Omaha Songs - Songs of the Inkugci Society, as given by Fred Merrick

by James Owen Dorsey (1848-1895)

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OMAHA SONGS.

I.

SONGS OF THE I'KUGET SOCIETY, AS GIVEN BY FRED MERRICK.

1. A man sings about the death of another man's sister.

In-da+ku-za+! Ho, my friend!
Ci-ya'n'-ge zi-k'i-a-za-ha' ha-ha'! (Ci'ya'ange, your sister; the rest
Ci-ya'n'-ge zi-k'i-a-za-ha' ha-ha'! may mean, "she has been
Ci-ya'n'-ge zi-k'i-a-za-ha' ha-ha'! separated from you, alas!")

The third line is sung about half an octave lower than the second,
and the last one about half an octave lower than the third. The
final "ha-ha'!" in each line is sung in sixteenth notes.

2. The explanation of this song was not given. Ma'gi, to walk;
gi he, this is the one. "He'" is the feminine oral period, so the
words may be those of a woman. Cude, smoke. The writer gives
as a provisional rendering, "This is the one who walks. Smoke
walks."

Ma'ag'gi ge'e he'!
Cu-de' ma'ag'gi ha-ha'!
Ma'ag'gi ge'e he'!
Ma'ag'gi ge'e he'!
Cu-de' ma'ag'gi ha-ha'!

SONGS OF THE BUFFALO SOCIETY. GIVEN BY FRED MERRICK.

i. Hu'-ne' ma'ag'gi mau'! (If spoken, U'gine ma'ag'gi ama' (?)
Hu'-ne' ma'ag'gi mau'! seeking they walk the pl.
Na'gi ge u-ki'-hi-me-ge'! (Na'gi ge uki'hi amée hâ (?)
Hu'-ne ma'ag'gi-me! run, as an able they are
He'gi
Ha'-i-me' a'bi ge'!
Ha'-i-me' a'bi ge'!

The theme seems to be, "Those who walk seeking them are the
ones (the buffaloes) who are able to run."

2. Song given by Fred Merrick, and said by Ja'gi-na'paj to be
very mysterious, as it is the song which the doctors of this society
sing when they spurt water into a wound, as when the patient has a
fractured bone. Denied by Joseph La Flèche and Two Crows, the
latter being one of the doctors of this society.

1 These I'kuget people are those who shoot translucent stones at the candidates

2 Omaha Sociology, §§ 257, 258.
SONG OF THE HORSE DANCING SOCIETY.¹ GIVEN BY FRED MERRICK.

Du'-a-te' da*-be'!  He sees this collection of footprints.
Du'-a-te' da*-ba-ga'!  See this collection of footprints!
Hi+ +e+ +e+  Hi+ +e+ +e+
Ca'n'-ge si'-ge' da*-ba-ga'!  See the trail of horses!
Du'-a-te' da*-ba-ga'!  See this collection of footprints!
Hi+ +e+ +e+

SONG OF THE GRIZZLY BEAR DANCING SOCIETY.² GIVEN BY FRED MERRICK.

Wi'-na* ma*-tcu' bgi'w e-de,  Though I alone am a grizzly bear,
Ha*-da* be'-gi-ge —  At night a stranger —
Wi'-na* ma*-tcu' bgi'w e-de,  Though I alone am a grizzly bear,
Ha*-da* be'-gi-ge —  At night a stranger —
E'-ga* x'-a-ra'
I'-ga-ge' e-he'!  Do be coming, I say,
Ni-ni* ge'-kê mi* e-ga*,  Since I smoke this tobacco,
Ha'-ni-te' ge' go'!

The following love songs were dictated by Mr. Francis La Flèche, now in the Indian Bureau.

1. The composer of this song deserted a Ponka woman, whom he had courted when he was a youth. He made this song in derision of her. It is sung in two ways: first, as a "song lengthened in singing," and then as a "dancing song."

If it were spoken, it would be thus, two lines representing the reproaches of the woman, and the others the man's reply: —

Wisi'-gâ-da* axa'ge a'gi'he'!  When I think of you, I am weeping as I go!
dahe' kê a'ahel-da* axa'ge a'gi'he'!  When I go along the bluffs, I am weeping as I move!

¹ Omaha Sociology, § 260.
² Omaha Sociology, § 262. "Hanite" is "anita" in the spoken language.
You say that to me, O Niagiwa!  

Fie! as I regard you as my grandmother, I am displeased!

Sung thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Wi'isi'ge' ha-xa'-ge' ha'gi'-he' ge'ee-ge}+! \\
\text{Wi'isi'ge' ha-xa'-ge' ha'gi'-he' ge'ee-ge}+! \\
\text{da-he ke'he ya'-he'-dja' ha-xa'-ge' ha'gi'-he}+! \\
\text{Wi'isi'ge' ha-xa'-ge' ha'gi'-he' ge'ee-ge}+! \\
\text{Hi'gi'-za-ge'ee}+!\text{, Ni'a-gi'wa}+ge, hi'gi'-za-ge'ee}+! \\
\text{Të-nä'! hi-xa'-wi-ge-ga}+!, hi'pi-ma-je}+! ge'ee-ha}+!
\end{align*}
\]

When sung as a dancing song, it is in three verses, which, if spoken, would represent the woman and her lover as engaged in a dialogue, thus:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{She. Wisi'ge-da}+axa'ge a'ta'he}+! & \quad \text{When I think of you, I am weeping as I stand!} \\
\text{Wisi'ge-da}+axa'ge a'ta'he}+! & \quad \text{Only you I do not regard it as of any value.} \\
\text{Wisi'ge-da}+axa'ge a'ta'he}+! & \quad \text{I do not think that you remember me.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{He. A'xa'sie}+\text{t e ebee'ga}+\text{ma'ji hä.} & \quad \text{I do not think that you remember me.} \\
\text{He. Ece' ga'ta ce' hä,} & \quad \text{You are saying it as you stand, O Niagiwa!} \\
\text{Nia'giwa}+! & \quad \text{You are saying it as you stand.} \\
\text{Ece' ga'ta-ce}+hä. & \quad \text{I do not think that you remember me.}
\end{align*}
\]

2. Gahi i'ce'age's song. He represents a woman as singing about himself. As he wished to marry her, he does not mention her name.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Nu-da}+ge'{-i-da}+ya}+! & \quad t'e-a'w-za-ge'ee-ge}+! \\
\text{Nu-da}+ge'{-i-da}+ya}+! & \quad t'e-a'w-za-ge'ee-ge}+! \\
\text{Na'ya one'-ye te-di, Wa'ka-da'-ya we'-ye-ka' ha'ta-he' ge'ee}+! \\
\text{Wa'ka-da'-a' a', e-he ha-ta'-he'ge'ee}+! \\
\text{E' t'e-a'w-za-ge' ga'-ya'-ya hän!}
\end{align*}
\]

1 "Nu-da' ge'{-i-da}+" is sung instead of "Nuda'age'{-i}" and "t'e-a'we'ge'ee, you kill me, indeed, is substituted for "diwit'ee, I, a woman, love you (a man) truly. The future sign is wanting."
The above syllables are equivalent to the following, in the spoken language:

Nuda'\textsuperscript{w} eagei' \textit{g\textsuperscript{I}ji}, t'\textit{eas}\textsuperscript{e} e'\textit{ge} ! When you return from war, you (will) indeed kill me!

Since you went, I have been asking a favor of Wakanda.

Wakan'\textit{da}, e'he a'ta'\textit{he} e'\textit{ge} ! I have been saying, as I stood, O Wakanda!

3. Waga'za's song. He tells of a woman who sings and confesses a mistake which she had made. Had she spoken, she would have said the following:

\begin{quote}
\textit{di'wi'ge} t\textit{e} i'bah\textit{a}bia'\textit{q}i\textit{ge} e'\textit{ge} ! I have indeed caused my love for you to be known!
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Ha'\textit{adi} uga'gea'\textit{a} te\textit{gan}'\textit{di}, Last night, when you hallooed,
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
I\textit{ja'je} wi'\textit{bea}dje e'\textit{ge} ! I actually called your name!
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Ga'\textit{z}i' ebe'i'\textit{te}, ai' \textit{\j}, When they said, Who is that unseen moving one?
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Waga'\textit{za} ame'\textit{e} h\textit{\j}, ehe' h\textit{\j}. "It is Waga'\textit{za} who moves," said I.\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
A'da'\textit{a} i'bah\textit{a}bia'\textit{q}i\textit{ge} h\textit{\j}. Therefore have I caused myself to be known!
\end{quote}

The same, as sung:

\begin{quote}
Da-da'\textsuperscript{w}-na i'ba-ha\textsuperscript{w}-bi-a-xi'ge+ e'ge' !
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Da-da'\textsuperscript{w}-na i'ba-ha\textsuperscript{w}-bi-a-xi'ge+ e'ge' !
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Ha'\textsuperscript{w}-adi hu'\textit{ga}'gea'-\textit{a} ga'\textit{a}',
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
I'\textit{ja'-je} wi'\textit{bea}dje ge'\textit{e}-oe+ !
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Da-da'\textsuperscript{w}-na i'ba-ha\textsuperscript{w}-bi-a-xi'ge+ e'ge' !
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
E'\textit{be}-i'\textit{te}-ge, a'\textit{bi}-da'\textit{a},
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
E-he' mi\textit{n}-ke' ge’-e-ge' !
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Wa-ga'\textsuperscript{w}-a'\textit{ga}'-ma e-he' mi\textit{n}-ke' ge’-e-ge' !
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Da-da'\textsuperscript{w}-na i'ba-ha\textsuperscript{w}-bi-a-xi'ge ga'ya h\textit{\j}' !
\end{quote}

4. Song composed by a man in ridicule of Mi\textsuperscript{a}-ma\textsuperscript{z}i\textsuperscript{a}. All of Mi\textsuperscript{a}-ma\textsuperscript{z}i\textsuperscript{a}'s sisters had married into the man's gens, and she wished to marry him, as she loved him. Whenever she heard this song it made her very angry.

THE SONG, IN THE SPOKEN LANGUAGE.

\begin{quote}
I'e t\textit{e} na'\textsuperscript{w}awape h\textit{\j}.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
"I fear their words?"
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Ta\textsuperscript{w}an'gea'\textit{z} einge' a'\textit{q}ata\textsuperscript{a} ba'\textsuperscript{a}.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}‘Is there no other gens, that
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Wi'\textsuperscript{a}z\textsuperscript{e}nke-na'q\textit{ctci} wacka\textsuperscript{w}onai \textit{\j}.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
You desire (men) just from that one?'
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
I'\textsuperscript{e}n'ge taite' na'\textsuperscript{a}wape h\textit{\j}.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
I fear that they shall say that to me."
\end{quote}
You say that to me, O Mi\textsuperscript{a}-ma\textsuperscript{a}-zi\textsuperscript{a}!  
I fear their words.  
I fear that they might talk about me.

The song, as sung:

1. I\textsuperscript{e} na\textsuperscript{w}.ya-wa\textsuperscript{-}pe\textsuperscript{-}ge'\textsuperscript{-}ge'\textsuperscript{-}e'!  
I\textsuperscript{e} na\textsuperscript{w}.ya-wa\textsuperscript{-}pe\textsuperscript{-}ge'\textsuperscript{-}ge'\textsuperscript{-}e'!  
I\textsuperscript{e} na\textsuperscript{w}.ya-wa\textsuperscript{-}pe\textsuperscript{-}ge'\textsuperscript{-}ge'\textsuperscript{-}e'!  
I\textsuperscript{a} na\textsuperscript{w}.ya-wa\textsuperscript{-}pe ga'ya-ga'ya e-h\textsuperscript{a}!

2. Ta\textsuperscript{w}.wa\textsuperscript{-}ga\textsuperscript{-}ya\textsuperscript{a} ga\textsuperscript{-}ba'da\textsuperscript{a}  
Wi\textsuperscript{a}+ goan-ka' hi\textsuperscript{a} ga\textsuperscript{-}ta\textsuperscript{-}ya e-ge+'!  
Ga'\textsuperscript{e} na\textsuperscript{w}.ya-wa\textsuperscript{-}pe ga'ya-ga'ya e-h\textsuperscript{a}!

3. Hi\textsuperscript{a} ga\textsuperscript{-}ge\textsuperscript{-}ce'\textsuperscript{-}e'\textsuperscript{-}e'  
Mi\textsuperscript{w}.ma\textsuperscript{-}gi\textsuperscript{h}a'!  
Hi\textsuperscript{a} ga\textsuperscript{-}ge\textsuperscript{-}ce'\textsuperscript{-}e'\textsuperscript{-}e'!  
I\textsuperscript{e} na\textsuperscript{w}.ya-wa\textsuperscript{-}pe\textsuperscript{-}ge'\textsuperscript{-}ge'\textsuperscript{-}e'!  
Ga'\textsuperscript{e} na\textsuperscript{w}.ya-wa\textsuperscript{-}pe ga'ya-ga'ya e-h\textsuperscript{a}!

(To be continued.)

\textit{F. Owen Dorsey.}

\section*{OMAHA FOLK-LORE NOTES.}

The Omaha myths account thus for the origin of vegetation: Ictinike (E-sh\textsuperscript{te}nte-kay) created fruits and vegetables, as well as grapes, out of parts of himself. The full account cannot be given, but the original text, with interlinear translation, notes, and free English translation, may be published hereafter by the Bureau of Ethnology. Suffice it to say that there is a reference to the Hindoo Lingam. This Ictinike answers to the Iowa Ictcitike (E-shchin\'-kay), the son of di (the sun-god), Unktomi (the spider?) of the Santee Dakotas, and Ikto, or Iktomi, of the Teton Dakotas. In the Omaha and Ponka myths, Ictinike is the cunning rival of the Rabbit, by whose son he is finally slain. Ictinike is also the Black Man, the Deceiver, who taught the Indians their war customs. After this first creation Ictinike married, and had his own lodge. He said to his wife, "I will go to visit your grandfather, the Beaver." He did not take his wife with him. On arriving at the Beaver's lodge he found that there was nothing for him to eat. The youngest of the Beaver's four sons said that he would be the food for the guest. So the father killed him. When the meal was ready the Beaver warned