

ETHNOASTRONOMY OF THE LAKOTA
(Lakota Stellar Theology and the Tiospaye)

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I gratefully make the following acknowledgements to those who have enabled me to study, understand and share the Lakota star knowledge contained in this essay.

.....To my partners and co-workers in this project: Victor Douville, Sinte Gleska College Lakota Studies Department Chairman and member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe; Stanley Red Bird, Sinte Gleska College Founding Chairman of the Board of Directors, Tribal Councilman, and Elder of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe; Thomas Simms, Sinte Gleska College Lakota Studies Instructor and the artist who provided the fine illustrations for this essay; Albert White Hat, Sinte Gleska College Bilingual Teacher Training Program Director, Lakota Medicine Instructor, and member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe; Florentine Blue Thunder, Artist, Lakota Studies Teacher and member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe; Charlotte A. Black Elk, author, member of the Oglala Tribe and the Oyuhpe Tiospaye; Ben Black Bear, Jr., Vice-president of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, ordained Deacon of the Roman Catholic Church, member of the Black Hills Sioux Nation Treaty Council, and an authority on the Lakota language.

.....To the Lakota people who have for decades hidden the star knowledge in their hearts, but who are now reaching over the walls of prejudice to share it with their brothers and sisters on every continent.

.....And to the Spirits and Powers who have their lives
in and among the stars. They have revealed themselves
and this knowledge to the People in order that all may
live in unity.

PREFACE

- JM-2 Ethnoastronomy is a relatively new discipline. The works of Von Del Chamberlain on Pawnee star knowledge, Thomas Kehoe and Alice Kehoe's study of the medicine wheels, and Dr. John Eddy's measurements and dating of these structures are probably the best known Ethnoastronomy Studies on the Plains. ⁽¹⁾
- JM-3 Some of the approaches of Ethnoastronomy have proved useful to us, because cosmological systems and astronomical knowledge do not stand alone, apart from a culture. Ethnoastronomy because it is interdisciplinary, often reveals the relationship between stellar knowledge and the art, ceremonies, attitudes toward the Earth, social organizations, etc., of a people. Such is the case in our study.

The materials in this essay on Lakota Constellations and the annual journey through the Black Hills related to the stars were presented at The First International Ethnoastronomy Conference, held by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., September, 1983. As can be seen in Appendices I and III, the stellar positions and the dating of the Lakota Constellations have already been verified by several astronomers and ethnoastronomers.

All the knowledge in this essay comes from Lakota Elders. The bedrock data was found in Father Eugene Buechel's Ethnographic Notes (unpublished) which contains

drawings
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of the Lakota Constellations, and in his Lakota-English Dictionary which defines many important astronomical terms. But, of course, all of Father Buechel's information also originated with the Elders.

Our ultimate purpose in gathering this knowledge is to create curriculum materials for Lakota students at the elementary, secondary and college levels. Our goal is to give the stars back to the people, most especially, Lakota young people. Nevertheless, there is a willingness to share this knowledge with non-Indians, so that they (through learning how the Lakota experience the Earth's sacredness) will be inspired to seek out or recover their own traditional ways of knowing the Earth - not as dead matter spinning in empty space - but rather as our very mother, a living and a holy being.

December, 1984

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- (1) Chamberlain, Von Del; When Stars Come Down to Earth; Bellena Press, 1982.
Kehoe, Thomas F. and Kehoe, Alice B.; "Stones, Solstices and Sun Dance Structures"; Plains Anthropologist, May, 1977.
Eddy, John A.; "Probing the Mystery of the Medicine Wheels"; National Geographic Magazine; January, 1977.

INTRODUCTION

Our study of Lakota Constellations and related matters has helped us to better appreciate that the need which the Lakota felt to move freely on the plains was primarily a religious need. This is implicit in Red Cloud's last speech to the people in 1903:

"We told them (government officials) that the supernatural powers, Taku Wakan, had given to the Lakota, the buffalo for food and clothing. We told them that where the buffalo ranged, that was our country. We told them that the country of the buffalo was the country of the Lakota. We told them that the buffalo must have their country and the Lakota must have the buffalo."

The repeated use of the word "must" in his speech is the sign that what Red Cloud is referring to is religious duty and not merely economic necessity or political control. He is referring to the need for religious freedom.

There is much he did not tell the government officials. Perhaps because he already knew they would scoff, he did not tell them that among all the animals, the buffalo is the embodiment of the power of the sun, that in following the buffalo the Lakota were following the sun on earth, that following the sun and the buffalo was part of being on the Red Road. ⁽¹⁾

(1) Joseph Epes Brown writes: "The Red Road is that which runs north and south and is the good or straight way for the Sioux. The north is purity and the south is the Source of Life." [The "Red Road" is thus similar to the Christian "straight and narrow way;" it is the vertical of the cross or the ec-cirata el mustaquim of the Islamic tradition. The Sacred Pipe, page 7.]

The Lakota were not "roaming around" on the plains. I do not intend to minimize the significance of the hunt as a means of obtaining food, but I want rather to add some other values to ~~the~~^{its} importance. Thus although it's true that hunting the buffalo required sending scouts to locate them, still from the religious point of view, it would, I think, be more accurate to say that the Lakota people were "led" by the buffalo.

M-4 At least during the 3 month period from Spring Equinox to Summer Solstice, the path of the people from their winter camps to the mid-summer Sun Dance site has more the character of a pilgrimage from one sacred site to another than the meandering of a people governed by erratic weather, a tough terrain and the unpredictable drift of animals in search of grass.

Sun, stars, mountains and the buffalo were quilled together in the stellar theology of the Lakota people.

It was by means of their stellar theology that the people knew they were to be at specific places when the Sun entered the Lakota Constellations correlated with those places. The connection between earth forms and star groups is established by stories from the oral tradition. (1) It is in this sense that they were led by the

(1) See LaPointe, Legends of the Lakota. Also testimony from the Elders. Names for and drawings of the Lakota Constellations discussed in this paper are found in Father Eugene Buechel's (unpublished) Ethnographic Notes.

Sun. They were led as well by solar forces in the buffalo. They were lead by reliving - again through sacred stories - the life of Fallen Star as it had occured, for example, at Harney Peak and Devil's Tower. Finally, they were led by the stars who are the Woniya (the holy ~~ancestors~~^{breath}) of Wakan Tanka. The stars were breathing power into their "relatives," the Lakota People.

What follows is a four fold explanation:

- First, the Lakota constellations and the sacred stories associated with them.
 - Second, how the various stages of the Spring journey through the Black Hills were synchronized to the movement of the Sun through the Lakota constellations.
- Third, a brief explanation of the spiritual powers called Tob Tob Kin which are given to the people during the Spring pilgrimage.
- Fourth, the Lakota kinship system, Tiospaye, and its relation to Tob Tob Kin and stellar power.

II. LAKOTA CONSTELLATIONS

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CONSTELLATIONS

I begin my ~~exposition~~ ^{exposition} about Lakota Constellations with a few stories from Lakota sacred oral tradition essential to this brief presentation. The central figure is a ~~PERSONAGE~~ ^{PERSONAGE} named "Fallen Star" Wicañpi hiñhpayá. Contemporary Sioux use contemporary terms in describing him. The Left Heron family calls him "a Messiah." Black Elk named him "Saviour" and "Holy One."

However, before I begin to tell any Fallen Star stories, I need to say that the stories of the Lakota oral tradition are sacred - not literature, not "myth", not folklore. Therefore, they must, like other scriptures, be understood on four levels of consciousness. These levels correspond, the Lakota say, to our physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual natures, and these are related to the unfolding of the four stages of life: childhood, youth, adult, and old age. The first three levels of understanding can come eventually to any earnest seeker, as he or she grows and matures. But the spirits alone can give us the last and highest comprehension. ⁽¹⁾ All four levels are true and those four truths are one truth. The medicine men say that how deeply each of us understands the stories tells us about the

(1) Similar levels when reading Jewish and Christian scriptures have traditionally been called: (1) literal, (2) allegorical, (3) moral/philosophical and (4) anagogical.

level we have attained. So one may be intellectually mature and yet be spiritually infantile. Now, the stories.

Long, long ago, two Lakota maidens were out one night looking at the stars. One young woman said, "See that big beautiful star. I wish I could marry it." The other woman said the same about another star. Suddenly, they are transported into the star world, and there these two stars become their husbands. The wives become pregnant. They are told this star world is theirs, but also warned not to dig any wild turnips.

Eventually one of them does, and as she pulls out the turnip, a hole opens in the star world. She is able to look down and see the earth, and even her own village. *She becomes homesick & decides to return to earth.* She braids more and more turnips to make a rope and lets herself down through the hole. But the braid doesn't reach the earth and she falls. The crash kills her, but her baby is born. The baby is raised by a meadowlark. Since meadowlarks speak Lakota, the baby, now named "Fallen Star," grows up speaking it too.

Fallen Star matures rapidly--in days rather than years. He is taller than normal and a light emanates from him. The meadowlark grows old and takes him to a Lakota band where he settles for awhile.

Fallen Star, the protector, the bringer of light and higher consciousness, travels from one Lakota band to another, and everywhere he is recognized, expected, and revered.

At one point, a band is camped near Harney Peak in the Black Hills. Everyday a "red eagle" swoops down and steals a girl-child, carries her to the mountain top and kills her. The men try to shoot the "red eagle," but fail. They pray for Fallen Star and after seven days (and after seven girls have been killed) he arrives. He shoots the eagle; and places the spirits of the seven girls in the sky as a constellation--Pleiades--in Lakota, wiciŋcala śākowiŋ--seven little girls.

At another time while a band is camped near the site of Devil's Tower, a brother and sister are chased by some bears. A voice directs them to a knoll. The bears, however, surround the children and close in. Fallen Star (as a voice of power) commands the earth to rise up out of reach of the bears, who claw at the hill as it lifts. The clawed hill becomes Devil's Tower. Later a bird carries the children to safety, back on earth.

There are many Fallen Star stories, but for our purposes this will suffice.

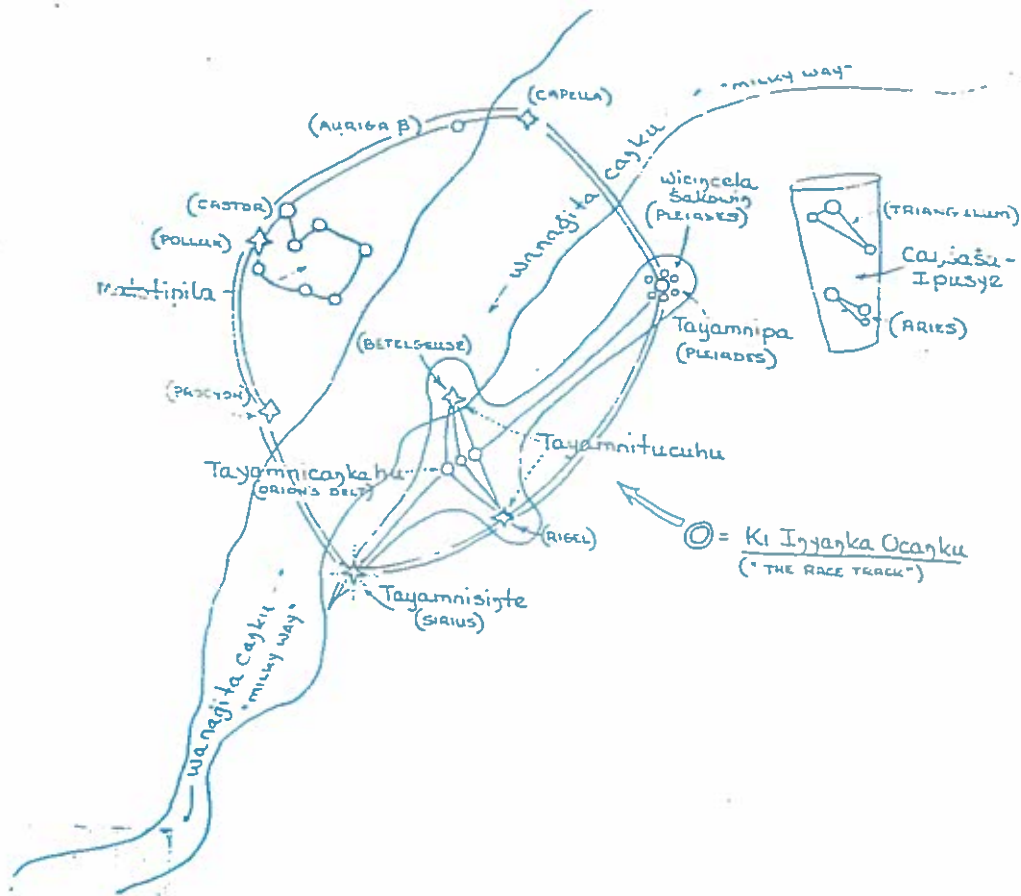
Now we are ready to look at some of the Lakota constellations. ⁽¹⁾

(1) Names and exact stellar positions of the Lakota constellations can be found in Appendix I.



Positions of Lakota Constellations on the ecliptic.

Here are the same constellations with their Lakota names added, and as a reference point the Greek nomenclature is also provided.



Some Lakota constellations on the ecliptic (from west to east):

- 1) ČaŃšaša Ipusye--Dried Willow;
- 2) Wičinčāla ŠākowiŃ--Seven Little Girls;
- 3) Ťayamni (the group)--An Animal;
- 4) Ki IŃyaŃka OčaŃku--The Race Track;
- 5) Maŭo TipiŁa--The Bear's Lodge.

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We know that many of the Lakota bands wintered in Western South Dakota and Nebraska. We know that one of the main ritual tasks of Winter (to be completed before the coming of the first thunders the following Spring) was the gathering of red willow (čansāša). The inner bark of this ^{tree} ~~tree~~ (red dogwood, *CORVUS STOLONIFERA*) ~~COCCLEA STOLONIFERA~~ is the principal ingredient in the smoking mixture used while praying with the sacred pipe.

So "Dried Willow" is the end of Winter/beginning of Spring constellation. The constellation looks like a branch with the bark stripped off. When the Sun enters it, their conjunction announces that the people are (or should be) ready to follow the teachings of the sacred pipe for another year.

Čansāša ipusye, as we have already explained, means "dried willow." However, this same phrase was also an esoteric shamanic expression for the wooden spoon used ^{RITUALLY} ~~ritually~~ to carry a live coal from the fireplace to light the contents of the pipe during the ~~pipe~~ smoking of the sacred pipe. With this meaning intended, the Big Dipper was sometimes called Čansāš Iṗsuye.

If the Big Dipper is a ritual spoon, then a celestial pipe ceremony is implied. What is the live coal? What is the pipe?

The live coal is the sun, and the pipe is the zodiacal constellation Čansāš Iṗsuye, wherein this phrase means--as it normally does--"dried willow." This needs some clarification.

Since dried willow is the principal ingredient in the smoking mixture, then, by a figure of speech (called in Greek, synecdoche) where the part represents or stands for the whole, the dried willow here stands for the whole pipe. Further, as this constellation is in Triangulum, and Aries, and for other reasons already discussed was recognized as an end of winter/beginning of spring constellation, we can also supply the time when the celestial pipe ceremony was performed.

On the morning of the vernal equinox the Big Dipper was used by the Wakan ^{Waste} ~~God~~ ("the sacred above powers of good") to carry the live coal of the sun to the pipe in the dried willow constellation in Triangulum and Aries.

What is the significance of this? Why was this celestial pipe ceremony being performed?

It was a cosmic ritual to rekindle the sacred fire of life on earth. The Big Dipper (from the immutable, unchanging circumpolar realms) was used by the higher powers to carry the live coal of the sun to the pipe constellation on the zodiac (the mutable, temporal domain) at dawn on the vernal equinox.

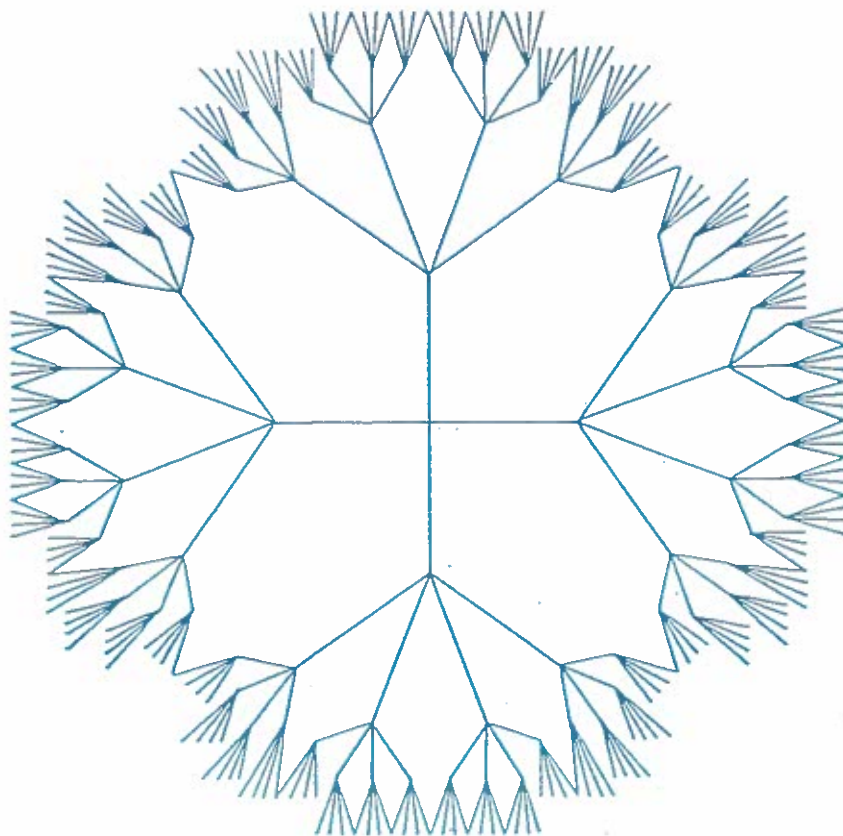
The higher powers, using stars and the sun, performed a celestial pipe ceremony to regenerate the earth. And we note that this cosmic ritual was paralleled by the tribes, still in their winter camps, performing the same ceremony at the same crucial time, participating thereby in the renewal of temporality, in the ^{Regeneration} ~~renewal~~ of a new and living earth.

The buffalo are now migrating north as the grasses green up and the people follow them for the spring hunt into the Black Hills. They camp at Harney Peak (Hinghan Kaka Paha--Owl Rattling Hill") when the sun enters the corresponding constellation--Pleiades. At night the Elders point to the constellation and tell the Fallen Star story about Harney Peak and how Fallen Star placed the girl's spirits in the sky. During the day the story is repeated as the peak itself is experienced as a shrine, while ceremonies (to be discussed later) were performed there.

When the sun neared the center of the great circle of stars, the people moved to the center of the Black Hills, to Pé Sla ("a bare hill"); the chokata ("center") of the Hills. (1) The Elders now tell the story of the Big Race. It describes how the circumference of the Hills was a race track (Ki Inyanku Ocanku) where the four-leggeds and the two-leggeds raced. ~~Indeed,~~ ~~indeed,~~ the race track was formed during the contest, and the Black Hills (while they already existed and contained "everything that is") were lifted higher by the tumult of the racing animals. (2)

(1) ^{SLA is} Pé Sla ~~is~~ listed on current maps ~~as~~ AS Reynolds Prairie.

(2) The traditional story of the Big Race can be found in Appendix II.



The Lakota creation story expounded through number is best understood as a theogony. That is, the creation of the universe is presented theologically - through the use of these numbers - as the unfolding of the nature of Wakan Tanka, the One.

Therefore, the 16 are 16, but they are also one. Each 4 is 4, but 4 is also 1 and 16. Thus when it is said in this essay that "powers" came down at certain sacred sites on the plains, the esoteric meaning is that 4 powers which are 16 powers which are really 1 came down.

To the diagram previously given, we can now add the descent of the 16 powers:

in the Sun ' the Lakota is cellation	The people will be at	Time and Ceremony	To receive the tob tob Kin as (the power which come down to earth at the ap pointed times in the ap pointed places.)
1 Sa Sa sye dried Willow")	Winter Camps (in Nebraska & <i>Western South Dakota</i>)	Spring Equinox (pipe ceremony)	<i>tob tob kin</i>
incala Sakowin even little rls)	^{KAKA} Hinhan despoo Paha (Harney Peak)	^{Back} welcoming the Thursday yate <i>in Kicipi</i>	<i>tob tob kin</i>
n Gleska Wakan he Sacred Hoop) Tayamini	Pe Sla (center of Black Hills)	^{Back} welcoming all life forms <i>okisletaya</i> <i>wonahiwala</i>	<i>tob tob kin</i>
to Tipila The Bear's dge")	Mato Tipila Paha (Devil's Tower)	Summer Solstice (Sun Dance)	<i>tob tob kin</i>

During the first three months of each year beginning at Spring Equinox, there is a vertical downpouring of the 16 powers to the people and into all creation. Then for the rest of the year there is a horizontal circulation of this infused power within the precise energy patterns of the Tiospaye. We shall turn now to a consideration of the nature and inner function of the Lakota Kinship System.

V. TIOSPAYE

I begin by quoting from Ella Deloria's book,

Speaking of Indians;

"All peoples who live communally must first find some way to get along together harmoniously and with a measure of decency and order.... Dakota people of the past found a way; it was through kinship... Kinship was the all-important matter. Its demands and dictates for all phases of social life were relentless and exact... By Kinship all Dakota people were held together in a great relationship that was theoretically all-inclusive... I can safely say that the ultimate aim of Dakota life, stripped of accessories, was quite simple: One must obey kinship rules; one must be a good relative. No Dakota who has participated in that life will dispute that. In the last analysis every other consideration was secondary - property, personal ambition, glory, good times, life itself. Without that aim and the constant struggle to attain it, the people would no longer be Dakota in truth. They would no longer even be human. To be a good Dakota, then, was to be humanized, civilized. And to be civilized was to keep the rules imposed by kinship for achieving civility, good manners, and a sense of responsibility toward each individual dealt with."

The task of Tiospaye is to embody the 16 attributes, to bring infinity into a finite organism, namely, the Lakota Kinship System. The governing principle in Tiospaye is ohokicilapi, "mutual respect".

This concept, ohokicilapi, refers to an innate power in the universe by which all things are bound together. Respect is the intrinsic power which causes atoms and planets to move in a circle around the source of light - as devotees perambulate a sacred place or person. ~~The orderly procession of the stars and the~~ constancy of the seasons are expressions of fidelity, a faithfulness which is founded on respect, on mutual respect, ohokicilapi.

The behavior appropriate in the uncle/nephew relationship or the brother/sister relationship is, as Deloria has stated, very precisely defined in Lakota society. Justice will be the appropriate expression of respect in one dyadic relation, while love or humor or patience or obedience or avoidance will be the proper expression of respect in another dyad.

Each male, for example, from his beginnings as a son and grandson will become a "real man" only when he can be called on to enact maturely the brother, cousin, nephew, uncle, father and grandfather behaviors, as well as meeting other criteria related to providing food and protection.

Once again, Ella Deloria offers insight into the Tiospaye when she writes;

"But the use of kinship terms of address was only the beginning, important as it was from the standpoint of etiquette. The core of the matter was that a proper mental attitude and a proper conventional behavior prescribed by kinship must accompany the speaking of each term. As you said "uncle" or - "Father" or "Brother"-- in either address or reference, you must immediately control your thinking of him; you must assume the correct mental attitude due the particular relative addressed, and you must express that attitude in its fitting outward behavior and mind, according to the accepted convention. Thus, term, attitude, behavior, in their correct combinations, were what every member of society must learn and observe undeviatingly. They were standard and inexorable; they had always been."

When the child says "grandfather" and the grandfather replies "grandson", it is as if two strings on a musical instrument are plucked. The resonance of respect issues AS an overtone. If the conduct which ensues between grandfather and grandson is true to the resonance within those

two relational names, then one of the attributes of Tob Tob Kin is ^{laterally} incorporated by the Tiospaye as a power flowing on the current of respect.

And then, gradually, as those masculine powers of Tob Tob Kin are deeply established in the male, he can invoke and help the females to incorporate into the spiritual body of the Tiospaye the basic feminine attributes through his proper relationships with his grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, neices, cousins, granddaughters and daughters.

In the same way, each female, from her beginnings as a daughter and granddaughter, will become " a real woman" only when she can be called on to enact maturely the sister, cousin, neice, aunt, mother and grandmother behaviors, ~~and~~ as well as meeting other social, economic ^{spiritual} criteria. And then, gradually, as those feminine powers of Tob Tob Kin are deeply established in the female, she can invoke and help the males to incorporate into the spiritual body of the Tiospaye the basic masculine attributes through her proper relationships with her grandfathers, fathers, uncles, brothers, nephews, cousins, grandsons and sons.

Balance in Lakota society was acheived through this complimentary dualism. Each male embodying the eight fundamental ^{masculine} ~~masculine~~ elements; each female ^{embodying} ~~embodying~~ the eight fundamental feminine elements.

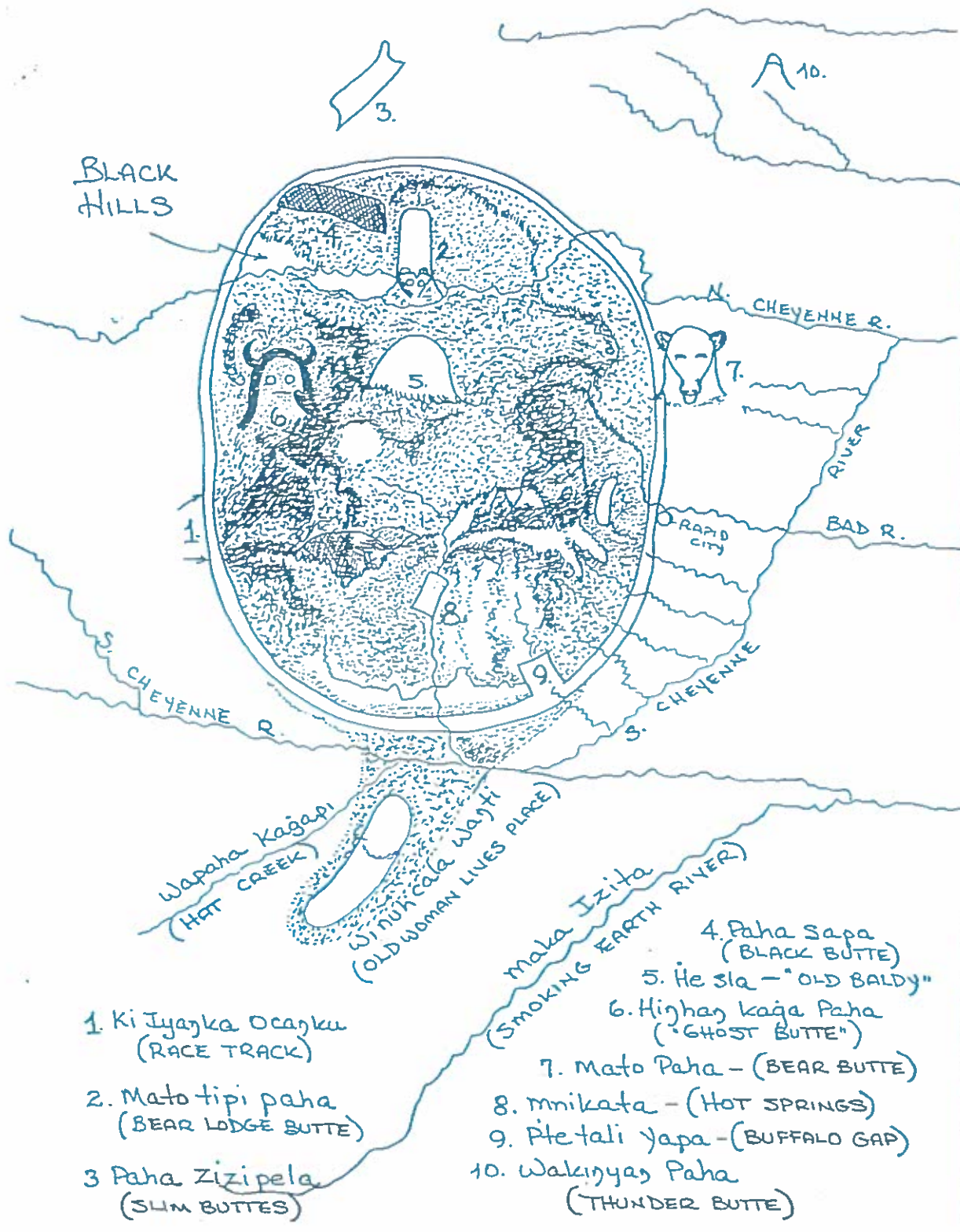
In certain other tribes, balance of masculine and feminine elements was something to be acheived within each individual, but in Lakota Society the balance

The huge circular race track corresponds to the Hogback Ridge which today forms the outer rim of the Black Hills. This can be seen on Amos Bad Hear Bull's map.
(to be discussed shortly)

We have already discussed the circle of stars in relation to the sacred story of the Big Race. There are, however, several other meanings given by the Lakota to this circle. At this time I will only mention that of the "Sacred Hoop", Can Gleska ^{WAKAN} ~~WAKAN~~. In Lakota theology all of life occurs within a never ending ever recurring circle of time/spce, matter and spirit. So the Black Hills is also viewed as the micro cosmic hoop out of which, annually, new life is born on earth.

The other Black Hills constellation is called ^{TAYAMAKI} ~~TAYAMAKI~~, "the first born of the three relations". With separate stars designated as head, tail, backbone and ribs, this animal - the buffalo - symbolizing all life, appears to be emerging (being born) out of the hoop of stars.

Just southeast of the Pé'sla is a rocky out crop named Slate Prairie on current maps. This area is called the "Tayamini" by Lakota Elders, and in aerial photographs it bears a striking resemblance to the stellar image of the same name.



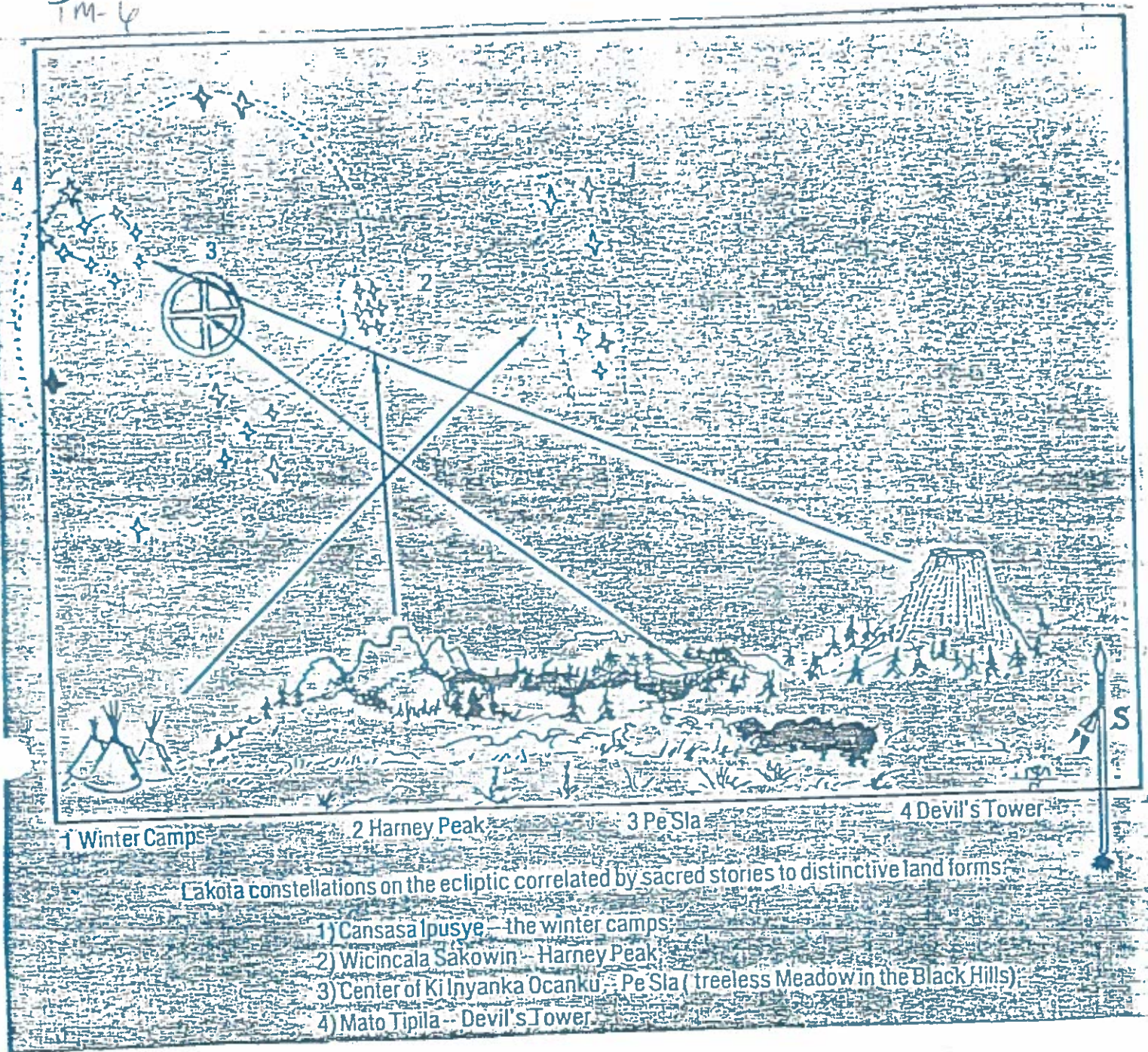
The Black Hills as depicted on Mr. Bad Heart Bull's map is ²consecrated enclosure. In that sense, Devil's Tower is properly included ^{inside} the sacred circle of the race track, although geographically it is sixty miles northwest of the Black Hills.

Around Summer Solstice the sun is in the Lakota constellation correlated with ^{Devil's} ~~Beetle~~ tower and the buffalo have brought the people to the corresponding land form--matotipila paha-- "The Hill of the Bear's Lodge".

The story of Fallen Star's creation of the hill is recounted, and the constellation--matotipila-- (using eight stars in Gemini) is pointed out.

Reflecting a little on what has been delineated so far: The stars were the visible scriptures of the people at night; and the related land forms were the visible scriptures during the day. Both night and day the people walked between sacred stories written on the sky and the earth--which through the mediation of Fallen Star taught them how to establish an authentic relation to the sky, to Skan, that is, to "the one who moves whatever moves".

Most significantly, there is a direct correlation between the changing position of the Sun (counter-clockwise) through the zodiacal stars and the annual movement of the people--led by the buffalo--from one unique land form to another (clockwise) around the plains.

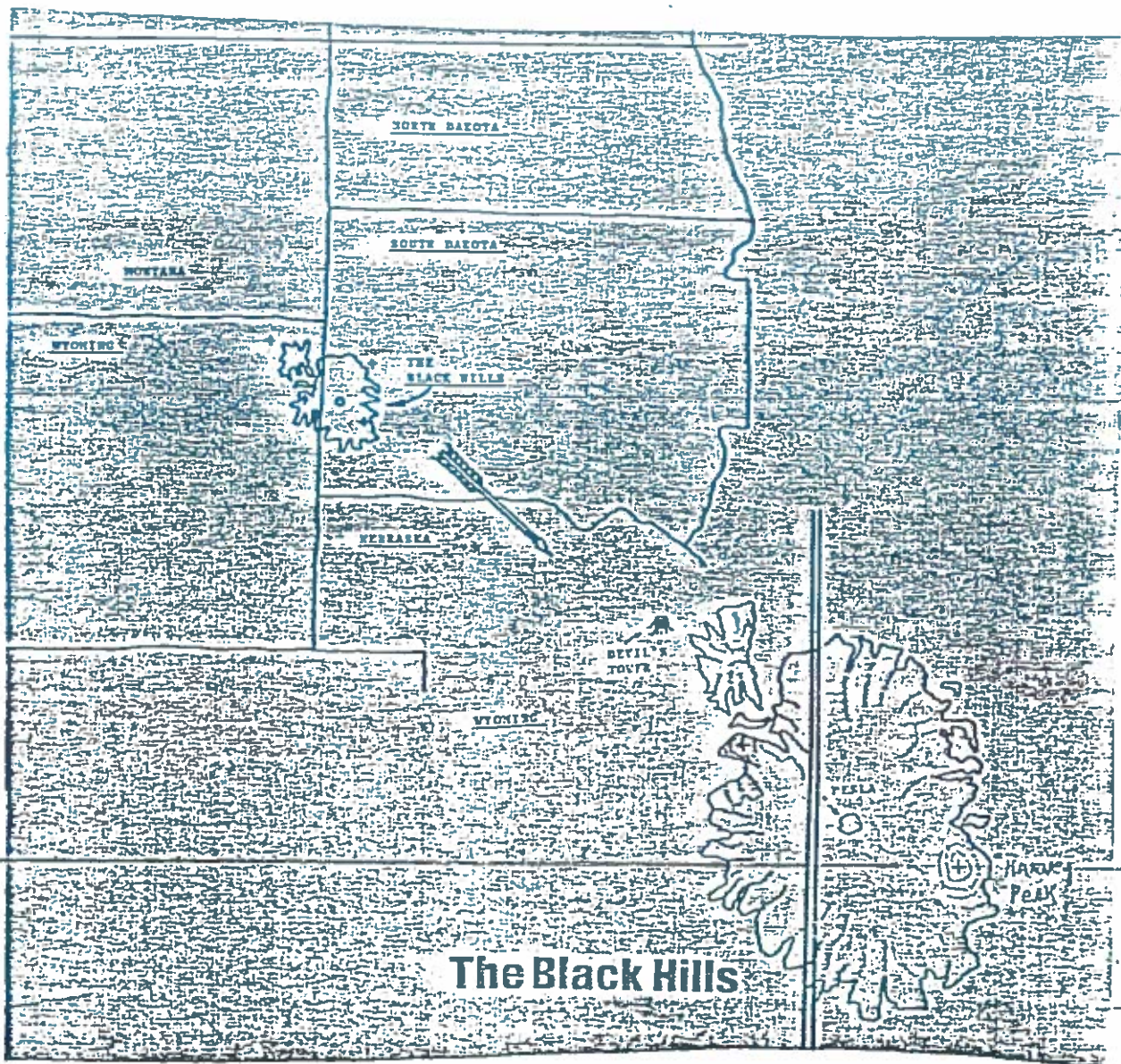


We turn now to an examination of the annual Spring journey through the Black Hills and the ceremonies done there."

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III. SUN, STARS & EARTH FORMS

The annual ceremonial journey (or pilgrimage) can be stated, succinctly, as follows: During the three month period from Spring Equinox to Summer Solstice the sun travels through four Lakota Constellations. Three of these stellar groups are connected by oral tradition to specific places in the Black Hills. By synchronizing their arrival at each of the three sites to the entrance of the Sun into the corresponding constellations, the people were following the Sun's path on Earth.



Furthermore, being at the right places at the right times and doing the appropriate ceremonies, the people received spiritual power from the Wakan Waste, the cosmic powers of good. This stellar power, though it certainly came down everywhere on earth, was especially focused through the Sun to certain sites on earth as it passed through the constellations correlated with those sites.

When the sun is in the Lakota constellation	The people will be at	Time and ceremony
Cansasa Ipusye ("dried Willow")	Winter Camps (in Nebraska) western South Dakota	Spring Equinox (Pipe ceremony)
Wicinca Sakowin (Seven Little Girls)	Hinhan Kaka Paha (Hamey Peak)	Welcoming back the thunders Yate iwakicipi
Ki Inyanka Ocanku (racetrack) or Can Gleska Wakan (The Sacred Hoop) & Tayamini	Pe Sla (center of Black Hills)	Welcoming back all life in peace Okisla:aya wowahwala
Mato Tipila ("The Bear's Lodge")	Mato Tipila Paha (Devil's Tower)	Summer Solstice (Sun Dance)

It must be kept in mind that the time period under discussion here is between ^{1000 and} ~~1500~~ ¹⁵⁰⁰ B.C.E.. ~~It~~ It was at that early time that the celestial pipe ceremony brought the Sun into the Čanšaša iṗusye constellation at dawn on Spring Equinox.

Devil's Tower (Matotipila Paha) is well attested as an ancient Sun Dance site. ⁽¹⁾ The people all knew the Sun Dance was performed around Summer Solstice, and we know that the Sun was in the Devil's Tower constellation (Matotipila) at mid-summer around 1000 B.C.E.. Still, this patterned journey was an ideal, not easy to attain.

In practical terms where ever a band had ^{wintered} ~~seasoned~~ it could observe the Sun moving toward the "dried willow" constellation; and thus where ever that band was located on the plains it could participate with the Wakan Waste in the celestial pipe ceremony on the first day of Spring, thereby helping in the renewal of life on earth.

At that time there were also prayers calling back the birds, calling back the animals and plants, and especially a hope expressed that a white buffalo would be found during the coming year.

Because the Sun Dance was a national event, religious, social and legal in its character and because matters which concerned all the people were decided on at that time; therefore, all western tribes where ever they were in

(1) See LaPointe, Legends of the Lakota. Also, the testimony of Elders.

early Spring would try to converge on Devil's Tower as the Sun moved toward the constellation related to that site.⁽¹⁾

Keeping in mind that we are discussing a period of time long before the Lakota had horses, bands or very spiritual members of those bands, who were near enough to walk to Harney Peak and the Pe'Sla went there at the times indicated by the sun on the ecliptic.

The ceremony in the Harney Peak area is called "They are dancing for the thunders that are theirs", Yate Iwakicipi. It is a ceremony welcoming back the Thunders, but it also implies the renewal of relationship with Wa Kinyan, a life-giving and a life-destroying power, which fights against evil.

At the Pe'Sla in mid-May, the Spring had actually begun and a ceremony is performed which welcomes back those life forms which were prayed for at the equinox. The ceremony is called, "Peace at a bare spot", Okislataya Wowahwala. This welcoming ceremony ^{includes} ~~includes~~: feeding the plants by pouring water into the earth; scattering seeds for the birds; and an offering of tongues for the meat eaters. Also at this time, people began to ready themselves for Sun ^{Dance} ~~Dance~~ by fasting, silence and purification.

- (1) The astronomical formula for ^{determining} ~~determining~~ the "date" when the Lakota first began synchronizing their ceremonies to the Sun and stars can be found in Appendix III of this essay.

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Bands who were too far East or West could still observe the impending time, and there were appropriate rites for attuning to those descending powers regardless of where a Tribe or band was.

Earlier, after quoting Red Cloud's words:

"...we told them that the buffalo must have their country and the Lakota must have the buffalo."

we asserted that he was referring to a religious duty. I believe it will help to clarify the complex nature of this duty if we continue our account of the annual Lakota Spring ceremony related to the Black Hills.

After completing ceremonies at the Pe'Sla, the people collected stones at Inyan Kaga (a hill in the Wyoming Black Hills) and carried them to Devil's Tower to be used in the purification lodge during the time of the Sun Dance. After Sun Dance was performed at Devil's Tower around Summer Solstice, the people then traveled to Bear Butte where important national councils were held.

During this period of time, the names of the three hills changed. Devil's Tower became Pte He gi, "Grey Buffalo Horn;" Inyan Kaga became Pte He Sapa, "Black Buffalo Horn;" and Bear Butte became Pte Pute Ya, "The Buffalo's Nose."

Devil's Tower changes to
Pte He gi
"The Grey Buffalo Horn"

Bear Butte, changes to
Pte Pute Ya
"The Buffalo's Nose"

Inyan Kaga changes to
Pte He Sapa
"The Black Buffalo Horn"

triangle

The ~~triangle~~ formed by the three mountains was called "The Buffalo's Head". During the month or so when ceremonies (preceding during/and after Sun Dance) were going on, this head became spiritually alive. During the time of the ceremonies, spiritual power was called down into the head, ~~thereby~~ *thereby* enlivening the whole spiritual body of the buffalo which symbolically is the whole Black Hills.

The Lakota were ~~privileged~~ *privileged* indeed, they were required to participate in this ceremony of praying new life out of the Sacred Hoop. And the Black Hills has, ~~as we can now see, its macrocosmic counterpart in the~~
stars: in the animal and the circle constellations.

The Lakota were made partners with the Wakan Waste in doing the necessary work of renewing life on earth. Fulfilling this responsibility, doing their religious duty required that the people be able to move freely in "the country of the buffalo", in order to synchronize their movements and ceremonies with the movement of the Sun through the Spring constellations.

When the Buffalo Head ceremony was concluded, the three month ritual of incorporating the powers of the Wakan Waste was completed also. The people were then on the ^{Red}~~Red~~ Road, their will, individually and collectively now highly attuned to the Source.

And the Red Road, too, had been incorporated; so that during the rest of the year, whenever the Lakota needed to travel, so long as their attunement remained true, where ever they went they stepped on sacred ground; they stepped into the center of another and another hoop.

We have seen that, like other humans, the Lakota experienced the reality of the spiritual world through the aid of rites, that unlocked the deepest levels of their consciousness. Such experiences are always beyond the intellect's capacity to understand. Nevertheless, all human beings feel a profound responsibility to try and express that "greatly mysterious" realm in intellectual terms.

Therefore, before going on to the subject of Tiospaye, something needs to be said about the ways in which the Lakota conceptualized for themselves the plentitude of power they received each Spring.

TM-9

IV. TOB TOB KIN

At a level of existence above this material realm Wakan Tanka, the One, unfolded itself into 16 intelligible powers called Tob Tob Kin, "the 4 times 4." These are the Wakan Waste, the cosmic forces of good.

It is the ceaseless interplay of these 16 emanations (which may also be called the grandfather and grandmother principles) that generates the material world. The one becomes 4, the 4 becomes 4 sets of 4 (Tob Tob Kin) and the 4 sets of 4 continue their unfoldment by fours into the many, into the whole continuous creation.

Tob Tob Kin are experienced by the Lakota as a hierarchy. First, there are four groups with four powers in each group. The four groups are called:

- | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------------------|
| WAKAN ANKANTU | - | The four superior powers |
| WAKAN KOLAYA | - | The four associate powers |
| WAKAN KUYA | - | The four subordinate powers |
| WAKANLAPI | - | The four intimate powers |

And then, four powers within each group unfold as follows:

- TM-10
1. The Sun - Anpetu Wikan
 2. The Sky - Mahpiyatokan (Skan)
 3. The Earth - Makakan
 4. The Rock - Inyankan

WAKAN ANKANTU

- ~~TM-11~~
1. The Moon - Hanwikan

2. The Wind - Tatekan

WAKAN KOLAYA

- TM-12
3. The Beauty - Wohpekan

4. The Winged Thunder - Wakinyan Tanka

WAKAN KUYA

1. The Buffalo - Tatankakan
2. The Bear - Hununpakan
3. The Four Winds - Tateyotopakan
4. The Whirlwind - Yumkan

1. The Soul - Nagikan
2. Breath of Life - Niyakan
3. Little Soul - like - Nagilakan
4. Intelligence - Sicunkan (ton)

WAKANLAPI

Second, the interplay of numbers: the 1, the 4, the 4 sets of 4 becoming the many, the creation, is the Lakota way of expressing the mystery of consubstantiality: That is, whatever the level of unfoldment, the ALL remains immanent in each; the transcendent One is always already present in the many, and the many or the 4 or the Tob Tob Kin keep changing back into the One which they always really also are.

It needs to be kept in mind that Tob Tob Kin is only a stage in the continuously expanding process of creation, which is a constant 4-petal blossoming of powers at the four directions. The Lakota have employed the drawing which follows to show how Tob Tob Kin expresses a living unity which becomes ever more complexly and harmoniously unified.

was accomplished through dyadic interaction.

Thus, while maintaining a rigid dichotomy between the social roles of Lakota men and women, social unity and personal wholeness was attained through the reciprocity of mutual respect.

In Oral Tradition, Tob Tob Kin are given gender. Wohpe, Maka and Harwi are female. Of the remaining 13, nine are male and four (the intimate powers) have no gender.

In Tiospaye we find a balanced dualism of male and female ~~roles~~ roles. So although there are 8 basic male and 8 basic female relational names, there is not some simple mirroring of sacred above by the social group. There is balance, however, in that both sexes are equally responsible for infusing power into the Tiospaye.

Tob Tob Kin, these are the 16 names for the otherwise unnameable One as it gives itself, calling creation into existence; calling the many out of its one-ness, and becoming at last a very distant "cousin" to itself: Being not only the unstruck sound before the beginning, but becoming, as well, each note of the whole song.

In order for the Lakota people to call down and embody the powers of the double octave of the macrocosmic Tob Tob Kin into the ^{microcosm} ~~microcosm~~ of the Tiospaye, and maintain a harmony between them, a continual attunement

of individual wills was required. The basic relational names (plus the numerous ancillary terms: "older brother", "younger brother", etc.,) were the inspiration and the

summons to live with precise mutual respect, with ohokicilapi, and thereby to be possessed in their Tiospaye by the Wakan Waste; transforming a social into a spiritual "body."

Therefore, that this uncle shall be a true uncle, that this sister shall be a true sister, is a sacred responsibility, indeed.

In their central prayer, Mitakuye Oyasin, the Lakota affirm an intrinsic and familial oneness with all of creation. "All my relatives": The part embraces and connects with the whole.

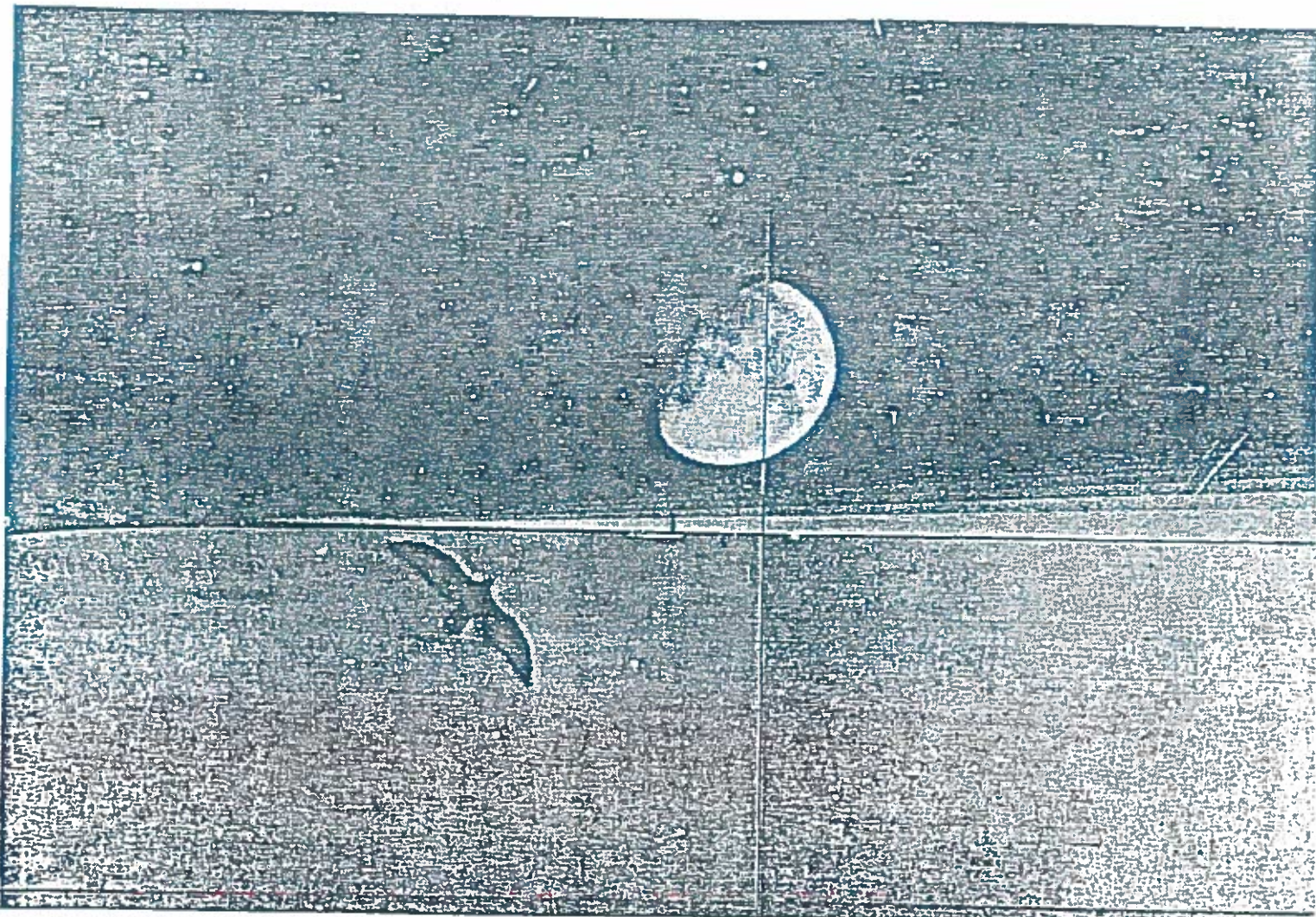
Yet on another level this is the co-creator's utterance (grandfather sacred above and grandmother sacred below) saying "these are all my relatives" as they call each creature into existence: The whole embraces and connects with all the parts.

Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the Lakota word "Wacekiya" means both "to pray", and also "to speak to one's relative".

To speak to a human relative is to evoke from oneself and invoke from the other the already innate power and presence of the divine.

It is for this reason that individual misconduct in the Tiospaye produces a feeling of genuine horror, horror at having done damage to the fundamentally relational fabric, the musical structure of the cosmos itself, as well as to the Tiospaye and the tribe.

The co-creators (who are also the Tob Tob Kin),
the Cause, have already had compassion on "the effect",
which is this universe. The whole has already embodied
itself in the part, inhabits every part already.



Amos Cloudman

VI. EPILOGUE

There is no Lakota word for "religion". While it is true that certain Lakota behaviors - rites and rituals - have (to Western eyes) a recognizably religious character, to the Lakota themselves, these are rather the intensification of daily activities all of which must be lived in a sacred manner. The whole "Lakota way of Life", Lakol Wicoñ'an, is their religion.

My purpose in this essay has been to help others (as I have been helped by medicine men and women, and by the Elders), to understand something of the complex yet harmonious ~~integration~~^{integration} of solar, stellar, animal, terrestrial, social and personal factors which Lakol Wicoñ'an, "the Lakota way of life", attains to in its fullness.

APPENDIX I

The Lakota Constellations: their names and stellar positions

Thus far in our study, we have learned of 3 circumpolar constellations and 8 constellations on the ecliptic. Lakota names are given first, followed by a translation, and then their stellar positions are described using the Greek names familiar to western astronomers.

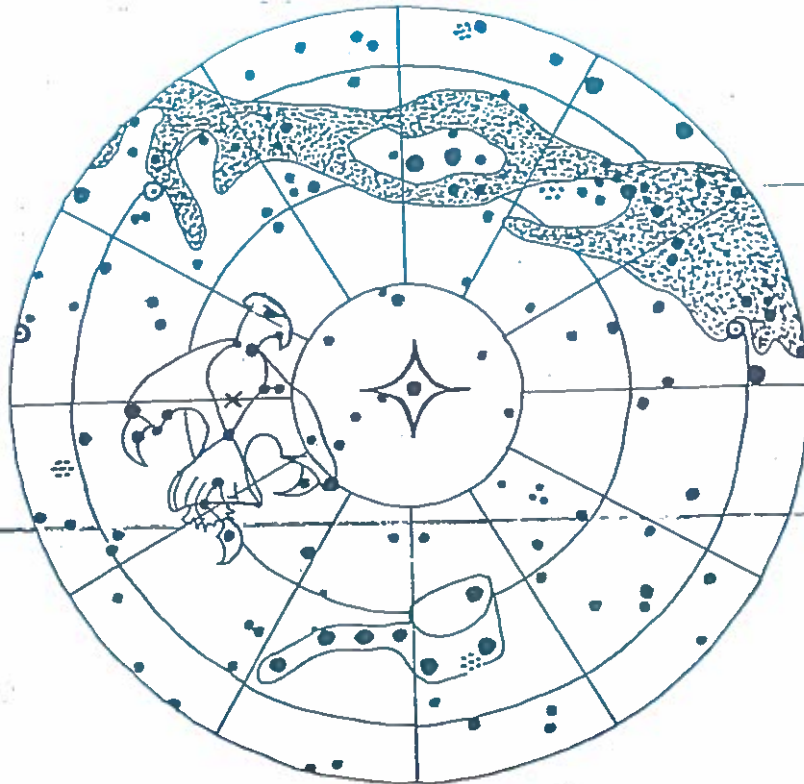
I. Eight Lakota Constellations on the Ecliptic

1. Čanśaša Ipūsyē, "dried willow", consists of Triangulum and Aries Alpha and the two stars west of it.
2. Wicinčala SaKowiŋ, "seven little girls", is identical with the Pleiades in Taurus.
3. Tayamni, "the first born of the three relations," has Pleiades as Tayamni pa, the head; the three stars of Orion's belt as Tayamni Cankahu, the back; Betelgeuse and Rigel in Orion as Tayamni Tučuhu, the ribs; and Sirius in Canis Major as Tayamni Sinte, the tail.
4. Ki Inyanka Ocanku, "The Race Track", is a large circle of stars which includes Castor and Pollux in Gemini, Procyon in Canis Minor, Sirius, Rigel, Pleiades, and finally, Capella and Beta in Auriga.
5. Matotipila, "the Bear's Lodge", is composed of eight of the 12 stars in Gemini. They form an irregular ~~rectangle~~ *rectangle*.
6. Huŋuŋp, "the Bear", is six stars in Eridanus.
7. Anpo Wicaŋpi, "morning star", is sometimes Venus and sometimes Jupiter.
8. Itkob u, "going toward", is the star Alpha Bootes, called Arcturus. This star has several other names: Anpo Wicaŋpi Sunkaku, "morning star's younger brother", Ihuku Kigle, "went under it" which refers to birds migrating ^{North} ~~West~~ in Spring who fly under it and Oglecekutepi, "an arrow game", used (in this case) to explain the relationship between morning star

and Arcturus.

II. Three Circumpolar Constellations;

1. Wicahpi Owanjila, "star which stand~~s~~ in one place"; this is Polaris, the North Star.
2. Wakinyan, "Thunderbird", thirteen stars in Draco beginning with Gamma and including two stars in Ursa Minor.
3. Wicakiyahapi, "the dipper", is the seven stars of the Big Dipper. Its other names include: "Carrier"; the seven sacred rites; Oceti Sakowin, "the seven *Council* fires"; Cansasa Ipusye, "dried willow". Each of the seven stars has a separate name. Beginning with the end of the handle there are: Tokahe, the first man to emerge from the caves in the Black Hills and live on the surface of the Earth; Hoqan Luta, "red fish", He Inkpa, "red tipped horn"; Hehaka Luta, "red elk"; Wicasa Ya Tapika, "a man they all praise". (also, waybli luta, "red eagle"; and zintkaka luta, red bird).



APPENDIX III

Establishing a Date for the Lakota Constellations

In the early stages of our star study, the "dried willow" constellation was understood simply as a star group which, when the sun entered it "long ago", signalled the end of winter, the end of the time when Cansasa could be gathered, and the time when winter camps would begin planning to "follow" the buffalo north.

Gradually, however, we realized that if we view the Lakota constellations as an artifact, a non-material artifact, we could use them to calculate with considerable precision the time in history when the Lakota people first began to synchronize their movements on the plains and their ceremonies to the motion of the sun through the stars on the ecliptic.

So we said, if we knew the range of years when "dried willow" constellation was the star group in which the sun ^{ACTUALLY} appeared at vernal equinox, then we would know the age of the whole artifact.

This is so because the astronomer's formula reads as follows: because of the precession of the equinoxes, the sun moves west one degree on the ecliptic every 72 years.

Currently, the sun on the vernal equinox rises in about the 20th degree of Pisces. Cansasa ipusye, "dried willow", includes triangulum and Aries. Give 30 degrees for their stellar space, plus 20 degrees into Pisces, and we have about 50 degrees. That is, the sun has traveled 50 degrees west on the ecliptic since it was in the "dried willow" constellation on the vernal equinox.

An early date would work out as follows:

$$\begin{array}{r} 72 \text{ years equals one degree} \\ 50^\circ \text{ degrees} \\ \hline 3600 \text{ years ago} \\ - 1984 \\ \hline 1616 \text{ B.C.} \end{array}$$

A very late date would be:

$$\begin{array}{r} 72 \text{ years} \\ 30^\circ \text{ degrees} \\ \hline 2160 \\ - 1984 \\ \hline 176 \text{ B.C.} \end{array}$$

Dr. John Eddy, one of the founders of Archaeoastronomy, said to me, "I don't think anyone would argue about 40 or 45 degrees."

$$\begin{array}{r} 72 \text{ years} \\ 40^\circ \text{ degrees} \\ \hline 2880 \\ - 1984 \\ \hline 896 \text{ B.C.} \end{array}$$

Therefore, to compromise, we could say that the Lakota Constellations are a 3,000 to 3500 year old artifact.

No doubt, the constellations had been known previously for a long time, but around 1000 B.C., the Lakota people began using the sun and the constellations as a ritual artifact of attunement, aligning (or synchronizing) their ceremonies and movements on the plains to the motion of the sun through the stars. Mr. Ray Williamson, Editor of Archaeoastronomy in the Americas, recently checked over our figures and confirmed the dates.

Appendix II

~~Appendix II~~

WAMAKA OG'NAKA E'CANTE OKI INYANKE

Ehani, there were many nations of peoples on Maka. Wakan Tanka had given instructions for living to all men. But man turned his face away from Wakan Tanka and had become selfish, quarrelsome and vain. Doing this, man nearly destroyed Maka and all her other children with his foolishness.

At that time, great mountains ran east and west and there was great violence done by the people to all creation. Maka became sad and wept that her children were destroying each other and had deeply hurt her. She then became angry, and she shook herself. A few nations knew of Maka's pain and retreated to sheltered places so they could survive.

When Maka completed ridding herself of her selfish children, she became calm once again. Now her great mountains were running north and south to show children that she had given only one final chance to walk the good red road.

The four legged, led by the buffalo, decided that men must be rubbed out or they would cause the end of all life before creation had completed her duty. As the four legged spoke, a magpie, who is the messenger of the North Wind, landed on a small tree nearby and listened to this great terrible plot being developed. He heard Buffalo say that growing things had aligned themselves with the four legged in this plan.

Magpie gathered the winged beings and told them of the plot the four leggeds had to destroy man. He spoke of how the four legged, with their partners the growing things might not be satisfied with destroying only the two legged and how the winged might be next. Eagle then reminded all that the two legged was not only man, but also included the bear - the symbol of quiet wisdom.

The winged called council with the two legged and developed a plan for all to live together on Maka. They went to the four legged and challenged them to a race around the Wamaka Og'naka E'cante - the heart of everything that is.

The two legged and the winged would run against the four legged and growing things. If the two legged and winged won the race, then man would be allowed to live with the rest of creation, according to the laws set by Wakan Tanka. If the four legged won the race then they would rub out man and have the earth. The four legged agreed, and it was decided that on the day that the clouds come rolling over themselves from the west, the race would begin.

On the appointed day, all creation gathered on the western

side of Wamaka Og'naka E'cante near a special mountain. When Bear called "go" all started in the clock-wise direction. Eagle and Hawk disappeared from sight almost immediately, Buffalo thundered along the track out of sight and all laughed when Magpie joined the race with his short low hoos.

Along the way, Magpie came upon Eagle and Hawk resting, he was happy to see them and he hopped on. Further along, he saw Buffalo lathered with sweat, tongue lolling standing near the Fast Waters, Magpie hopped on. The race continued in this fashion, many four leggeds and wingeds moving swiftly stomping and packing the earth as they ran until they tired then stopping to rest, and all this time Magpie hopped along.

It took four days to circle the Wamaka Og'naka E'cante, when the sun was nearing its descent on that final day Buffalo was close to the special mountain. Suddenly, a brilliant thought went through Magpie's mind, he flew with all his power and the North Wind gave him lift. He landed on Buffalo's back and rode to a short distance from the finish line and hopped across winning the race.

Continued life was gained for the two legged, he would live according to the laws of Wakan Tanka and creation could now complete her task. Maka then declared that the spilling of blood that occurred during the race would make the Wamaka Og'naka E'cante more special and its blood would remain for all time as a sign of sacrifice so man and creation could live. The packed earth along the track would stay the same as a reminder to all that this place was special and all should walk softly in the Heart of Everything That Is.

The legend of the race around the Black Hills is more than a story of life. The meaning of the legend is also in its symbolism. The North Wind holds the power of the cleansing cold wind, the quiet strength and perseverance which comes from facing the north. The North Wind also sends forth the Trumpeter Swan whose power is reconciliation, a power desired by many and possessed by very few, a power which must be brought among creation by the most humble so all of the people can live altogether.

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Further, because the Lakota constellations are associated through Oral Tradition with specific land forms, we can definitely affirm that the Lakota people were on the Plains during these early times.

This is not to say that the stellar world became for them merely a chronometer. The word "Etu" in Lakota refers not to time alone, ^{but} ~~to~~ to "something happening at that time in that space"; or "an event which ripens toward that space at that time". And it is just this meaning; event plus time plus space equals "sacred place of occurrence," which our study reveals.

The sun and stars in conjunction with Oral Tradition are saying (to give one example) "when sun enters Matotipila you will go to Matatipila Paha (Devil's Tower) and do the Sun Dance then and there." In other words, "Be in the right space at the right time doing the right action:. This is "etu".

Thus Lakota constellations are not a chronometer, but a ritual instrument of attunement, a series of spiritual instructions, or cosmic utterances addressed to the people.

(Woodlake) Community. Events on the Redfox farm, sometimes world news, would be mentioned. After a while Mary would remove the towel and wash the woman's face with a wet washcloth. Mary would ask her patient if she could smell the cedar -- H^an'te ki'n ya'mn'a he (?). If the answer was hi'ya (no), then she would replace the dish in front of the patient and cover her head with the towel again. It was hot under the towel as the patient was smudged (a'zi'di'ya) Mary would remove the towel and wash the woman's face frequently.

His mother later told her son, that each time she washed the patients' face she would be gently moving the facial features into their proper position. The smoking process continued until the patient could smell the cedar, and face was repositioned into its natural form. Some patients might require just a few adjustments and on others, it probably took many to effect the cure.

Mary also explained to her son that these people had a pinched nerve (Kan) in the face known as Wa'na'g^i I'te Yu'h^min'pi (Wa = noun marker, nagi = dead soul, ite = face, yu = movement by undetermined cause, hmin = crooked, pi = plural) The Ghost Crooked the Face. Facial paralysis was also caused by a sudden jerking of the head -- "whip lash". Further commenting that if they had been Wa'na'g^i K'te'pi (Ghost Killing) or touched by a ghost, the patient would be dead. Long ago people were admonished for whistling at night, as this practice attracted ghosts.

Mr. Redfox stated that he heard of a medical doctor in GrandForks who affected this same cure by punching the patients face with his fist. This was done to release the punched nerve.

Stepping forward to look at today's modern medical practices, we can see native people the world over had ways to relieve suffering. Usually we are used to taking a pill to improve health. I don't think the average patient today would approve of being smudged, nor punched, by their doctor. However if it has the desired affect, why not?

For further reading:

World Book Encyclopedia -- Bell, Sir Charles.

A Field Guide to Medicinal Plants: Eastern and Central North America.
By Steven Foster, and James A. Duke. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1990.

Bell's Palsy
Cure.

A Message From Garcia

The History and Culture of the Spirit Lake Dakota

By Louis Garcia ©

Message #14

Bells' Palsy

When someone sees a ghost (Wa'na'g[^]i) they say that your face becomes twisted. The eyes sometimes look to the side also. The name of this affliction in Dakota is Wa'na'g[^]i K'te'pi (Ghost Killing). In modern terms the medical profession has named this condition Bell's Palsy. Sir Charles Bell (1774 – 1842) was an English anatomist. In 1829 he described the function of facial nerves. Bell' Palsy is caused by a sudden swelling of the main motor nerve. This swelling maybe caused by a virus. Ninety percent of patients recover in several weeks without treatment, but the condition can be treated with steroid hormones.

Mary Sdon'sna'sna'wi'n (Rattling or Tinkling Crawling Woman (DLS # 1066, 1875 - 1939) was the daughter of Ica'duze (Gentile Breeze, DLS# 561) and Ti'pi'was'^te'wi'n (Beautiful House Woman, DLS # 945). In 1900 she married Solomon Sun'g[^]i'na'du'ta (Scarlet Fox, DLS # 61). Outside of being a common housewife she had the knowledge of how to cure Bell's Palsy.

During an interview on February 28th, 1985 with Archie Redfox, the only surviving child of Solomon and Mary, he told me how his mother accomplished this cure.

From time to time a wagon would come into the yard. Usually it was a female who was affected. They would always have their face covered with a shawl or scarf. The woman would wait in the wagon while the man would go into the house and make the arrangements. Archie being a little boy hardly noticed the details. He was too busy playing. Still in his youth, Archie came to the realization that something was going on that need his further investigation. One day while his mother was with a patient he sneaked into the house to satisfy his curiosity.

His mother and the patient with her face still concealed were in the kitchen. His mother took a metal dish, metal being the common dish sets at the time, usually covered with enamel. Going to the other room his mother, brought forth a big handkerchief from which she took what he later learned was H'an'te (Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana* L.). He never learned if it was cedar leaves, twigs, inner bark, or root. Mary pounded up the cedar with a hammer. From the wood stove his mother took a live coal and placed it in the dish with the cedar. The Patient was asked to sit up close to the table. The dish of smoldering cedar was placed before the patient. His mother took the shawl from the woman's face. Archie was peeking from behind and so never saw the patients twisted face. A towel was draped over the woman's head and shoulders and the smoldering dish of cedar placed under this facial tent.

As this activity was taking place, Mary would be having small talk with the woman. Just like she had come to visit. Mary would tell her about local happenings in the Bde'can