EDUCATION FOR TRANSCENDENCE:
LESSONS FROM THE !KUNG ZHU/TWASI

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I. TRANSCENDENCE AND GROWTH

Altered states of consciousness are now receiving increased theoretical and empirical consideration in the field of psychology. Ludwig (1969) has offered a definition of such altered states. He says they are (p. 9-10):

... any mental state(s) ... which can be recognized ... by the individual ... or an objective observer ... as representing a sufficient deviation in subjective experience or psychological functioning from general norms for that individual during alert, waking consciousness.

I find problems with this definition. For example, altered states of the more profound kind are more than "mental states"; the deviation which they represent is so fundamental, that the person is at a different level of being than "subjective experience" or "psychological functioning." But Ludwig's definition suggests a typical and contemporary psychological starting point.

At the same time, psychologists are re-realizing that altered states of consciousness have been a perennial concept of man, and that there are deep roots for such study in ancient psychological, religious, philosophical and spiritual disciplines. One particular altered state, very thoroughly considered in such ancient disciplines, is the experience of transcendence. This is especially important because, unlike certain other altered states, the experience of transcendence has vast potential for increasing personal growth and represents a special, unique level of being. Huston Smith (1969) has said:

"This material appears in different form in Katz (1973)."
Transcendence should be defined neither quantitatively as "more of the same" nor qualitatively as "better than anything previously experienced" but in terms of the kind of value it designates. The effect of its appearance is to counter predicaments that are ingrained in the human situation.

If we recognize this non-comparative quality of transcendence, we will not confuse transcendence with ordinary psychological states, however intensified these psychological states may be.

The experience of transcendence has been approached from many perspectives (see the essays in Richardson and Cutler, 1969). Maslow (1962), for example, has offered a psychological perspective. He has described "peak experiences" in life during which "... many dichotomies, polarities and conflicts are fused, transcended or resolved." The emotional reaction during that state has a" ... special flavor of ... surrender before something great."

Among the more thoroughly described transcendent experiences within a spiritual perspective are the yogic state of samadhi and the Zen Buddhist state of satori. Suzuki (1956), for example, says that satori or enlightenment is an "intuitive looking into the nature of things" as opposed to an analytical or logical understanding of it. He quotes Zen masters who stress the sense of the "beyond" in satori. One master says, "There is not a fragment of tile above my head, there is not an inch of earth beneath my feet." Another, stressing the spiritual revolution produced by satori, says, "The bottom of a pail is broken through."

There is always a tendency to rank these experiences of transcendence according to their depth or purity or intensity. For example, Maslow's peak experiences may seem more a question of going beyond the ordinary self, while the experience of satori may seem more a question of participating in eternity. This difference in emphasis would lead one to place satori on a higher level. And then, Maslow sometimes writes about peak experiences in a way that suggests they do not even have that special, non-comparative quality of transcendence; instead of being transcendent experiences, peak experiences are merely intensifications of ordinary psychological processes. This presents still another problem.

In this paper I would like to focus on experiences which are definitely transcendent; that is, to consider issues in education which depend on the fact of transcendent experiences in general, and not on their different levels or degrees. A proper education for transcendence can evoke transcendent experiences and transform them into experiences of growth.
Certainly different experiences of transcendence have different implications for growth. Experiences of satori may produce spiritual revolutions, leading to the birth of a new man, while peak experiences may produce intense awe or joy or reflection, leading to a temporary change in emphasis or direction. I will not treat such different implications in this paper.

Central to any discussion of education for transcendence is the idea that man, or an aspect of man, seeks something beyond himself. I am assuming such a need for transcendence. Huston Smith (1969) puts it this way: "Man lives forever on the verge, on the threshold of 'something more' than he can currently apprehend." And he quotes Nietzsche's Zarathustra who says that "Man is a bridge and not an end." Education for transcendence must deal directly with an experiential threshold. It must teach how one can cross the threshold of fear into the state of transcendence. This education must also bring transcendence into ordinary life, and ordinary life into transcendence if personal growth is to occur (for a discussion of growth and transcendence, see Katz, in press.)

II. !KIA-CURING WITH THE !KUNG ZU/DTWASI

I want to describe !kia-curing as practiced by the Zhu/twasi tribe, and their systematic education for this !kia-curing (for other views see Lee, 1968; Marshall, 1969; Katz, in preparation). The altered state of !kia is not a unitary concept. There are different levels and depths of !kia and I will focus on the deepest, most clearly transcendent of the !kia experiences, as important insights into education for transcendence can emerge from this study of the Zhu/twas.

This section is based on field-work experience while living with the !Kung in the Kalahari Desert in northwest Botswana, Africa. The group of people I lived with have been called the !Kung Bushmen elsewhere in anthropological literature. Zhu/twasi is a word they use to describe themselves and it is less pejorative than Bushmen. Zhu twasi means "only or just people" or "true people" or simply "us."

!Kia has been translated elsewhere as trance-curing. I think trance is a misleading, as well as vague, word and would hope that a more complete understanding of the !kia experience can emerge from considering what the Zhu/twasi say about that experience. For the sake of simplicity I will use !kia and !kia-curing interchangeably, though there are other !kia states not connected with curing.

The !Kung language is characterized by four clicks. Two clicks appear in this paper, and are represented by a "I" and a "T". When a consonant follows the click, the !Kung word may be pronounced simply by dropping the click.

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The Zhu/twasi are a hunting and gathering people living primarily in the Kalahari Desert. Their existence is not so overlaid with the complexities of "civilization" as are contemporary industrialized cultures. Therefore, certain aspects of their education for transcendence seem to function in a purer form; at least, they are more apparent. Also many Zhu/twasi, approximately one-half the older adult males and one-third the adult women, learn to Ikia.' During the !kia state, they perform curing and fulfill many religious functions. !Kia-curing is harmonious or synergistic with maintenance and growth on both the individual and cultural levels. The fact that large numbers of persons can experience transcendence in a way harmonious with their own and their culture's growth is somewhat unique and certainly significant. Though the Zhu/twasi are in some senses remote from contemporary civilization, they seem completely contemporary in their education for transcendence. This process of education deals more with fundamental and enduring human characteristics than with particular and transitory cultural settings.

A. THE !KIA-CURING DANCE

The primary structure for the occurrence of Ikia is a dance which usually lasts from dusk to dawn, and which may occur once or twice a week. The entire village comes to such dances, including children and old persons. The women gather around the fire, singing !kia songs and rhythmically clapping their hands. The men dance in a circle around the women, some working themselves into a !kia state.

The !kia, and its setting of the !kia dance, serves many functions. It is the Zhu/twasi's primary expression of religion and cosmology. It provides curing and protection, being a magico-medical mode of coping with illness and misfortune. The !kia and the dance also increases social cohesion and solidarity. It allows for individual and communal release of hostility. Finally, the dance alters the consciousness of many members of this community. As individuals go into !kia, others at the dance, participating in various ways and to various degrees, themselves experience an alteration in their state of consciousness. An atmosphere develops at a dance whereby individual experiences of !kia can have a contagious effect on others.

31 do not talk here specifically about the Zhu/twasi women. The process of educating for !kia is fundamentally similar for men and women.
B. ONSET OF 'IKIA

The Zhu/twasi say that lkia is due to the activation of an 
energy, which they call ntum, or medicine. Those who have 
learned to lkia are said to possess nlum and are called "masters 
of nlum" or "nlum masters." Nlum resides in the pit of the 
stomach. As the nlum master continues his energetic dance, 
becoming warm and sweating profusely, the nlum heats up 
and becomes a vapor. It then rises up the spine, to a point 
approximately at the base of the skull, at which time lkia 
results. B0' talks about the lkia experience:

You dance, dance, dance, dance. Then nlum lifts you in your bel­ 
ly and lifts you in your back, and then you start to shiver. Nlum 
makes you tremble; it's hot. Your eyes are open but you don't look 
around; you hold your eyes still and look straight ahead. But when 
you get into lkia, you're looking around because you see 
everything, because you see what's troubling everybody .... Rapid 
shallow breathing, that's what draws nlum up ... then nlum 
enters every part of your body, right to the tip of your feet and 
even your hair.

The action and ascent of nlum is described by Tsau:

In your backbone you feel a pointed something, and it works its 
way up. Then the base of your spine is tingling, tingling, tingling, 
tingling, tingling, tingling ... and then it makes your 
thoughts nothing in your head.

This nlum is an energy which is held in awe and considered to 
be very powerful and mysterious. It is this same nlum that the 
nlum master "puts into" somebody in attempting to cure 
him. So, once heated up, nlum can both induce lkia and 
combat illness.'

C. 'IKIA AS A TRANSCENDENT EXPERIENCE

 lkia can be considered as a state of transcendence because 
during the lkia, a Zhu/twasi experiences himself as existing 
beyond his ordinary level of existence. The lkia itself is a very 
intense, emotional state. Emotions are aroused to an extraor­ 
dinary level, whether they be fear or exhilaration or serious­ 
ness. Also, a Zhu/twasi practices extraordinary activities dur­
ing Ikia. He performs cures, handles and walks on fire, claims X-ray vision, and at times says he sees over great distances. He does not even attempt such activities in his ordinary state. Moreover, he can go beyond his ordinary self by becoming more himself, more essential-by becoming more than himself. For example, there had not been a dance for a number of weeks at a particular waterhole. One of the important n/um masters who lived there said he wanted to have a dance soon so that "I can really become myself again." He meant, I think, that he wanted to experience again what he felt was his more essential self. Tsau, a blind man who is one of the most respected n/um masters, describes his own transformation:

... God keeps my eyeballs in a little cloth bag. When he first collected them, he got a little cloth bag and plucked my eyeballs out and put them into the bag and then he tied the eyeballs to his belt and went up to heaven. And now when I dance, on the nights when I dance and the singing rises up, he comes down from heaven swinging the bag with the eyeballs above my head and then he lowers the eyeballs to my eye level, and as the singing gets strong, he puts the eyeballs into my sockets and they stay there and I cure. And then when the women stop singing and separate out, he removes the eyeballs, puts them back in the cloth bag and takes them up to heaven.

During the Ikia state, Tsau becomes more than himself because he can "see," and he means that both figuratively and literally.

Through Ikia, the Zhu/twasi participates in the religious dimension. Transcending himself, he is able to contact the supernatural, a realm where the ghosts of dead ancestors live. Sickness is a process in which these ghosts try to carry off a chosen one (the sick person) into their supernatural realm. The ghosts are strong but not invincible. Masters of n/um may struggle with the ghosts and may often win. In Ikia, a n/um master argues and contends with these ghosts and sometimes carries on a heated dialogue: "Don't take this person yet, he's not ready to go," in his ordinary state, a Zhii/twasi is in awe of the supernatural and avoids talking about it; certainly he does not deal directly with it. If a n/um master's n/um is strong, the ghosts will retreat and the sick one will live. This struggle is at the heart of the n/um master's art, skill and power.

Ikia can be viewed as an altered state of consciousness, altered to the degree and quality where it becomes a state of transcendence (see Tart, 1969). As a Zhu/twasi's sense of self, time, and space are significantly altered during Ikia, there is a feeling of ascent. A master of n/um says: "When I pick up n/um, it explodes and throws me up in the air and I enter heaven and
then fall down." Others during !kia feel they are "bursting open, like a ripe pod" or "opening up" so that something more important can come out.

D. EDUCATING FOR !KIA

1. Socialization for !Kia

One of the most striking things about Zhu/twasi education for !kia is that it is very much a normal process of socialization. Every male tries to become a n/um master, though he may try more or less hard. Long before a person seriously tries to become a n/um master, perhaps in his late teens or early twenties, he is playing with !kia. A group of five- and six-year-olds may perform a small !kia dance, imitating the structure of the dance, the dance steps, and the !kia gestures, at times falling as if in !kia. Through play, the child is modeling; as he grows up, he is learning about !kia. Furthermore, education for !kia occurs within the context of the family, which, of course, is the major vehicle for socialization. The primary source of information about !kia, as well as the experiential teacher of !kia is likely to be one's father, perhaps one's uncle, or an older brother.

2. Seeking! Kia

But this strong and supportive context for !kia is not enough. A Zhu/twasi must seek !kia—he must be willing and ready to receive n/um which can evoke the experience of !kia. N/um is not "put into" someone who cannot accept it. This seeking of !kia usually occurs when a young man reaches twenty or so. He becomes a "student" and may express his search by going to as many dances as possible, perhaps two or three a week; in a sense, he is pushing himself to get more experience with the !kia dance.

3. Predisposition for! Kia

Who is it that seeks n/um and who finds it, or rather who is able to accept n/um? Though approximately 50 percent of the

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adult males do 'kia and cure, 50 percent do not. There were several variables which seemed to increase the likelihood one would become a master of n/um. First, lkia families seem to exist-sif your father has nlum it is likely that you will get it.' Also, there were individual predisposing factors. For example, if you are very emotional, you're more likely to become a nlum master. Experience with intense emotions could be good preparation for the deeply emotional lkia experience. Moreover, Zhu/twasi who have a richer fantasy life, who have more access to their fantasies and are more able to accept them, are more likely to become nlum masters. Since fantasy is an altered state of consciousness, these qualities could again be excellent preparation for contacting and accepting another altered state, i.e., lkia. Though I have no data on this, there might also be predisposing characteristics of a more physiological and biochemical nature. Reaction to stress, brain rhythm activity, and blood-sugar level are among the variables which can affect the appearance and nature of an altered state (Tart, 1969).

4. The! Kia Experience

Socialization for lkia and seeking 'kia are preparatory phases in education for 'kia. At the heart of this educational process is the experience of 'kia itself. There is consensual agreement and clarity about the concept of 'kia and the action of nlum. Most Zhu/twasi, whether they 'kia or not, can describe how Mum works and what it feels like to lkia. But during the lkia experience itself, these concepts and descriptions are not available. While there is conceptual clarity, there is experiential mystery. This is the case with one's first lkia experience and, to a lesser degree, with subsequent lkia experiences. And when someone who has lkia over the years experiences lkia with a new intensity or quality, the experiential mystery is again great. At its core, the education is a process of accepting a /kia experience for oneself This is especially difficult because lkia is painful as well as unknown; it is a greatly feared experience.

Along with feelings of release and liberation, 'kia also brings profound feelings of pain and fear. In describing the onset of lkia, medicine men refer again and again to pain and fear. They describe searing pain in the area of the diaphragm and spleen, and at the pit of the stomach. A master of n/um,

'Richard Lee has collected data which shows a significant relationship between a father's having nlum and his son's getting n/um, whether or not the father actually teaches the son. Could there be some inheritability or predisposition toward 'kia?'
recalling his first experience with \textit{n/um} says: "\textit{N lum} got into my stomach. It was hot and painful, like fire, I was surprised and I cried." As I thought about this pain and fear, it seemed that the physical symptoms were also metaphors for other nonphysical processes. Finally I talked with one of the two most knowledgeable and powerful curers. His description of \textit{!kia} was both clear and subtle. He said that as a person enters \textit{!kia} the fear is that not only will he lose himself, but he may never come back. To paraphrase it, the fear is of psychological death without an experience of rebirth. This fear evokes its own special and profound pain. When the potential master of \textit{n/um} can face the fact that he must die to himself and feel assured that he will be born again, then he can face the fear, overcome it, and break through to the \textit{!kia} state. One of the older \textit{n/um} masters describes this death and rebirth:

(In \textit{!kia}) your heart stops, you're dead, your thoughts are nothing, you breathe with difficulty. You see things, \textit{n/um} things; you see ghosts killing people, you smell burning, rotten flesh; then you cure, you pull sickness out. You cure, cure, cure, cure... then you live. Then your eyeballs clear and then you see people clearly.

Here we get some idea of why \textit{!kia} remains an experiential mystery and why it is feared. We can say that to enter \textit{!kia}, the Zhu/twasi must give up his familiar identity and assume a new \textit{!kia}-identity. He gives up the familiar and enters the unknown. Looked at from another viewpoint, he must experience psychological death before he can be reborn into \textit{!kia}. This passage into the unknown is frightening for the Zhfi/twasi as it has been for persons in every culture.

a. \textit{The Dance Structure}. How do the Zhu/twasi educate for this critical passage into \textit{!kia}? Of primary importance is that the person himself seeks \textit{!kia}; if it comes to him he must accept it. Various structures and techniques at the dance support his efforts and encourage them. At any dance, the potential master of \textit{n/um} can receive support and encouragement from a number of people. First and foremost for the student is his teacher, who has agreed to train him and give him \textit{n/um}. This teacher, perhaps with one or two other \textit{n/um} masters, will likely be the one who tries to put \textit{n/um} into the student during a dance. There are also a number of people who can become guardians. They may give the potential master of \textit{n/um} physical support when the onset of \textit{!kia} makes him shaky and unstable, or hold him when he trembles during \textit{!kia}, or lead him to others so he can cure them. The guardians serve another crucial function since the potential master of \textit{n/um} may do things which can be harmful to himself or others. For example, he may want to get closer to the tire to help his \textit{n/um} boil up;
b. The Thermostatic Approach. As he continues to dance into the night, ever more seriously, the potential nlum master's n/um may begin to boil and lkia becomes imminent. At this point, another critical element in the educational process occurs. Almost as with a thermostat, the potential nlum master tries to regulate his condition. As he feels lkia coming on, he may involuntarily draw back from, and at times actively resist this transition to an extraordinary state. His teacher, the guardians, and the singing women, help him overcome this resistance. They try to help him balance his fear of lkia and the intensity of the oncoming lkia. If his lkia is coming on so fast that his fear escalates and prevents him from experiencing the lkia, his teacher may make him stop dancing for a while, or drink some water, or lie down-all to "cool down" his too rapidly boiling n/um. The nlum must be hot enough to evoke lkia but not so hot that it provokes debilitating fear. Also, it is never a question of merely putting nlum into the student. The correct amount is critical. Experienced masters of nlum, for example, are encouraged to go as deeply into lkia as they can, provided they maintain enough control over the nlum to use it for curing. Tsau tells what he does during a dance with someone who is learning to lkia:

You must do (the student's spleen area) properly. You've got to fire arrows into that area; fire them in and fire them in and fire them in until those arrows of n/um, which are a lot like thorns, long thorns, are sticking out of the spleen and stomach area like a pincushion, sticking out in all directions. So you see why we rub (the person's body) like we do, because the arrows are popping out of his body and we're rubbing them back into his body. And that's why we take our sweat, and then we try to work the arrows around to the back. When we do that, his breath and soul returns properly to his body; but if we don't do that, then he might die, he might die if we just left those things (sticking out) ...

When the student is too fearful, Tsau ceases to focus the nlum inward and upward, and instead allows it to subside:
If I come up (to someone at the dance who is learning to !kia) and he fears it, and he says, "Please don't put your hands on me because I might die," and he just says, "Take your hands off me," then I leave him because he fears it. ... When a person says he is afraid, I remove (the arrows) I've put in.

Throughout this work at the dance, there is extensive physical contact between the potential n/u/m master and his teachers and guardians. Much of the sensitivity to these subtle thermostatic considerations comes from this intimate contact. Physical support complements the psychological support offered the potential master of n/u/m.

Drugs are not used on any regular basis to induce !kia. There is, however, one indigenous drug which apparently is used infrequently and in a specialized manner. If a student is having considerable difficulty learning to !kia, he may be given this drug at the beginning of a dance. The drug is offered as a training device, which may vault him over his intense fears as well as bringing him closer to the !kia state. The drug experience itself also becomes a preparation for !kia, since both experiences are forms of altered states of consciousness. As with other techniques used at the dance, the dosage and time of ingestion of the drug are carefully regulated by the teacher. The drug is supposed to help the student over the barrier of fear and into !kia, not catapult him into yet another unknown and potentially frightening altered state.

There are specific and sometimes idiosyncratic signs that someone is approaching that threshold of fear and/or !kia. The signs must then be interpreted: Is the fear so intense that he must sit down, or is the fear such that if he stays with it, he can overcome it and enter a !kia state? Some of the signs of fear and/or impending !kia are: Is his body shaking? Does he have a glazed look, or are his eyes downcast? Is his face impassive? These are signs used not only by the person himself, but also by his teacher, guardians, and the women who are singing and clapping. If the women sense that someone is ready to go into !kia, they may intensify their singing and clapping to give him an extra push.

An example may describe the subtlety of this thermostatic idea. One young Zhu/twasi, who was new to !kia, had a look of tremendous fear as he was dancing. The singing and clapping, the dance in general, were at a high intensity. !kia was threat-

The drug is awaiting botanical identification and analysis. It appears to be a psychoactive substance which has not yet been reported in the literature. I never observed the use of this drug during any of the !kia-curing dances I attended.
ening to overwhelm him. But instead of taking him away from the dance, two persons went to him, one holding him from the front, the other from behind, and physically brought him back to the dance. The three of them then continued dancing, in close physical contact, as the singing reached new levels of intensity and excitement. In a sense they brought him back to what he most feared, but they were now physically with him. He became able to go through his fear and into lkia. The approach to each potential nlum master depends on his history and present readiness for lkia. As the person experiences the beginnings of lkia, those who are teaching and working on him can confirm the validity of his experience. They can acknowledge his entrance into lkia,

C. lkia Management. As lkia occurs at a dance, the atmosphere becomes more electric and the dance more focused. One person going into lkia is in a sense an incentive or stimulant for others to do likewise. At one dance, there were fifteen dancers, and twelve of them were potential nlum masters. I tried to imagine what would happen if all of them were to go into lkia at once. Certainly the process of education for lkia would be severely strained. But no more than two or three were in lkia at anyone time. What happened was a process of lkia management. The more experienced nlum masters hold back their lkia until those who need more help are either under control or able to function in lkia. Rarely are there people in a state of lkia who need help and cannot get it.

5. The Teacher

The teacher is a Zhu/twasi who is a nlum master. He remains an ordinary person during his non-lkia state, rather than an intimate of the gods or a chosen instrument. He does not demand obedience nor a long apprenticeship. The period of learning is focused during the dance itself. The emphasis is on experiential education. The core of the teaching is at those points when lkia is about to and does occur. The teacher is with the student at the threshold of the latter's fear and lkia, trying to help him over his fear and into lkia, and then guiding him to use that lkia for curing. The blind, powerful nlum master Tsau said to me:

... I ask God for nlum and put it into you. And I say to God: here's my child, give me some more nlum so I may put it into him... even today I'm going to put it into you, and you'll dance, dance, dance, dance: I'll put it into you ... one of these days soon, when the women start singing, you'll start shivering "... let's dance tonight, let's dance tonight and, .. and dance tomorrow night and
teaching by example

consistent and constant features of educational process

!Cum

then I'm going to dance you again ... I'll dance you tonight and dance out tomorrow night ... I'm going to do you ... and you will be trembling like leaves in the winds ... when I cure you, I will feel n/um trembling in your body, and then I'll say: Oh, today this fellow has drunk n/um."

Though originally from the gods, n/um now passes regularly from man to man. Teaching is primarily by example. The teacher has been there before. He may !kia at that particular time; certainly he has had !kia many times before. He recognizes the student's progress, interprets his condition, and confirms that the student is in !kia. As he works with his student, the teacher combines many functions. He is likely to be a parent or close relative, and therefore he is responsible for the student's socialization in general. The teacher is a spiritual guide in that he initiates the student into the cultural mysteries, probing the nature of his existence. He is like a priest in that he has had contact with the ghosts and can guide the student to that realm. He's very much a therapist in that he tries to help the student accept his fear rather than be overcome by it. And, he has been an academic teacher because he has taught the student the conceptual framework of !kia.

6. NI um as a Special Gift

The process of educating for !kia has consistent and constant features. For example, though nlum originally came from the gods, men now teach or give nlum to other men. Also, they usually get nlum in their mid-twenties, or occasionally in their early twenties or early thirties. Certain exceptions to this usual educational process seem to stimulate the appearance of powerful nlum and to signify its continuing availability.

For example, !Cum is considered by other !Kung to be a powerful nlum master. He agrees. I asked him how other !Kung get their nlum, and he said, "How do I know they got it? So they dance and do it; but do they really know what they're doing? I don't know. Maybe it's the singing of the women that does it." I then asked him whether he cures with the other nlum masters in the village, and he said, "What other doctors? You think there are other masters of nlum in the Village?" !Cum loves to joke but he nonetheless means what he said. !Cum's father had nlum, but did not give it to him. !Cum received nlum directly from God. He describes it this way:

My own experiences with !kia-curing are described in another work (in preparation),
When I was about fourteen or fifteen, I was asleep, and God grabbed me by the legs and sent me out into the bush at night, and out there, he gave me a small tortoise and told me: "This tortoise, leave it here and then in the morning, get your father to degut it, and put n/um into it and that will be your n/um." And then God took me farther and I was crying in the dark, and my father came looking for me and found me crying, and carried me back to the fireside. Then in the morning, I said, "Father, come and see this tortoise: fix it for me and put n/um in it, and give it to me because this is what God has given me, Fix it and give it to me so I may keep it; so that when you are dying, I can use it and I'll save you." But my father refused. He just killed the tortoise, roasted it and ate it; and then the skin of his throat parted and we could see his windpipe exposed. Then God told me, "For what your father has done, I'm going to kill him. The thing I gave to you that he ate is killing him." And I refused and I said. "My father won't die," And I took another tortoise with n/um in it, and dropped burning coals into the shell. And then I put the shell to his lips and he drank the smoke, and the same day the skin above and the skin below came together and closed, and he lived. Then God said to me, "See what your father's arrogance has done to him; you tell him to stop that and not to do it again or else I will really kill him next time." And that's how I got what I have. That's where I started it and today I cure the people in the different villages. If someone is sick, I go to them.

This vision and gift of n/um is both unusual and startling. So were some of the immediate effects. !Cum says, "I only danced after this (vision) experience, and only began to !kia after this experience; but right after!" He then says that twice after the vision, God took him out to the bush alone, and he began to !kia. The first !kia is almost always a time of especially strong fear, fear of the hot n/um and the unexpected intensity of the experience. But his solo, a God-induced !kia, was different. He says of these two experiences: "How (could I) be afraid during these !kia (like the others are during their !kia)? God killed every thought. He wiped me clean. Then he took my soul away whirling, my thoughts whirled."

Tsau is considered an even more powerful master of n/um, perhaps one of the two most powerful in the area. And he also describes himself as such. He talked about how he got n/um:

Tsau

When I was tiny thing, sucking at my mother's breasts, I took n/um, I drank n/um. It was n/um ... it was at the breast, I was about three or four years old. I would cry, and cry and cry; my mother would sing to me; and I would cry and suck the breast and cry. I just sat in my mother's lap and danced. I was afraid of the n/um: it was hot and hurt ... , that is my story. Others (who !kia) are much older than me, but they started their n/um later than me.
Other !Kung were understandably surprised at this early onset of !kia ability. As Tsau put it, people would say, "What's this youngster still at the breast doing?"

Kau is a youngster of only eleven or twelve years. And yet already there is something special about his relation to !kia. He is an especially talented dancer, and dances more frequently than his peers. Most unusual, he seems already to have drunk n/um. In the view of others, he has great potential for becoming a powerful n/um master. [Cum describes a particular dance:

I've looked at this kid, Kau, and didn't see anything until recently. But a few months ago we had a dance in the bush, and the kid started crying and was carried around (the dance) crying by his playmates ... he was witless.... His father was away I said, "This kid's already drunk n/um." Then I told the women, "Stop singing because this kid's father (who is teaching him about n/um) is far away, and I'm not going to work on him, and you're going to give this boy a lot of pain if you keep singing." Then the ladies stopped.

Cum then tried to figure out why Kau is so special. Where others approach !kia with fear and caution, Kau's enthusiastic and devoted approach is striking:

... what is it that has made Kau !kia while such a young boy? I'm trying to figure it out in my own mind what is it that sets him apart .... When I see a little kid like that I say, "His heart is full, full of dancing" ... it's his heart. He loves to dance. When the singing starts, he's not the least bit afraid of people, so he dances full out and that's what helps him !kia.

7. !Kia in Context

The Zhtitwasi do not seek !kia for its own sake. They experience !kia in order to cure others. If they were just to !kia without curing, this would be seen as a misuse of these !kia-related powers. Also, !kia is not cultivated as a long-term state. A Zhtitwasi has to maintain his responsibilities as a member of a hunting and gathering group. He is a hunter and gatherer, who also happens to !kia. !Kia generally should occur within the period of a dance. One of the older and more experienced n/um masters didn't come out of !kia when the dance ended the next morning. This extended !kia wasn't seen as a privilege, or an extra source of curing power; it was seen as a mistake. The n/um master himself was quite upset, and tried as hard as he could to come out of !kia. When he returned to his normal state later that morning, he was able to resume his ordinary, everyday responsibilities.
The intrinsically valuable experience of !kia remains thoroughly functional, !Kia always occurs in context. One way I have tried to describe this is with the concept of synergistic consciousness. !Kia-curing is a state of synergistic consciousness, harmonious with both individual and cultural levels of existence. !Kia supports the functioning and growth of the individual n/um master. It allows him to transcend himself and develop extraordinary powers during certain periods. It reaffirms his relationship with the supernatural and leaves him with a feeling of well-being. For a few of the most powerful curers, !kia also seems to raise their general level of being; their ordinary lives take on a special quality. And !kia does not interrupt or disrupt the Zhu/twasi’s carrying out his basic everyday responsibilities.

!Kia also supports the functioning and growth of the culture. When a Zhu/twasi becomes a n/um master, everybody gains. With its religious, medical and social dimensions, !kia is a major force in the culture. Also, there is no limit on n/um; no zero-sum game is involved. One Zhu/twasi becoming a nlum master does not mean another Zhu/twasi cannot become one; often, especially if they know each other, it can mean just the opposite. N/um is an expandable substance. What is good for the individual is good for the culture is again good for the individual. This is a synergistic relationship.

### III. EDUCATING FOR TRANSCENDENCE

Perhaps we can extract from the Zhu/twasi’s experience with !kia certain more general ideas about education for transcendence.

#### A. BEYOND TRANSCENDENCE

The experience of transcendence is momentary—though in another sense timeless. The emphasis is not so much on having a transcendent experience but on what you do next—what effect this experience has on your life. The Zhu/twasi !kia in order to cure, and to participate in the religious dimension. !Kia has an integral place in the ongoing life of the individual and his group. As documented so vividly and so often, Westerners too easily place all the emphasis on achieving the experience of transcendence (see the first-person accounts in Kapleau, 1967). They look harder and harder for one transcendent experience, the breakthrough. The farther they feel from that experience, the harder they look, and the more
need/ora
custom/or
transcendent
experience
desperate they can become. If they are fortunate enough to
stop grasping and allow the experience to occur, then they are
faced squarely with the crux of the matter. After the exhilara-
tion and relief which can follow the experience, there is often a
letdown. Instead of having found the answer, they are usually
faced with a perplexing question: What do I do now? Without
a context for transcendence, it is a transitory experience, with
uncertain implications for personal growth. The explorer of
consciousness temporarily leaves himself and his society. But
after experiencing a truth, he returns to himself and to his
society, and attempts to live this truth with himself and others.

Certainly there have been dramatic instances where one
transcendent experience changes the course of a life and
begins a path toward growth. Religions conversions, for
example, do occur. But first, it seems, there must be fertile soil
from which the experience can arise and in which it can sub-
sequently grow. This is another aspect of transcendence in
context. What is an experience of transcendence for a par-
ticular person? How does his life, as a context, affect the nature
of that experience? Put another way, is the Zhu/twasi
experience of !kia analagous to other more familiar expe-
riences of transcendence-such as the Zen satori or the
mystical religious experience? My feeling at this point is that
more than likely they are similar. This doesn't deny the fact
that within any culture (or spiritual discipline), there can be
differences in degrees or levels of transcendence. I think that
each culture transcends itself in a way specific and organic to
that culture. The modes and metaphors of transcendence can
be quite different, but I think the state is similar. For example,
one culture may have an apparently more sophisticated or
elaborated set of metaphors. But these may be merely a more
literate representation of a universal experience of transcen-
dence, and the emphasis certainly belongs on the experience.

B. THE STUDENT SEEKS

As was clear with Zhu/twasi !kia, the individual himself seeks
the transcendent experience. But this seeking is not a grasping
after !kia; it is making oneself ready to receive n/ urn. This is in
contrast to a Situation where someone sits back, waiting for it to
happen to him, waiting for a teacher to give him an experience
of transcendence. The saying that the teacher finds the student
when the latter is ready can also be applied to the experience of
transcendence. Transcendence grows in fertile soil.
C. AN EXPERIENTIAL PASSAGE

I have been talking about the experience of transcendence, not the concept of transcendence. Entering into a transcendent state is an experiential passage. Conceptual clarity about that state may give one a feeling of confidence or some comfort, but when it comes down to the moment of transcendence, it is of no help at all. In his book *The Teachings of Don Juan*, Castaneda (1968) describes how his need for conceptual clarity about transcendence denies him the very experience of transcendence.

Inevitably, there is a strong desire to find out what will occur during a transcendent experience: "What will happen to me? How will I feel?" We all want to hold on to something—some "known"—when we face the unknown of a transcendent moment. But, just as inevitably, there can be no conceptual clarity in that moment because there are no concepts. The experience is transcendent because it has gone beyond concepts, beyond the mind.

D. PSYCHOLOGICAL DEATH AND REBIRTH

The Zhu/twasi describe a process analogous to a psychological death and rebirth as critical to entering !kia. This is not surprising. There is a broad range of evidence suggesting this is the process which characterizes the entrance into a transcendent state. During an experience of psychological death, you give up who you are, what you are accustomed to. And in the process of giving up your identity, you can enter the state of transcendence. The conviction that you will be reborn encourages you to enter this state. You can accept the fear; it is no longer immobilizing—as when you fear that you will become nothing or that you can’t come back again to yourself. Rebirth for the Zhu/twasi is being reborn into the !kia state, and, after the dance, being reborn as an ordinary, fully functioning Zhfi/twasi. Having a conviction about rebirth is helpful. But the basic process is being able to accept the unknown, to willingly go into fundamental mysteries. The hero's passage is a journey into the unknown; facing the unknown, the boy becomes a man, the man a hero (Campbell, 1956, demonstrates the depth of man's involvement in this process).

Today, many young people particularly are trying to establish their own identity. Many of them would also say they are looking for an experience of transcendence. But being in a
state of identity diffusion—at loose ends, not particularly invested in anything—is not equivalent to being in a state of transcendence. You give up your identity when you experience transcendence, but before you give up an identity, you must first have one. The Zhu/twasi for the most part know who they are and sense their place in their universe. They have an identity which they can transcend.

E. THE TEACHER

The teacher of Zhii/twasi !kia is someone who is there at the crossroads, at the point of no return, who by his presence encourages you across fear into trance. While the emphasis remains on being prepared for !kia, ready to receive the n/um he puts in you, the Zhu/twasi teacher initiates you into areas he's had experience with. But the Zhu/twasi model is too rare today. There are many supposed "teachers" of transcendence, but few who are encouraging others toward real transcendence after they themselves have become experienced with such states. There are few teachers who are relatively complete; who could, for example, be both teacher and parent and be both responsibly. Many "teachers" today operate without a context. The Zhii/twasi education for !kia is effective primarily because it occurs within a growth context which is actively interested in transcendent education.

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