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MYTHS-LEGENDS OF OSAGE INDIANS 7858

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Interview with Franklin N. Revard,
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BELIEF IN CREATION--IN THE GREAT GOD AND A MESSIAH.

In the mythological legends as to the creation of certain lands the beaver, otter, and muskrat hold the role of formation. The Iroquois narrated that their primitive female ancestor was kicked from the sky by her enraged spouse when there was yet no land for her habitation, but that it suddenly bubbled up under her feet, and waxed bigger till a whole country was in her possession. Others claim that the beaver, otter and muskrat, seeing her fall rushed to the bottom of the deep to bring up mud sufficient to construct an island for her residence.

Among the Osages, Takahilis, and Algonquin of the northwest tribes, the muskrat was their simple, cosmogenic machinery of land formation. These latter tribes were philosophic enough to see no real creation in such an account, but only formation by the action of these amphibious animals. The earth was there but hidden by boundless waters and heaved up for dry land by the muskrat, as a formation only, logi-

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cally distinguishing between the terms formation and creation, not assuming to know anything of creation and considering any questions concerning it nonsense. Their amphibians were not considered constructors, but merely reconstructors, a very judicious and important corollary. It supposed a precious existence of matter on earth anterior to ours, but one without light or human inhabitants. A lake they said burst its bounds, and submerged all lands (similarity to the Bible deluge) and became the primeval ocean. We find among all primitive peoples some marvelous parallels of belief in the mythic epochs of nature, the catastrophies, calamities and deluges of fire and water, which have held and swayed all human fancy in every land in every age. But all fancies have been lost in the dilemma of an explanation of a creation of matter from nothing on the one hand, and the "eternity of matter" on the other. Exnihilonihil (est) is an apothem indorsed alike by the profoundest metaphysicians and the most uncultured of primeval man.

Francis S. Drake, in his "Indian History for Young People" gives the following fabulous legend as the Osage Metaphysician's

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natural philosophy for the origin of his "people." Many Osages believe that the first man of their nation came out of a shell; that while he was walking on earth he met the Great Spirit, who gave him a bow and arrow and told him to go a hunting. After he had killed a deer the "Great Spirit" gave him fire and told him to cook and eat his meat and told him also to take the skin and cover himself with it and with the skins of other animals that he should kill. One day the Osage, while hunting, saw a beaver sitting on a beaver hut. Mr. Beaver asked him what he was looking for. The Osage answered, "I am thirsty and come for a drink." The beaver then asked him who he was and whence he came. The Osage replied that he had no place of residence. "Well, then," said the beaver, "as you appear to be a reasonable man, I wish you to come and live with me. I have many daughters and if any of them should be agreeable to you, you may marry."

The Osage, as the legend goes accepted his offer and married one of his daughters, by whom he had many children. The Osage ancestors gave this as their reason for not killing the beaver, as their offspring were believed to be the Osage people. Such were their traditions, not present.

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OSAGE TREE OF LIFE AND HEAVEN MYTHOLOGY.

Rev. J. Owen Dorsey refers to a chart that was accompanied by chanting a tradition by the members of a secret society of Osages, drawn by an Osage, Hada-curse, Red Corn, early adopted by a white man named Matthews. Hence, Red Corn was named Wm. P. Matthews or "Bill Nix," becoming one of the tribal lawyers. He belongs to the Sade-kice gens. Other versions were given by Pa hus ka (present Pawhuska), White Hair, Chief of the Bald Eagle sub-gens of the Tsice, and from Saucy Chief, from the Na-ca-ce gens, and from Good Voice of the Miki gens. The chart represents the tree of life by a flowing river, both required by the head of her gens to take four sips of water (symbolizing the river). Then rubs cedar on the palms of his hands with which he rubs her from head to foot. If she belongs to the left side of the tribal circle he first strokes the left side of her head, making three passes, pronouncing the name of the Great Spirit three times, repeating the process on her forehead, right side and back part of her head, making twelve strokes in all (a perfect number).

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Beneath the river were the following objects; The
Watssetuka mate slaying animal, or Morning, (Red) star (2) Six
stars (Elm Rod), (3) the Evening star (4) the Little star.
Beneath these are the moon, seven stars and sun. Under the
seven stars the peace pipe and war hatchet which is close to
the sun. The moon and seven stars are on the same side of
the chart. Four parallel lines across the chart represent
the four degrees through which the ancestors of the Tsicu
people passed from the upper heavens to the earth. The
lowest heavens rest on a red oak tree (Pusuku). The
Sadekice tradition begins below the lowest heavens on the
left side under the peace pipe. The stanza of the chant
point to the different periods of evolution, first when the
children of the first period (former end) of the race were
without human bodies and human souls. Then birds over the
arch denote the evolution of human souls in bird bodies.
Then the progress from the fourth to the first heavens,
followed by descent to the earth. The ascent to four and
descent to three make up the sacred number seven. When
they alighted, as the legend runs, it was on a beautiful
day when the earth was clothed in luxuriant vegetation.

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From this time the path of the Osages diverges, the war gens marching to the right, the peace gens to the left, including the Tsiu, who originated the chart. Then conflict and the question of rights begun. The Tsiu, peace gens, met the messenger and they sent him off to the different stars for aid. According to the chart he approached in order the Morning star (Watsé-tuka), the sun (Hapata Wakanta- the god of the day, the sun), moon (Wakantaka- the god of night) seven stars (Mikake-pecuda), (Ta-adxi Three deer), Big Star (Mi-kaka-tanká), and Little star (Mikake-cinka). Then Black Bear went to the Wacinka-cutse, a female Red bird, sitting on her nest. This grandmother granted his request, giving them human bodies, made from her own body. The Haskaucantsi, the most war-like people; made a treaty of peace with the Waccaci and Tsiu gens and from the union of the three resulted in the last Osage nation but not including the allied races.

A somewhat different version is given by the other gens, but all showing more or less the Darwinian theory of man's evolution, or ascent-almost as plausible in reason, when we link to this the first man's marriage with the beaver's daughter.

THE GHOST DANCE, RELIGION AND MESSIAH.

The Ghost-dance that is so potent in the religious life and belief of the Arapahoes and Cheyennes of the west made but little impression and progress among the Osage, who seem to have had a more philosophic premise of religious belief and practice. This dance was practiced by a majority of the Pawnees in full anticipation of the early coming of the Messiah and the buffalo, becoming as devoted to the belief and dance as the Arapahoe who introduced and propagated the method of worship. But the dance was strenuously opposed by the Agency authorities because of the spirit of unrest, conquest and conquering it engendered among the adherents. Yet it was but the inherent idea and feeling of all humanity from the most untutored savage of Africa's dismal jungles to the learned "Band of Avon" that somewhere the human paradise has been lost to be regained by reverential approach to the great God of Christianity, the Great Spirit, or many gods of pagan minds, and the "Restoration" idea is the stronger in those whose life is proportionately hard to bear--a universal truth." This perhaps, explains why the Osages, being the most opulent, wealthiest tribe

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of America and the world, felt less need of a redeeming Messiah than those less fortunate, and being long under the influence and teaching of the Catholic Church, many are firm believers in and worshipers of the Christian Messiah, Jesus. Yet all belief in a Messiah is virtually the same though vested in moral, ethical philosophy or in silken robes or in simple nude pagan imagination. "Paradise lost" and Messianic return and restoration, though one be to John's revealed Heaven of the Spirit, the other to the happy hunting and fishing grounds. It is mainly a difference in comprehension of what is the ideality and perfection of life and its ultimate purpose and reward. "The belief and teachings as to the Hebrew Messiah, the Christian's Millennium, the Hindu Avator and the Hesunanin (Our Father) of the Indian ghost-dance are in essence the same and are born in the hopes and longings cherished by all human beings.

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DOCTRINE OF THE GHOST-DANCE-BY THE PROPHET OR
MESSIAH-WOVOKA.

When the sun died, I went up to heaven and saw God and all the people who had died a long time ago. God told me to come back and tell all my people they must be good and love one another and not to fight, steal or lie. He gave me this dance to give to my people. You must fight, do no harm to any one. Do right always, it will give you satisfaction in life. The Revelation of Wovoka, the son to Tivibe, the prophet of Mason Valley, Nevada, who died about 1870, Wovoka (meaning cutter) was an industrious boy working till 30 years of age, when he announced this revelation that made him famous. He was reared in a narrow valley of the Sierras, 30 miles long; walled in by convulsively torn volcanic mountain walls, towering to perpetual snows, sparkling with diamond icicles, with a background of pine forests, the whole under the canopy of a cloudless, infinite, blue sky through which the mind is called in thought to far off worlds above. Hasselas-like, a valley apart from the rushing world beyond, a favorable home for the contemplative mind of a dreamer whose instinctive spiritual power is producing a

religious code that needed no human assistance. The doctrine anticipates that the whole Indian race, dead or alive, will be reunited upon some regenerated abode, or planet to live again in their aboriginal happiness forever free from death, disease and misery." And these fundamental beliefs are common to all Indian people with only the mythological differences attributed by each apostle or prophet according to his tradition or his mental trend or ideas of happiness as characterize each tribe; but scarcely more variations of interpretation than are found in Christianity with hundreds of sects and creeds and innumerable shades of individual opinions that divide the ranks of Christianity and with, perhaps, as much sound reason.

All Indian believers were exhorted to make themselves worthy of the rewards of the promised happiness, conditioned upon discarding cruelty and war and practicing honesty, peace and good-will, not only with each other, but also toward the pale-faced alien among them. Many believed that the white races were of secondary importance; spiritually unreal and would have no part in the Red Man's plan of regeneration, would be left behind as other earthly things, and perhaps cease entirely to exist after the coming of the Indian Messiah and the regenera-

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tive dawn, which some even fixed on certain days or years, as has often been done by religious enthusiasts among Christian adherents.

PARAGRAPH OF THE MESSIANIC LETTER.

"Do not tell the white people about this. Jesus is now like a cloud. The dead are all alive again. I do not know when they will be there. Maybe this fall or in the spring. When the time comes there will be no more sickness and everyone will be young again.

"Do not refuse to work for the whites, and do not make any trouble with them until you leave them. When the earth shakes, (at the coming of the new world) do not be afraid. It will not hurt you.

"I want you to dance every six weeks, make a feast at the dance and have food that everybody may eat. Then bath in the water. That is all. You will receive Gods words again from me sometime. Do not tell lies."

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All Indians must dance, everywhere, and keep on dancing till their year of jubilee, is but the continuation of the ancient religious dance, as Miriam, David and others danced before the Ark of God or the thousands in religious festivals, dancing only to the glory of God, till the practice of dancing was introduced upon the Greek and Roman pulpits or stage by men and women dancing together for show and pleasure. The full blood Indian knows no dance but by men alone and that partaking of a religious nature. Few, if any, of the part bloods take part in these dances, but manifest their love of music and dancing by frequently participating in the reel, two-step and waltz.

It was recently the writer's privilege to witness a full blood dance given for their men guests from the pueblos of New Mexico, in the round house (a dancing, feasting and council building, similar in shape to a round circus tent, or locomotive round house) that stands in the midst of the Indian Village, one mile northeast of Pawhuska. Four corpulent braves seated in a circle with drum sticks beat a large one-headed Kettle drum, with the same regular stroke and beat, making a thundering roar. One began, the three others follow-

ing what appeared to the ear untrained to such music a doleful song or chant with equal time to the drum beats, which sounded to the writer's ear, thus: Loom, Doom, Loom, Deompity-doom, doom, doom, doom, doomity-doom, or giving the broad Latin of Italina sound something like this: Dam, dam, dam dam'pol, dam, dam, dam, dam, dam'poi, dam, but this ^{is} the white man's swearing expletives. for the Osage have no swear words and whenever using one (which is seldom) they must adopt or transfer the language of his enlightened, civilized white cousin.

charm of a small stone image is carried by some, as is the custom of the Ute, also.

The following incident related to the writer by a most excellent devoted Christian girl, Miss Hilton, shows the susceptibility of the full bloods to Christian teachings:

After a young missionary of the Southern Board had taught a rather troublesome old fellow, L. M., ever wicked, in beating his squaw, that if he did not live better and cease beating his wives he would go to the bad place (having consigned two or three wives to the Osage stone covered tomb) he married another, a Christian, who tried to influence him to be better. He came to Miss Emily Cotterelle and said, "want to be a good Indian. My squaw says if I don't do better me will go

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to the Devil and I don't want to go to the Devil. "He want to be a good Indian."

Most of them believe in good and bad spirits and the bad live in a lower place of happiness than the good, who continue in spirit-life and are rewarded according to the good and bad done here. They worshipped idols, pictures or other emblems that signify the Great Spirit; believed in self-torture or self-sacrifice in order to obtain forgiveness of wrong doing. At times they arched in solemn procession, bowing to the ground in prayer and at other times in congregations or as individuals asking the Great Spirit for present desires and future favors in an earnest devout manner. Their emblem is a cooing dove, signifying peace and love.

But there are many who believe that the white man's religion and ceremonies are no better than their own.

One Osage, Angie P., after marrying two braves whom she said went crazy, having run away from her, was going to wed another man who desired her to go to Lawrence to get a license to marry in white folks way. After much persuasion, she was induced to go and have the act sealed by getting a roll of paper, which she was led to believe was the magnet or charm of the Great Father at Washington, to hold this third time

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her man with her. Soon the third ran away and she said
 "he got crazy, too." Lamenting over the fact that she had
 married white folk's way and could not again take a man till
 Uncle Sam took back her sham (charm) said, "Me no marry white
 folks way again. No good. He ran away, too. Roll of paper
 do no good. Me no like it." And it seems that this Indian
 woman was not far from being right in her estimate of the
 charm value of the roll of paper.