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To Fly Away (Sam Hauley), a Nebraska Santee Dakota dancer, taken about 1918. Note the Woodland type ribbonwork and beadwork on this man's costume, reflecting the eastern locale of the Santee as compared to the Middle and Teton divisions of the Dakota tribe. (Photograph from the Fugle estate)

SOME NOTES ON THE SANTEE

by

Ella Deloria

(Editor's note: In our last (March-April) issue we presented a short monograph on the Yankton Dakota by Ella Deloria. In this issue we are happy to offer further material by Miss Deloria, but this time dealing with the Santee, or Eastern Dakota. This material was collected by Miss Deloria from Santee informants of Prairie Island Community, near Red Wing, Minnesota several years ago. JH)

Santee Dakota Suicide

This, they say, is true. It has been related by our people since early times. South of Red Wing is a town named Lake City; and across the river from it there is a great rock, a cliff that is hdihéya (T. g.lihéya, perpendicular; and it is there that a Santee young woman committed suicide.

It was this way: There was a young man in the tribe who wanted her for his wife, and gave many handsome gifts to her people so that he might have her. She did not want him for she did not care for him (pidášni) so she avoided him but he still followed after her all the time.

Many a man would be insulted and ashamed by being refused in marriage, and would leave the tribe; but this one either had no pride or his desire for the girl overcame all his natural pride. He stayed by, all the time, and wherever she went he peered around, and followed after her, always keeping in the offing in such a way that he annoyed her to distraction.

Then came a time when the Dakota men were going to war; all manly young men had pledged themselves to go, in an open ceremony at the dance. But this particular man did not join them; instead he stayed away from the center of activity.

This shamed the girl all the more: to think that the kind of man who desired her should be the kind that would be afraid of war! So she was now doubly irritated; by his persistence against her wishes, and by his cowardly attitude towards war.

"I will go to war myself," she declared. In those days, Dakota women sometimes

went to war. Usually to accompany their men whom they loved; but often too to show their disgust for certain men who appeared to dread going. So this handsome young woman now quietly determined to go; but only her family knew it. She made the usual preparations; many pairs of moccasins and packs of pounded dried meat. (pápa is Teton and Yankton for dried meat; waćónića is the word among these people; waćónića sáka, usually. See in my dictionary for ćónića; wa; sáka.)

Her sisters and cousins who loved her begged her to desist, but she was determined. At last the party started out, and they came to the base of this rock I mentioned at the first. (This is now called "Maiden Rock" on the map. ECD.)

And as they were camping, for there was a great host of them going against the Ojibwa, she suddenly saw the man who haunted her continually; he was hiding nearby but keeping her always in sight. She was angry to think he was not man enough to come to war, but was now coming simply on her account. She told somebody that she had seen him, and that her desire to be rid of him forever was paramount.

She went around the huge rock, following a small ravine that led upward towards the back side of the rock, the sloping side.

The first thing people knew, she was singing a song. Now what this song was, I do not know. Nobody knows it now, and all they ever say of it is, "She was singing a wiwakuze song." Now, what wiwakuze means, exactly, I do not know; nobody uses the word any longer; that is simply what they call it, wiwakuze. She was singing a wiwakuze song, so the big men below said, "Wa! Pá wikóške ki šicáya tákeya dó; Ektá yápi yó!" (Ah! That young woman is saying something portentous; go to her!) But before they could even start, she pulled her shawl over her head (Šiná póšmićota iyékiye--Shawl, póšmićota means pulled overhead, in Santoe; ša, head; ošmićota, I cannot translate.) and leaped into the abyss below. When they recovered her body, no bone was broken only once; rather twice or more each, they say.

And that is the true story of Maiden Rock; and it was a Dakota woman of this band who stood by her principles enough to die for them, it is said.

Many other suicides there have been in the tribe, for the history is long. There was a young woman, happily married, so it seemed, who nevertheless hanged herself one day. She climbed a tree and followed out an over-hanging limb, there she tied the thong rope by which she caught her neck in a noose and then fell over, where they later found her dangling. It was a horrible thing. And the reasons were traced to the fact that her husband had found fault with her and scolded her. Dakot women are good; they make the best wives because they do not forever nag their husbands, but they are very touchy; because they do their best, no doubt, they are fatally resentful when they are criticized and perhaps this one thought she was as perfect in her attitude as was possible; and no doubt she was; but when her husband presumed to find fault--no doubt he was annoyed over something else, that often happens--she could not bear it and would rather be dead.

Whenever a Dakota woman committed suicide she did it by hanging herself. When a man wanted to die, he went to war and exposed himself to the enemy in such a manner as to be hit at once. Men did not commit suicide so often as women; but if they did, either by going to war or some other original way, it was from some injury or insult to their pride. Often it was because they were turned down by the girl they would marry. It was not so much that they could not live without that special girl, however, as it was the hurt to their pride, and that the girl should reckon them so terribly unworthy as that. I know of instances where men died in that way; but the number is small; sometimes a man, if he is big enough, can face being turned down. He may go away for a time, and take a wife from elsewhere.

There was one man who was turned down after he had offered many expensive gifts for the girl; but instead of resenting it he just laughed and said, "Man had been turned down before."

But then he said, "Having tried to do this marriage thing in the most accepted fashion, and failing, I shall manage as best I can." And so it went on, and a few seasons after that, one day the camp was in an uproar over something. "Hapsti has disappeared!" And everyone was most excited.

Hapsti was the girl who had turned down the man, and had been sought after by others, all of whom she turned down, until it was believed that she did it for the pleasure of being hard to get.

But lo, it developed later that Hapsti, somewhat abashed, was residing in the tipi of the man she had first refused; and she lived with him to a ripe old age.

It seemed that when he offered things for her she did not like him, at that distance. But when she talked to him, at the courting, she was charmed with him. She did not know him under his blanket, but she accepted him, and it turned out to be the man she did not want at first.

Many said how foolish she had been, to refuse an honorable one, and then choose the less honorable form, by eloping, but others said, "It is well; she followed her heart, and will be always happy." And she was. She died some twenty years ago. And she was a good woman, really, for she belonged to the One Husband Fire, to the end.

Once a young girl of fifteen, or fourteen, killed herself. That is the youngest suicide I know of. It was very sad too; the girl climbed a tree and then tied a noose to her neck, and made it fast to the limb, and dangled there. It seemed that her brother scolded her, and that she could not stand. You see, Dakota brothers owe a certain respect to their sisters and cousins of the other sex; they must only speak when necessary, and then always respectfully; they must never say anything deprecating about them or express any annoyance or disapproval of them. But this thoughtless youth scolded the sensitive girl; and she thought "How can I live on in the tribe, since my brother cares no more for our relationship than to scold me as if I were some other relation?" She said this to her friends.

But in their hearts they too knew it was all wrong. So when the men found

her dead in the woods, they all sympathized with her, and thought she did the only thing she could, stop living, rather than live on as if she were callous to what had befallen her.

Santee Dakota Dugout Canoes

The means of locomotion around this country, for these people, was by boat, principally. They thought more of their boats than of their horses. And often men went to war in that way. Boats were made out of single logs. First they were cut to the correct length; and then they were shaped to a point in front and back. Then one side was planed to a flat surface, and that was the bottom. After this, the log was turned over onto the flat side, and the other side, which would be the top of the boat, was hollowed out by cutting and chipping and planing until the boat was shaped properly, and balanced, and then it was sealed against possible leaks, and was ready for use. Whole families, and sometimes two families were able then to get about with comparative ease. They could load on all their belongings, and start forth.

Now-a-days nobody makes boats; there would be no place to go in them, anyway.

A wakan Wačipi Initiation

There were Waká Men in the tribe; medicine men. They fasted, for visions, in the very long ago. Nobody much knew what happened, and the ones who fasted and later possessed supernatural power, never would tell what they saw; and now that they are all dead, it is impossible to know anything about their dreams. Not everyone fasted; only such as felt they must.

And it was always said of those who sought a vision, "Hená wakápi če," Those are holy ones. But just how they derived their power is lost to us, if indeed it was ever known.

Those who had supernatural power, from whatever medium, were more or less clubbed together into a dancing society; they had the Waká-wačipi. But that too has been obsolete for many years.

When I came here forty six years ago, there was a woman living here by the name of Apéhdewi (Teton, Apé, day; daytime; T. g.l.a, to be going home. Wi, feminine ending.) who was then one hundred years of age.

She said she saw a Waká Wačipi. Mystery dance, and in those days, certain medicine women were also members. So there was a very important waká woman in the group. And when the tribe went out to gather "Pótpaka" (A certain wild vegetable; I cannot identify it; and I suspect the t would be a k in Teton and Yankton; In which case, kpa is ground fine; in small pieces; ka, that sort. This then suggests šikpáka (ši, fat), a kind of root found growing at the base of reeds around the lakes, in the Dakota country, which had a rich oily taste, and was used as a substitute for fat during famines.)

When the tribe went out to gather Pótpaka, there they lost the famous medicine woman; she died of some sudden ailment, and so when they returned, the Waká-wacípi held an initiation ceremony for the daughter whom they took in in her mother's place. I do not know whether her mother left her any heritage, but at any rate, the other members wished the daughter to take her mother's place in their ranks. That is all that is told.

So they had the Waká-wacípi, and there the dancers dressed in the usual way; without any especially prepared or ornamented garments--simply the usual clothes. The forms they went through and the songs they sang were the significant things, Apéhdewi said; but she did not recall the songs nor remember their wording; she just knew that happened. And the part she recalled is that a great many beautiful goods, possessions of all sorts, were given away at this time. They were not given away in the Give-away style, with praises and glory; but they were thrown away, "Wihpeyapi", discarded on account of the death of the famous medicine woman.

A Giant Fish

There was a Sun dance going on, they say. The Sun Dance has not been danced in so long that nobody living here can tell anything about it. But in those days there used to be a sun dance. And the head dancer, the one who initiated the ceremony was a man who had visions; and this one was dancing without food or water, when he suddenly saw, (in his trance-state, for he had his chest pierced and was tied to the tree or pole); he saw a white figure pass across the Sun dance lodge and on out. What he saw puzzled him, because even as it passed, he could see right through it, and could discern the people who stood opposite and were looking on. But not these people, nor any others, could see this white apparition; and immediately he asked to be released. So a relative who loved him, gave a present to some former Sun dancer and requested him to release the sufferer.

This one now accepted the gift, took his extra-sharp knife, and cut through the flesh by which the dancer was tied fast to the pole and set him free.

Immediately he walked or staggered out of the lodge, so all the spectators forgetting the other dancers, followed him out, and they went, a vast throng, towards the distant water, not knowing what they followed.

And when they reached the water there it was; a huge fish, unbelievable large, that rose and fell in the water. The people were so amazed they could not stand still but ran wildly about. There were prongs coming out of various parts of the tremendous body, which nobody could account for.

At last the fish stopped swimming and seemed to float, so the men sioned for it and tied great ropes to it and brought it to shore. While it still lived, it had two lights in front that dazzled the on-lookers; and the lights they say were apart from each other, the length of seven bows. And the bows then in use were perhaps a yard long. So that the distance between the great fish's eyes was 21 feet. That is what the people tell.

And the prongs which stood out from various parts of the body were the antlers of an elk which the great fish had swallowed whole and which, by struggling to free itself, had eventually caused the fish to die. They brought it ashore, but nobody would touch the meat; the sun-dancers, saying its apparition appearing at the ceremony had an ominous significance, refused to touch it; and even the dogs of the camp would not eat it. So they left it there to decay. This the people have told for generations.

A Man Changes To A Fish

There is yet another legend. It would seem that all our legends deal with fish; but that is natural for we lived principally by fishing.

In the case of both these tales, I do not think it so very unlikely, for I have since seen great skeletons in the showhouses in St. Paul, skeletons of animals as big as what the people tell.

Now this second fish story happened thus: It was very long ago, and it happened not far from here. That always reminds me how long these people have lived in these parts, perhaps for centuries.

North of here, perhaps 20 miles, is Hastings, a town. And near it is a place called Prescott in English; but to this day, we Dakotas call it Hogá-Wake, (Fish/it lies.)

There were two friends who were either on their way to war or were returning; but nobody says as to that.

And they stopped near a large lake, so one of them went to fish, and he brought a tamáhe (cf. tamáheca, to be lean, the Northern Pike, Esox lucius.)

He cut the fish into parts, and cooked it in a container, and offered it to his friend.

The friend said, "But friend, I don't somehow care for this tamáhe, I would rather not eat it."

But the friend good-naturedly insisted; "Come now, koda, you must eat something; and this is good food I offer you. I went out and got it fresh myself. I know it is good."

"No koda, do not urge me. I somehow do not care for it." -- "But why?" the one who cooked it was very insistent. So at last the other said, "Very well, then, I will eat it." And he ate until he was satisfied of his hunger.

But that evening, he grew very thirsty, and with it, he became so listless that he could not get his own water to drink.

"koda, m.ní makáu yó," he said. And his friend brought water to him which

he drank; and he wanted more, and more, until his friend grew weary, carrying water to him throughout the night. At last he said, "Koda, I am now very tired. I have carried water to you from the lake as many times as you wished, and now I am overcome with sleepiness.

"I will therefore help you to the bank of the lake and lay you in such a position that you will be able to drink as often as you wish of the water.

So he took him with difficulty for he was very heavy; and he laid him on the shore, where his lips might easily touch the water whenever he wanted to drink.

There he left him and went to bed in his bark hut which they had erected.

Now it was morning; and the man, wearied by carrying water, was ashamed to have the sun up, while he still slept.

He sprang to his feet, and he saw that his friend was not there; he ran to the waters edge, but there also his friend was missing from the place he had laid him. But he found him later, out in the water, and he was now a fish. When the friend realized what he had brought about, he sat on the bank and wept loud and long. And the fish swam around and round him, as if to comfort him; but it was too late.

At last the man came away; and he told the tribe what had taken place; so they went with him to the lake where his friend had turned into a fish, and they found him lying there, in a moon-shaped form, still, but his fins gently moving.

When later they returned there, they found him dead, and turned into rock and hardened. And to this day, if one goes there, he may see what yet remains of the man whose friend made him eat Tamahe, against his will, and so turned him into a fish. That is a legend.

Social Customs

These people sometimes took two wives; two is the most I know about. Of course nobody has more than one wife any longer. But in olden times, such was the case. And among us Santee, it was very likely to be a younger sister or a young female cousin of the wife, who became the second wife.

A Dakota man did not take a second wife because he was tired of the first; the first wife was always the wife of his choice; the second wife was a girl who needed protection and who, if he did not take her, would be homeless. That was the way a good Dakota did; of course there were some who would not pass for men, who might do things differently; but I am telling you only our good customs, by which all good men and women were governed.

There were cases of a girl who lived in the home of a sister or cousin and her husband, without coming to be his wife; but generally, the older generation, the

mothers and fathers, the aunts and uncles, who stood in the place of the girl's parents, thought it better that she should be the second wife to the man in whose house she lived, and so conform to that household, rather than to go about loosely and perhaps get into trouble, and incur the gossip of the tribe. It was considered more honorable to arrange matters in this way.

Some girls who did not care for this arrangement, refused, or ran away; or preferred to live with their other relatives, aunts or mothers. But in general, since it was the custom, this was done.

Not every girl was so given in marriage; if her parents were living and she had an established home, it would not happen, probably.

When a woman died, if she left any children, then a younger sister of the dead woman was said to "Take over my children." They are called her children because of course they call her mother already.

In such a case, the girl marries her brother-in-law but if there were no children, and even if there were, if the girl did not fancy marrying her brother-in-law, or if he preferred to stay unmarried, then no marriage was obligatory.

But in general, "Taking over my children" meant marrying the father of the children that called one Mother. This is so firmly established that when anyone says so, that is taken as the meaning.

There was a girl who married a white man, and a baby-girl was born to her, but she died at the time. So the white man took the child to a distant city, but often wrote back to the younger sister of his dead wife, to tell her how things were, and this girl wrote and asked him if she might take over her daughter. The man said, "No, I think it would be best that she remain where she is, for I can do more for her in the city than if she were away off on the reservation." (This is identical with a case I knew of in the Standing Rock group of Teton. ECD)

Somehow this got out; and the people unkindly said, "She offered herself to her brother-in-law but he turned her down." It was not so. The younger generation do not know that use of the term. The girl had a young man she was planning to marry; and thought when she married, she might take the child of her dead sister into her home, so that it would not forget Dakota ways. So the comment was unfair. Nobody now-a-days takes two wives; and even if a woman or man leaves children, it does not follow any longer that the living sister or brother, marries the widower or widow. It may happen; it is not invariable. When a widower or widow married the dead spouse's sister or brother, it was for the sake of the children, so that they might be spared the chance of adjusting to a strange step-parent, who likely as not would be unkind to them.

These people had the One Husband Fire you mention of the Yanktons, and the Celibates' Fire. And women who were still chaste, were welcome to the Celibates' Fire, the same as you tell of the Yankton.

Zitkáná Wašté = Alfred Riggs
 Peace = Ceremonies

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The difference is that in our case, everything was simpler. The red rock was used, they placed their hand on it a moment, which was equivalent to swearing their innocence. But they did not have the knife or arrow or bullet. They did not touch it to their lips. My informant thought that added ritual was amusing, and chuckled at it. (I find the ceremonies simpler the farther east I get; they are so very complicated among the Og.lalas. I should call these people Quakers, and the Og.lalas, Roman Catholics, for ritual. ECD) (This was before I got into Waká-wacipi.)

When I was a young lad, and after the Massacre of 1862, we were stationed at Fort Thompson, I recall witnessing a Celibates' Fire. And the Bible had been translated by Zitkána Wašté (Good Bird--Stephen Riggs) some time before, so now they used a Bible instead of the red rock to proclaim their innocence.

"Heyáta iyéwíçayapi çe" eyápi. (They caused them to come away from the center of activities, it is said.) That is, they who knew that the participant was not being honest, had the right to drag him (or her) out of the circle of feasters; and they never lost the chance to do so. It was such a select group, that the entire tribe was always partly jealous that anybody who was no better than they should appear virtuous.

The peace pipe was always offered at ceremonials; but here again the form was far simpler. The pipe was ceremonially presented to the Earth, (Uci, Grandmother, is how the earth was invoked;) And to the above, Até Wakáñaka, Até, Father, Waká, Holy, Ťaka, Great. But it was not presented to the four Winds. And, but rarely, it was presented to the Sun, because it was the most powerful mystery which could be seen and felt.

Wozepi taking out of the ceremony.

Our people did not have any ceremonies for the young girl; no Buffalo Ceremony. We had Heyóka-Wozepi, the feast of the Anti-naturals.

That too is lost; just how it was done is long gone, because white people came to these parts long before they appeared among the western groups. Naturally we must have stopped doing those ceremonies sooner. I know this, though I only saw one such ceremony (and then they said it was not correctly done.), that the participants were in some sort of league with the thunder; and they were pledged by visions, to do everything opposite. They were said to feel differently about things from the rest of the people. They felt hot as cold and cold as hot; they reached into the boiling kettle of meat, and they brought forth the hot meat with their bare hands, and did not feel any burn. They took the hot, boiling soup in their hands, or they thrust sprays of the sage-brush into the hot soup, and sprinkled themselves with it, saying all the while, "I! I!" as men say when they suddenly are deluged with icy-cold water.

Long ago, too, the Huká Ceremony was in vogue; when two or more people wished to adopt each other or to stand in a certain close relationship with each other, so that they could always depend on each other, and enjoy doing things for each other, then underwent that ceremony. Gifts were given away, by them, in each other's name; and the pipe was waved over their heads during the singing.

(Here again, my impression, although the information is very scant, is that the

two who were Huká, owed each other certain things; but among the Tetons, one who underwent the ceremony was expected to be generous and kind to anybody at all; it was a sort of system for raising one's standing; so that in places, (and this came out among the Assiniboine, especially,) such as were Huká were raised to a certain peerage, as it were. And anyone of such a rank must thereby fulfill certain obligations all the time, to whoever was about. The Santee made it a personal thing; the Tetons, a spectacular tribal matter. Perhaps my information is too thin to allow for generalizations; but, that is the idea I get. ECD)

Names

Among our people, when anyone was born, he or she had a name automatically. If a boy his name was Časké. The next boy and the next and so on, each had a common appellation. And the same with the girls. And there were five names allowed for each sex. Usually nobody had more than five children. I do not know what happened when there were more than five girls and five boys. A man should think before he has so many!

Here are the names: Of course these are the general names, so that every first boy in the tribe would be Časké, every fourth girl would be wáske. But a man when he was grown, and had achieved something in the chase or a vision perhaps, but principally in war, took another name, a personal, a serious name. Sometimes the name was that of some relative now dead, a father or grandfather or uncle whose character and achievements and generosity were admirable.

<u>Boy</u>	<u>Girl</u>
1. <u>Časké</u>	1. <u>Winúna</u>
2. <u>Hepá</u>	2. <u>Hápa</u>
3. <u>Hepí</u>	3. <u>Hapstí</u>
4. <u>Čatáha</u>	4. <u>Wáske</u>
5. <u>Haké</u>	5. <u>Wiháke</u>

Wild Rice Gathering

Our people have been rice gatherers for generations. Yet rice cannot be got just anywhere. There is a place near Šákpe (Six; spelled Shakopee on the map,) where the people gathered rice for generations. And there was also a place near St. Paul. Now-a-days we are situated here in places where rice does not grow in enough amount to make rice-gathering profitable; and besides, it is cheaper now to buy the store rice.

Rice grows only in water; around the lakes. And the rice areas were owned communally, and when it was rice-gathering time, then each family or group who cared

to do so, went out to gather rice.

There were no restrictions on rice-gathering, because there was always plenty, and stayed where it was until it was gathered, whereas, herds of deer kept wandering away. There was strict ruling in regard to hunting of deer and buffalo, and naturally in those cases, police were appointed to see that no individual rushed ahead to procure for himself alone at the expense of the tribe; for the common good was paramount. I will dwell on that later.

Rice gatherers usually went out by families; or by one or two couples who were congenial; usually it was two brothers or cousins and their wives, or two sisters or cousins with their husbands, in no case did a son go with his mother-in-law, or a daughter with her father-in-law. And brothers did not go with sisters or sisters with their brothers, unless their spouses also went along. The rules of propriety and respect obtained here as strictly as elsewhere. Why should they be broken ever? It was not necessary, and was in bad taste.

They went in boats. They camped near the rice-fields, and there they left the children with the older people to take care of them, and to cook the meals. Sometimes several families camped together in this way as a sort of home base, and then went out from there to their several directions.

They went in boats. The men propelled the boat which was not easy, for the growth of rice and the frequently shallow water impeded the speed of the boat, and often they would find themselves grounded for a time. And the pathway of the boat was never in a straight, direct line, because the boat had to be steered along wherever there was a slight opening in the rice stalks.

Long poles forked at one end were used to push the boat along, and the men who steered the boat stood up to steer.

The women gathered the rice. The bottom of the boat was left quite clear and open. And each woman was equipped with two stout sticks, one in each hand. They were about this long. (Perhaps 2 feet or a trifle longer.)

As the boat moved slowly, each woman reached out with one stick and brought a sheaf of the tall rice, and held it bent into the boat; and with the other stick she threshed it quickly, so that the kernels fell into the bottom of the boat. This she did in passing; and the next time she reached out with the stick in her other hand, and brought down some rice from the other side, and used her first stick this time to beat with. Thus she alternated from side to side, each hand doing first one thing and then another, until the load of rice was sufficient.

As there would be at least two women in the boat doing this while the men propelled the boat along, it would not be too long before they would be through. Sometimes if the rice was very plentiful, the boat could be well filled and the gatherers could start homeward in good time.

Sometimes they rested; and they ate in the boat; and thus they worked, for

several days until they had a very good supply for themselves and for their old parents who are taking care of the children for them.

After they were satisfied with the quantity gathered, they might go home; or remain in camp there for some time, hunting ducks or other game also.

Then when they wished, although this need not take place immediately, they built a great fire, and there they heated the rice in large containers, so that the chaff the kernels parched a bit or at least dried so that it stood away from the rice its

When all the parching was done, then the men dug a large hole, this big or bigger (he spread out his arms in a circle perhaps 2 1/2 or 3 feet in diameter.) and the hole was carefully lined with some sort of skin, to form a kind of pocket or container. (Like the lower crust of a deep-dish pie.)

Into this container the rice was placed. It was now quite dry, and the chaff was loose around each grain.

Then a strong, vigorous young man who was well and clean, was selected to tread the rice. He was given a new pair of moccasins for his feet--moccasins which had not been worn before--and first he bathed in the river to insure his cleanliness.

He put on the new moccasins, and then he was supplied with a strong staff to lean on. He stepped onto the hole filled to the top with rice, and he danced on that all day.

The rice was under his feet and each time he jumped or took a step, some of the grains would be loosened entirely away from the chaff. The loose grains moved all day so that when he was through with treading, it was very likely that the rice was now rid of all the chaff.

Now there might be a lapse of some days, or perhaps if they wished, then the gatherers winnowed the grain, by taking it in a large container and letting it fall in a small steady stream, where the breeze was blowing through it.

After doing this carefully all day, they were satisfied the rice was now clear and ready to be stored. It was poured into bags, and stored away for the winter at the rice gathering was over for that year.

There were other wild foods that our people used; now that it is cheaper to get food from the store, and since it is difficult for us to get about gathering wild foods, we gradually drop the use of them.

We still get Tánápa. It grows by ponds, in special places. And there is also what are known as Psićica, (Psi, rice; ćicá, child of.) These are called Muskrat potatoes, by the white people.

The Tánápa is like an onion; and it grows in the muddy water. We bring it up and cook it as it is, with the skin on.

After it is cooked soft, the skin peels off easily, and then we take the inside and cut it into smaller pieces to dry. Then we dry the small pieces as the western tribes dry the sliced wild turnip, and then we fill sacks with it and put it away for winter use. It is excellent in soup with other food, meat etc.

Santee Dakota Marriage Customs

(Susan Wind-eagle)

I want to tell you first about the old Santee marriage customs. In those days, it was very hard to be a young girl; it was not easy. With you, living the free life you do, wherein you can drive a car and come and go as you please, what I am about to tell you will not be agreeable.

In those days, because the young women did not know any other way, it seemed tolerable to them to accept this custom.

I want you to know that not every girl abided by these customs, there were, as now, bad girls who did not observe the good ways of the people, but preferred to live just as they liked; breaking all the rules, and sleeping with different young men, and caring nothing about being honorable wives and taking husbands in the ancient and accepted way. But of those I do not speak.

Suppose now that a young man is ready for marriage, in the old life. He has achieved war honors, and has acquired property enough to maintain a home and family. Then he, through his fathers and uncles, offers one very beautiful horse and other handsome gifts, to the relatives, the parents of the girl of his choice.

According to the best manner no doubt, this boy has not even talked with this girl. She has been so well protected that no young man has so much as spoken to her. The boy who wants her for his wife is pleased with this fact; he would rather himself be deprived of speaking with her previously since that insures all the more that she is a well-chaperoned and protected girl, to whom no man has even dared to speak.

The gifts for the girl are now brought to her home, the goods piled upon the horse, and the horse is led by some messenger who has been paid a fee to take them there. He ties the horse with its load of finery to the hitching post outside the door. Then he goes home without a word.

This is the outward act; of course there have been communications through messengers in private between the two families so that it is no surprise to the girl's people when this happens. The girl, they are reasonably sure, is willing to submit to the arrangement. Of course, after the transaction, when she faces the marriage bed, she may revolt; but that she does not yet know herself. The thing to do now is to be maidenly and daughterly, and defer to her parents' better judgement as to her future. It is said to be better judgement because they are older and have had more experience, and are presumed to know best for their child.

Usually if the family are not pleased with the match, it does not advance this far; to the extent of sending presents. So when the horse and its load of fine things,

is tied to the post outside the door, the parents of the girl are ready to reciprocate in kind. They must do as all Dakota gift-giving requires, give something of great value than the gift received.

So they take two handsome horses, and place handsome gifts on their backs, and send them to the bridegroom's tipi, for his own. That means they accept the terms and that they are giving the son-in-law a gift in return. Of course many of the things are eventually for the girl's own household; but generally the horses are given to the young man to do with as he will.

These gifts are taken by the messenger of the girl's parents. And if until now the transactions were kept secret, there is no longer any doubt about matters; the entire tribe is aware of what is to take place, and everyone is highly interested.

And now the entire camp divides into two sections for the culmination of the wedding. On a stated day, the girl is dressed perfectly beautifully. And then the most closely related to her, and others in the tribe who wish, form a group against the groom's relations and the others who wish to be on that side.

The two sides approach each other; the boy in the centre of the approaching line, on his side; the girl on hers.

And then stop short when someone who is directing the ceremony, gives a signal. They all stand ready, facing each other, perhaps as far off as that tree. (I should call the distance a short city block, ECD)

And then when the director gives a shout, all who care to do so, run from the boy's group, as hard as they can, to get the girl. And here something very undignified and laughable takes place, but it is regarded as an honor.

Usually it is men who run, because they are swiftest; but occasionally women will run too.

The aim is to reach the bride first; who reaches her first takes her on his back, like a baby, and rushes back with her towards the groom's section. And who comes up second takes hold of one leg and supports it; and the third takes the other leg; so that as the girl is borne along, she is in a very ridiculous position. Yet nobody laughed; they thought it very honorable to be brought and then rushed in that way, and carried to the husband's tent by the swiftest runners of the tribe.

A girl so married was married in the most respected fashion; and if, as it was likely, she was a virtuous girl, then her fate was secure; for above all things, a Dakota man wants a chaste wife, and mother for his children.

But there were times when the girl, on meeting her husband at night, revolved against marriage and then she ran away. She was then said to pidásni; and it was unfortunate, but nobody blamed the girl. And the property settlement usually remained as it was; unless the man wished to return it. That was a matter of individual preference.

Of course this method of marriage has been abandoned for countless years; I only tell you what used to happen very long ago.

(This rushing for the maiden, and carrying her on the back holding her legs, etc., I do not find anywhere else in Dakota, at least not so far. Another difference is that the parents seem to be the main arbiters of a marriage here, whereas in the other Dakota bands it is usually the brothers and male cousins of the girl who receive the presents. And also among the Dakota of the west, not until the girl goes to be married, riding the horse, and being escorted by an aunt or other relative leading the horse, is a second horse led along, bearing the gifts, like highly decorated apparel, or a fine weapon or quiver or some such thing, for the groom. ECD)

The Monster Child

(I asked for some myths; or legends; and my informant who was an old woman of 81 said she had not thought of any for so long that she could not think of one consecutively; and she called to her daughter, a woman of perhaps fifty.

"Mary," she said, "can you recall any Hiúkaka?" And Mary said, Mdokétu-heyapi ecá zuzúhecana ahí keyápi yé!" (Summer time/ they say that, i.e., tell myths/ then/snakes/ they come/ it is said!)¹

Never-the-less, she told the following:

Once it is said there was a young woman who was pregnant. And in due time she had a child. And she was very happy with the baby, but after a time the most disturbing thing began to happen.

Whenever she was alone, or whenever she was asleep, and suddenly wakened, she heard the distant din as of a great encampment; people shouting and laughing, talking and howling and singing; she heard dogs barking and horses neighing, she heard dancing and in short, she heard all the usual noises that go with a tribal camp.

She grew more and more puzzled with this experience, until finally she was even afraid to go to bed. And it turned out that all these sounds came from the baby which she had given birth to; and she was very sad. She loved her baby, and when the chiefs decided that it was not really a child but a giant, which had come to invade the tribe, and that it must be abandoned for the sake of the people, she cried many days.

But when the tribe was on the march, they secretly lured the mother away from her child where she laid it down; and then they left the babe sleeping under a tree, and went away, and crossed the river to the other side. And that evening there was loud shouting and when they looked, a great man, far bigger than any of them was walking to and fro on the other bank gesticulating and appearing to be very angry.

Many of the people fainted from fright; but when the giant started to swim over to them, to take revenge for having been abandoned, they stood ready for him; and all the warriors had their bows and arrows in readiness, and some had war-clubs, and spears and every known contrivance for killing, and as he neared the shore they began to fire at him.

They riddled his body with countless arrows; and they hurled spears and clubs at him until unable to combat it any longer, he sank down into the water and disappeared.

Then down the stream there appeared a great churning of the water as the body floated down; and from the bubbles that came up there came also red blood in profusion; and then, there rose to the surface all manner of trinkets and things which women like to own; there were mirrors and even gold watches, and small shell disks and all sorts of round things, anything that was made in a round flat form these all came to the surface.

The women on the shore longed for some of the trinkets and would have swum after them but the wise men strongly forbade it.

"The giant was bad for the tribe; he came here to destroy it, by taking the form of a babe; now is it likely that anything that comes from its body would be good for you? Let nobody touch one thing that comes forth!" So they let all the treasures come to the surface and then go down again, and nobody touch them at all. And the poor woman whose baby it had been, after seeing the horrid giant into which it had become, was torn between fear of the giant, and yet love for the baby that had given birth to. And that is all to this tale; at least it is all I can recall of it.

The Abandoned Children

Once upon a time, there was a man and his wife who dwelled alone together in a tipi by the lake. And in time they had a little boy; and after a while, they had a girl. The four lived happily until one day the father went off on a journey.

Many many days went by, and he did not return; and each day the children said "Mother, where is our father?" And the mother answered, "Be patient children, your father will soon be coming home."

But as time went by, she herself knew that the man would never return; what befell him she did not know; but she knew he was lost for all time.

So the three of them continued to live on by themselves and to manage the best they could.

After a time, a man came to their tipi; a handsome man who hunted for them, and provided them with plenty of food.

But then he began to desire the woman; and he sent the children into the woods saying, "I left some ducks by the willow tree; bring them here." So they went out together.

Not finding the willow tree, they wandered through the woods, and lost their way. After many hours, tired and hungry, they stumbled back to their home, and

found it deserted; the man had induced their mother to run away with him.

On the way to his tribal camp, they had to cross a stream, and there their mother washed herself; washing away the top layer of herself, and emerging a handsome woman, clean and in all ways desirable.

The mud which she had washed away from her body colored the water, and at last formed a deposit on the edge of the stream.

The children rested, and ate food; and waited their mother's return; but when after many days she failed to come, they joined hands to keep together, and went out to look for her.

And then they came to the stream, and as they crossed it, the boy said, "Little sister, this soil is body-soil from our mother. We shall take it along." (Wahášapa, skin dirt, ECD)

So they took handfuls of it, and continued until they came to a tribal encampment; and on the edge of it there lived a kind old woman.

"Come, come, grandchildren, come into my lodge where you are welcome. I know all about you, that you have been abandoned by your mother. And now she is here, rejuvenated, and married to the king's son. She lives in that large white lodge under. But you remain here with me."

After the children had eaten and rested, the boy said, "Come now, sister, let us find our mother." So they went to the home of the king's son, and there they found her sitting, like a young bride.

And when the children saw her, they hurled the mud of her body back on her, and blackened her with it. And the king's son was enraged, saying that the children had insulted his home, invading it and throwing mud upon his wife.

All the people were angry with the children, and the cry went about, "There are the children who have desecrated the home of the king's son! Abandon them, abandon them."

So the men came and took the children and tied them to a tree where they could not get loose. And all the people broke camp and scolding them and poking at them with sticks.

The old grandmother who had befriended them came last of all. She was humming a little song as she advanced, saying,

"Takoža, maké ci

Ķúya, Ķúya!"

(Grandchildren, where I sat,

Down below; down below!)

And the men said crossly to her, "Old thing, what is it you are singing? And she said, "Nothing; I am always humming to myself!"

And when she stumbled towards the children with her cane in hand, they said to her, "Never you mind; you too do not need to deride them; everyone has done so; you get along!" And she said, "O, but they have desecrated the home of the king's son. I too want to take a poke at them!" So they let her go.

But she had previously sharpened an arrow-head to a keen edge, and attached it to her staff; and as she went close to the children, she quickly snapped apart the thongs which bound them pretending all the while to strike them. And while she did this she sang her song:

Ṭakoṣa, maḳé ci,

Kúya, kúya!

That was all she could say; if she attempted to tell them anything, the men who were watching would suspect her of helping them.

When the tribe moved away, the two children stepped easily away from the tree for the thongs which held them were broken. And they hurried to the tipi of their old friend the grandmother.

They understood her song; she meant that below her home, i.e., where she habitually sat, there they would find something that would help them.

And surely, there at the base of a tree below her lodge they found an earthen kettle, a knife, and some tinder; and some dried meat and other foods; rice and the like.

They ate the food; and used the weapons they found, and got more food; and young as they were, they were supernaturally aided so that they were soon very well off, and had a superabundance of food.

And about that time, the tribe which had tried to do away with them had struck unfortunate times, and a famine raged in that section.

Now the people were sick, and many were dying, and about that time, the boy met a crow; and the crow told him what was happening. So he placed a fine piece of meat in the crow's mouth, and asked him to go to that tribe, and fly about until he found the largest and whitest tipi of all; then he must light upon it, and when the woman of the tipi was sitting in her woman's place, he must drop the meat in front of her, from the smoke vent overhead.

The crow flew away; and followed all the instructions. And when suddenly, amid the famine, a large piece of fresh meat fell in the woman's lap, neither she nor her husband knew what to make of it. The wise ones of the tribe they notified and although everyone wondered about the source of the meat, nobody could say where it was from.

A few days later, the boy met a snake; and again he used the snake for a messenger. He placed a fine piece of fat in the snake's mouth, and asked him to travel until he came to the largest tipi in the tribe which had abandoned him and his sister, and there to leave the fat in the lap of the woman.

The snake did as he was bidden, and, poor thing, (šika) it was difficult for him to crawl, and yet hold the fat in his mouth, and still to hold his head erect enough to ascertain the biggest tipi in the camp; but he managed to do just that.

He partly crawled in, under the base of the tipi, and crept around the woman and left the fat in her lap where she sat suffering from hunger, a pitiful sight. And when she looked down in her lap and saw a fine piece of fat lying in it, she could not tell whence it came.

Again the wise ones were notified; but nobody could say. Until they brought Uktómi in; he was staying there at the time, so they said, "Uktómi, you shall do our divining for us. Whence is this meat and this fat?"

And Ukto said with great disgust, "Do you think it is the least bit hard to divine this? Why, it is so simple, it makes me laugh. Who else is sending this, but the two children you abandoned? They are well-off while you are starving, and they want you to know it."

The people said, "That is true. Let us turn about and go back to our children." And they moved at once.

But the crow which had been spying, when he saw their move, flew back at once to the children, saying, "The entire tribe is coming this way." And the children began to get ready for them. The girl took all the liver they had on hand, and roasted it and then pounded it as one might make pemmican.

She then took some choice meat which was dried, and this she parched and pounded, and mixed with it a large cake of marrow and bone oil.

And now she was ready, as the company began marching back toward their camp; and as they went slowly by, she stood searching for her mother; and when her mother came in sight and called, "Micúkši, micúkši!" (My daughter, my daughter!) the girl said, "And this from your daughter that you abandoned to die!" and threw a bag of food to her. It was the pemmican made of liver.

The mother who was practically starving, fell upon it eagerly, and filled her mouth with it and began to chew; and as she chewed she pulverized the dry liver more and more until her breathing was stopped up by it, and all with whom she shared the food also. The king's son also died, and the children at last had their revenge on the two who had harmed them most.

Then they went on down the line, and there at the farthest end came the poor little grandmother, now so feeble and bent with years and hunger, that she seemed to crawl instead of walk.

And the boy stopped her. "Grandmother, grandmother!" we want you to come home to us! I have come for you," he said, and wept and stroked her small white head.

When they reached the home which had been hers, it was the one she left for the children when the tribe moved away, they said to her, "We have saved the best of food for you." So she ate the choice pemmican and the rich marrow oil, and was revived.

The tribe, what was left, came to the old camp ground, and there they found the two children rich beyond all dream. They had racks and racks of drying meat; and had caches full of store; and the people marvelled that two children could fend for themselves like men.

When the camps were all erected; then the boy came home and said, "Sister, come; I will invite them all to a feast."

She did so; and when the crier called them to eat, not a single one remained home, they came in great numbers and sat upon the grass in a great circle outside the door. Food was distributed to them there and everyone ate his fill, with out rest and they sang the praises of the boy and his sister who had thus saved them.

"Whoever practises the Dakota law of hospitality merits praise!" they proclaimed and they lauded them to the skies.

Alas, if only it had been so. But the boy had resentment in his heart and what can blame him? He had in some mysterious way included death-medicine to the soup which the people were even then drinking. And in a little while after the feast, some became sick on their way home, some in their tipis, and some right there at the feast.

There was nothing to do for them; no remedy; and since all were sick, nobody had the strength to call the boy to account. They simply lay wherever they fell, and suffered till they were dead.

Before nightfall, the children had had their full revenge, for not one of the tribe which had abandoned them was alive to tell the story.

Only the old woman who had befriended them from the first, lived on, the pet of the children; and the crow who was their spy and the snake who was their messenger remained. And these five lived together, and no further troubles are told of them. That is what I can remember of this tale.

I do not know what the poison was which the boy administered; but they say whatever it was, it caused the stomachs of all who ate it to pop open; and as each popped with a bang the person died at once.

FOOTNOTES

¹A taboo against telling myths and legends in the summer is found in many North American Indian groups. Sometimes the warning is more explicit than that given here, the penalty being that snakes will come and enter the anus of the summer storyteller.

²Uktómi or Spider, is the Dakota trickster, an anti-hero who figures in many myths. He corresponds to the Algonquian, Náhpas or Wisákežak and the Crow "old man coyote".