#### BEAR CLAN ORIGIN LEGEND

**INTRODUCTION** 

THE BEAR CLAN or more correctly, the Black Bear Clan People:  $\mathbf{T}\dot{\mathbf{u}}^{\mathbf{n}}\mathbf{ap}^{\mathbf{n}}\mathbf{i}^{\mathbf{n}}$  **BEAR CLAN:** (sacred name) were commonly called:  $\mathbf{M}\dot{\mathbf{u}}^{\mathbf{n}}\mathbf{je}$  **Kiráje** "They name themselves (after the) Black Bear". It remains the largest Ioway/ Otoe-Missouria Clan, and it is said to have been the more powerful in

traditional times. They are ascribed as the founding Fathers of the **Báxoje**, **Jiwére-Ñút'aji**, as the Bear Clan members lived among the three tribal communities. There were four brothers who emerged from underneath the earth, where they lived in another world. Each brother -- **Hí<sup>n</sup>gru**, **Héna**, **Hága** and **Hága'iñe** (I.)/ **Hagá'iņe** (O.) – in turn, were the ancestral fathers of their particular subclans.

It seems that the Bear Clan members were the only clan to still remember and recognize their individual sub-affiliation into recent times. However, it has been many generations now since any tribal member could recall the succession order of the subclans which descended from the oldest brother, **Hi**<sup>n</sup>**gru**, which took precedence over the others. Indeed, by the 1980's, it had become unusual to encounter anyone under 30 years of age, that even knew their basic clan descent. The 1890 Ioway delegation to Washington, D.C., gave the individual Bear subclans to James O. Dorsey, a noted ethnologist:

Tú<sup>n</sup>ap<sup>9</sup>i<sup>n</sup>: Sacred Black Bear Tábathe: Bear With Spotted Breast PáXatha: White Nose (Bear)

Mu<sup>n</sup>ch<sup>9</sup>íñe(I.)/ Mu<sup>n</sup>ch<sup>9</sup>ine: Young Bear/ Little Bear

In theory, all Bear Clan/ Subclans members are brothers, and as such, their marriage must be outside the total clan grouping. But as the Otoe-Missouria and Iowa Peoples tend to individualize every clan and subclan, then each subclan held their own tradition of four brothers. These individual traditions, however, do not necessarily coincide. This understanding explains the marriages of couples, who both were from the Bear Clan, by the statement: "He is from another kind of Bear (Clan)." And just as the Clan legend of one Clan, was not known to the other Clans, so it is likely that the various subclan legends were not known to the other three sub-familial groups. William Whitman ("The Otoe", 1936) noted that secrecy and maintaining privilege within a small group was and remains a fundamental concept among Ioway and Otoe families, that consequently there are numerous versions of the traditional stories, yet none commonly told and agreed upon by the Tribe(s) as a whole.

THE CLAN BUNDLES that belonged to the Bear have not been present among the People since the early day families that settled the reservation(s). Indeed, the knowledge of hereditary chiefs, and of the Clan Sacred Pipes has been lost with past generations.

THE EARTH or UNDERGROUND MOIETY (Division) is headed by the Bear Clan and includes the following Clans: Eagle, Beaver, Elk and Wolf (Ioway). The Wolf Clan has been extinct from the Otoe for many generations. The Bear Clan "takes lead" during the Fall and Winter of all tribal government affairs, tribal buffalo hunts, public gatherings, feasts and tribal ceremonial events until "the frogs were heard in the Spring." Then tribal affairs were transferred and continued by the Buffalo and associated "Friend" Clans. The Buffalo were the second largest clan. Their leadership prevailed throughout the Spring and Summer Seasons. This special sharing of tribal ceremonial and social political leadership presented a decentralized social organization which permitted the family and its extensions to remain the primary social unit in which the Clan and individual dominated. It served the People in traditional times as a checks and balances such as realized in the U.S. model of legislative, judicial and executive branches. The Bear Clan resumed control in the Autumn when the "elks whistling" was heard, usually sometime after the end of the Autumn buffalo hunt.

BEAR CLAN IN THE BEGINNING, The Creator, Má?un: Earthmaker, had already made the Earth. And, it is said that ORIGIN previously the Clan lived under the ground in another world, in the form of bears. Then they came out of the ground and assumed the form of human beings, although they maintained Bear characteristics. Such traditional clan traits, were said by the old tribal members to have a tendency to be shiftless, noisy, irritable and aggressive. Yet, their virtues were also recognized to include fearlessness, thoroughness and that they taught the People (Clans) to do traditional agriculture techniques.

THE ORIGINAL FOUR BROTHERS, **Hí<sup>n</sup>gru**, **Héna**, **Hága**, **Hagáiñe** <sup>1</sup> came up through the Earth from an underworld in search of another land. They composed names memorializing the Clan emergence on Earth and their experiences as they established themselves as a People and Tribe(s). Clan descendants have used these sacred clan names from that time for their children:

**Dá<sup>n</sup>we:** Awakened Becoming aware of themselves.ey

I?Ará: Yawning Indicating their four year awakening period.

before their emergence.

Wayí<sup>n</sup> Cháki: Strong Mind The decision to journey in search of new land.

Wayi<sup>n</sup>hchi: Open Minded/ Even Tempered The decision to start.

Maká Dhí: Yellow Earth While Climbing up through the tunnel they

scratched out, they came through a layer of yellow clay, as they neared the outer layer of

the Earth.

**Náthu<sup>n</sup>:** Sycamore The first tree root they encountered, which they followed upwards to Earth's outer layer.

Left Hand/ Arm The oldest Bear thrust his hand through the

Earth's crust, making an opening for them to emerge on Earth.

Axéwe Hú: Come Appearing Out The Bear Brothers emerge upon Earth.

Watógre: (Four) Together With Them When they met Elk Clan.

It was the Autumn Season when they emerged from the former land. The orange glowing sun was towards the southern hemisphere and cast a reddish hue on the land....

Hánthi: Glowing Dawn's Light Time of day the four brothers emerged on earth.
 Hánwe Pì Good Day They signify the advent of their first day on this earth.
 Pá Húye: Turns Head (Looking About) Deciding in which direction they should go to explore in the new land.

The name of the place where they emerged on earth.

They named the place of emergence, **Máya<sup>n</sup> Shúje: Red Earth**. It is considered to be the traditional place of origin of the Ioway, Otoe-Missouria People. It is thought to have been located northeast from present day Green Bay, Wisconsin. Some of the early day tribal members proposed that the name even referred to the first band of original Siouian People before they dispersed into separate, autonomous tribes.<sup>2</sup> The Elk Clan name, **Húŋɛ: Beloved Child** is also thought to have been the original name of these Siouian ancestors.<sup>3</sup> (See: "Pipe Dance").

IT WAS AUTUMN, and the Brothers declared: "Hánwe jé?e dáhe hintéwi ke. Wéwagràñiwi ke (This is our day! It belongs to us)". It would come to be that as the Bear Clan met and joined with the other clans, they would "dotanhan (take on the leadership)". And so, Wírugranñe ke -- they govern the whole people in communal social, ceremonial, governmental and political activities during the Fall and Winter Seasons.

<sup>2</sup> Skinner, A. "Ethnology of the Iowa". 1926.

Odáhsje:

Máya<sup>n</sup> Shúje:

**Red Earth** 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Hagáiñe (Ioway); Hagáine (Otoe).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Fletcher & LaFlesche. <u>The Omaha Tribe</u>, 1911; 1970. pp. 40-41; p. 389-90.

Meanwhile, they wandered about and discovered that they were on a large island. They care to **Níto:** Big Water. They realized that it could be dangerous to cross, but they relied upon their own innate power given them by Má'un: Earthmaker, The Creator.

Some tribal elders related that the Bear Brothers swam across the "Big Water", while others contend they crossed in a canoe. Irregardless, they started out into the water.

BadúThigre: Tracks in the Boat/ Wood

UgráJire: Floating Along

But in a short while they were stopped by a large fish. Using their paddles, they got it out of their way. They continued on until they were stopped by a **Ischéxi:** Horned Water Panther. They removed it out of their way and started again. Yet, they were stopped a third and even a fourth time before arriving at a shore. And as they came out of the water in this new land, the composed more personal names.

Húhe: Coming
Hú Hí: Arrive Coming

Ñí Hú Hí: Arrive Coming Out of Water
 Ñí Uwají: Arrive From On the Water
 Éda Wajú: Comes From There (the water)

Gisti<sup>n</sup> Jígre: Sunlight Shinning/ Reflecting Off Water (literally = Arrives Shinning)

Pagrán Dáhe: Standing First (on the shore)

Máya<sup>n</sup> Pí: Good Land (declared by the brothers)
Grahíñe: What They Liked (they liked the land)

And then, they wandered about looking far something to eat. However, they came upon the tracks of some other people. They followed them saying: We thought we were the only ones here! These tracks may bring us to some good people!

Pagró Hí: Arrived Coming First

Thigré Pí: Good Track Thigré Dówe: Four Tracks

Through the thick timber along a river, they journeyed. **Mayúwe:** Going Along Through the Land. They found an eagle feather. "Indeed, there must be someone here. We will carry this (feather) and learn what it is." And going further, they came upon a broken arrow, and again, they took it with them.

THE SACRED NOW THEY HAD TRAVELED some ways when they heard the sound of someone pounding. Hingru told PIPE & Héna to go ahead and see what it was. He returned, telling that he saw a very old man, hard at work on something. Wétatañe: They Hear Sound (in making a Sacred Pipe). The Brothers all went to see, HáhdaGú: Start Coming Back, but they found no one -- only the stone pipe bowl was laying there. HáneŠkúñi: Not Sitting There. It seems that the old man had been a holy messenger who turned himself into the pipe bowl. Híngru picked it up and said to his brothers, "This will be for some good and great use," And so, he carried it with them. ManthréXówe: Bear's Spirit.

So then, they came to a stream, and noticed a certain stick floating upright, as though it was standing. Streamers of blue and green weeds and moss hung from it. The spectacle inspired **Hí<sup>n</sup>gru** to fashion a pipestem in its likeness. **Ráhnuwe: Pipe/Pipestem**. And so, it began that the ancient pipestems were ornately decorated with dyed porcupine quillwork and buckskin streamers, although colored ribbon and small beads wrapped around the stem are now used in artistic design. (See: "PIPE (Sacred)").

BEAVER AND AGAIN, TIME HAND passed when some kind of person came swimming up the river. It came towards them. Ñí Wa<sup>n</sup>?shige: Water Person. And that is when Beaver ARRIVES: Clan joined the

Bear Clan. Watógre: Together With Them. InúwaHù: Comes With Them. (See: "Beaver Clan"). Beaver was present when the Bear Brothers quarreled with one another. The oldest, Hi<sup>n</sup>gru, brought out the Sacred Pipe and offered it to his brothers. They accepted it and made peace among themselves; however, Hága chewed on the pipestem. Má Grádage: Splitting the Pipestem (Literally = Biting Off His Arrow). Mató Warúthri<sup>n</sup>: Mean Bear. So then, a new pipestem had to be made. And for that purpose, Beaver brought in a branch from an ash tree, and gave it to Bear for the new pipestem. Waxóñita<sup>n</sup>: Something Holy. Now, they began to recognize one another by personal names, and that began the division of the People into subclans:

> Tunáp<sup>9</sup>i: Black Bear Tunáp<sup>9</sup>ihsji: True Black Bear Mató Théwe: **Black Grizzly Bear**

Mató Shúie: **Red Bear** Mú<sup>n</sup>je: **Brown Bear** Mú<sup>n</sup>je Xáñe: Big Bear (Ioway) Mú<sup>n</sup>ie Xá<sup>n</sup>ie: Big Bear (Otoe) Ukíwi ~ Ukímañi: Walks On Another Naxúje Nine: No Ears (Disobedient)

And then, they continued on their search, they say. And they looked all over, in trees, turned over logs and dug holes, uncovered roots here and there, in order to find something to eat.

> NáRútha: **Hunting Around in Brush** Naxá Ruká<sup>n</sup>: **Turning Over Logs**

Ná T<sup>9</sup>áñe: **Dead Trees** Tóhi: Thistle Ná Nùwe: Two Trees

Bútu Ruthrá: **Stripping Oak Trees** 

Unátu<sup>n</sup>dha: Stamps On (Earth) & Makes Rumbling

And then, they came upon Wánshige Ruthránki: Lone Man. Coming close, they tried to bluff him, but he was not afraid. He said: "I have been wandering, looking over the whole country, but you have found me". They showed him the broken arrow that they had found along the way. "Yes," he said, "that is my weapon. That is a tool I use to hunt animals for food and to fight off enemies. Now you have found me, so I give it to you as a gift. It is of great benefit."

WOLF IT WOULD SEEM WITHOUT doubt that Wánshige Ruthránki: Lone Man was of the CLAN:

Wolf Clan, perhaps the elder brother, remembered by the early day reservation day

Otoe-Missouria elders as the extinct "Coyote Clan People," (Whitman. "The Otoe," 1937). It was "the Wolf Clan that brought and introduced the bow & arrow, teaching the People how to hunt. However, the useful hunting tool also became a weapon that men used to wound and kill one another. (See: "Wolf Clan origin legend").

TRAVELING ON, THEY HEARD thunder up above. "Eswéna máya" ma<sup>n</sup>grída damínašge je (Perhaps there's EAGLE & a land above?)," they said. Again, they heard the thunder. And then a big rain commenced with lightning **THUNDER** CLAN: and much wind. And thus, the Bear Clan People had come upon the Eagle and Thunder Clan People.

At first, they saw no people, only nests and eagle feathers, like the feather they had previously found. Then suddenly, it seems, there were people all about the nest, others were on it and still others on nearby rocks and trees. They were Chéxita (Waká<sup>n</sup>da): Thunder Birds (Thunderers). There were four brothers leading these people.<sup>4</sup>

Waká<sup>n</sup>daKìpa: Meets Thunderers

And then, several of the Eagle People flew up in the air, and lit on a cedar tree.

Badhí Grijé: Alighting On A Cedar Tree.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> See: Eagle & Thunder Clan origin legend.

Nathráthraje: Trotter ~ Light Foot ~ Walks Fast

The Bear Clan members offered them the Sacred Pipe and the two Clans prayed and smoked it together, they say. And then, **Hi**<sup>n</sup>**gru**, the oldest Bear Brother cleaned the pipe, putting the ashes on the ground in remembrance that the Sacred Tobacco is nurtured of Our Mother Earth. Thereupon, a Sacred Pipe was given as a gift to the Eagle & Thunder Peoples, to use when they wished to pray and communicate with **Hi**<sup>n</sup>**túga Má**<sup>o</sup>**u**<sup>n</sup> **Waká**<sup>n</sup>**da: Our Grandfather, The Creator-God**, as well as to establish sanctuary, truce and peace among opposing groups and individuals.

So then, the Eagle & Thunder Brothers told the Bear People to keep and have the Eagle feather they had found, in order to remember that it represents Hi<sup>n</sup>túga Má<sup>n</sup>u<sup>n</sup> Waká<sup>n</sup>da in the Heavens Above, where He dwells with all the Hi<sup>n</sup>túga Wanáxi Xóñita<sup>n</sup>: Holy Grandfather Spirits. And from there above, where the Eagle & Thunder People had come, they say. And with this exchange of gifts, the custom of the "Give-Away" was established to honor individuals and special friendships. The Eagle feather has served the Native American Peoples since antiquity, as a sacred symbol of God, The Creator Above, in the Heavens and Earth. It is noted that the Eagle soars high in the sky towards the Heavens and toward the Presence of God.

#### WakándeWahune: Known By God

Also, Eagle gave Bear his eagle wing to carry as a symbol of authority, wisdom and blessing. He was to use it on occasions of ceremonial prayer, blessings or native doctoring, it seems. In addition, Eagle gave Bear one of their sacred clan names, **Xrá Pí: Good Eagle.** Bear responded by giving youngest brother to Eagle as a relative, **Mú<sup>n</sup>ch<sup>9</sup>iñe: Little Bear**. And so, in the making of this relationship, a new relation term was created -- "**Itádo: Friend"** -- was instituted between the Clans. They became "Friends". (In contemporary times, it is referred to as "Indian Friends" in order to denote that their relationship was specially arranged as well as, unique and non-consanguine. This relation may be continue "even unto their children, who would consider each other as "Friends".

**RED EARTH** THE VILLAGE AT **MáSùje**/ **Máya<sup>n</sup> Shúje: Red Earth** was established about this **VILLAGE:** time. It was fortified with palisades as protection against enemies of the people. Those first Clans were living there, when the other Clans arrived, it is said. These other Clans asked to be admitted. So the Bear People "pitied them", it is said, and allowed for them to come into the village.

Háhda Gú: Starts Coming Back (Again)

Mayá<sup>n</sup>da Grí: Come Home From Traveling the Country Chína Ñíta<sup>n</sup>: Looking At the Village (lit.=Big Waters Village)

Ma<sup>n</sup>k<sup>9</sup>uyu: Planting Medicine

ELK ABOUT THAT TIME, THEY heard someone. Elk had been on the island and left behind. He jumped acrossCLAN: the Ñíto: Big Water (Ocean). It took four attempts before he finally made it over the Great Water. And since that time, the numbers <u>four</u> and <u>seven</u> are considered sacred and significant. They have reference to the Túhi Dówe: Four Winds (Directions) and the constellation of Bikáx?e Sáhma: Seven Stars. These numbers were integrated into the organization of the traditional society, government, ceremonial and prayer activities and in arts & crafts. The strenuous efforts of Elk caused his tracks to burn. Nevertheless, as a result, he brought the Gift of Fire to the all the People.

Ut?wá Thígre: Tracks At The FirePlace

I Péje: Fire Mouth

Thereafter, when the Bear Clan People did anything holy or in a peaceable way for the good of the whole People, he would have Elk light his (the Bear Clan) Sacred Pipe, so that he could make a prayer smoke, they say.

SOME time later, they went West and found a trail. They traveled along this trail to find the people who had made it, and thus, they came upon the Buffalo Clan People and their affiliated Clans of Owl and Wild Pigeon People.

BUFFALO SOME SAID THE BEAR CLAN and affiliated Clans first hunted and ate the Buffalo People. It was in the CLAN:

Spring, when the oldest Bear took some tobacco, and so, he prayed with it. Praying with tobacco is the original use of this sacred plant for Native American Peoples. He spoke to the Wind Spirit, so it would not

blow towards the Buffalo. And that is how they would be able to kill the Buffalo. WánksiKùje: Hunting (Shooting) A Person. Wachkehi Máñi: Killing Them. Máhi: Knife. Bear taught the People how to hunt meat and to butcher and divide the meat. The name, Mankukhan: Buffalo Breast honor a portion that was considered "something sacred to eat". They tanned the hides to wear for winter robes and to cover up the children to keep them warm. They smoked the meat, and they dried it, in order to preserve it, putting it away to use later. And again, in the Autumn of the year, they held a council and went on another Buffalo hunt. Báda Thígre: Tracks in the Snow.

Eventually, they offered one another their Sacred Pipes, and "became friends". They held a Give-Away ceremony, exchanging gifts to one another. Buffalo gave them corn -- blue, white, red and speckled and also pumpkin and squash. The raw corn cut and bloodied the Bears' mouths. Hí Wósige: (Food) Gets In The Teeth. So the corn cooked for a huge feast. And so they initiated the custom of the tribal feast. Warúje Náyi": Standing To Eat. Warúje Pí: Something Good To Eat.

By this time, the other Sky Clans (Wild Pigeon, Hoot Owl and Snake) had joined together with the Buffalo Clan People. And they made their village adjacent to the Bear's earth lodge village.

#### Watógre Hú(he): Coming Along With Them

One young Buffalo girl married into the Bear Clan. **Mu<sup>n</sup>t<sup>2</sup>óge: Male Bear.** When she gave birth, the two families decided the child should be given a name, a sacred name, so that the child would be blessed & consecrated. They gave tobacco to the oldest Buffalo Brother to give the child a name, and invited him to a feast, it seems. It was determined that the child should belong to the clan of its father. And so the child was bestowed a Bear Clan name -- **Náyi<sup>n</sup>HuMi: Comes Standing Woman (or Tries to Stand Up Female).** And thereafter, it has been the custom of naming of children for a blessing and good life from among the composed (personal) names of the paternal Clan. These names commemorate the origin and emergence history of the Clans into this world. As said, a feast was prepared for the members of the two Clans. The Clan history was narrated and the songs were sung that were composed during their journeys and adventures.

They agreed to give Bear the control of all the village during the Autumn and Winter, since it was that time of the year when they arrived and emerged on this Earth:  $M\acute{a}^n \~{n}i$ : Everything Fading/ Getting Brown.  $M\acute{a}^n S\acute{o}je$ : Smoky Weather. MaxúThka: White Cloud.  $?\acute{U}^n N\grave{a}heX \acute{a}\~{n}e$ : Big Acheiver ~ Acheives Much ~ He Does Much.

Meanwhile, the Buffalo "took over the tobacco" for the Spring and Summer Seasons.

Then it happened that the Bear Brothers were talking and the oldest said he would soon become sick and leave them. And then, his flesh would become one with their Earth Mother. But his Brothers did not understand what "sickness" meant, nor anything of death. "Remember my words, as you increase (have more children) through life. My spirit will always be with you," he told them. He requested that **Kíku<sup>n</sup>dhe:** Red Indian Paint be put on his face. And today, that is still done after the deceased is incensed in sacred cedar smoke. They say that there were two paints -- a chief's paint and a Bear Clan paint; Although he was entitled to the Chief's paint as one of the four original Clan Brothers, he indicated that he wanted the Clan paint, and said it could be used on their children as a holy sign and blessing.

THE AND THEN, HE DIED, it seems. And they howled a long while, as they did the time, when in the underworld, they awoke. That was the time when they decided to journey

WAKE: up to this earth. Wá<sup>n</sup>jiGre: Person Hollering Going Home. Héna, who was the next oldest brother, painted his older brother's face with kíku<sup>n</sup>dhe: red Indian paint. [See: "Paint"]. And then, Héna took charge of the prayer service ceremony. He sang: "I am coming to where the old people are!" They laid the deceased brother's head to the West. The oldest living brother is always in charge; however, the younger brothers, may take charge in his absence even today. So Hí<sup>n</sup>gru Bear was buried in the ground as he wished. [See: "Funeral"].

Some of the descendants of **Maxú Thká: White Cloud**, who are members of the Bear Clan, have in recent historical times, marked the graves of recently departed family members with a white flag having a green cross, which would remain until deteriorated by the weather. It's symbolism is representative of both Christian and traditional recognition of the **Túhi Dówe: Four Winds (Directions)**. ["The Genealogy & History of the White Cloud Family", <u>Museum Graphics</u>, p. 11, St. Joseph, Mo., 1960?].

[The above synopsis abstract has been derived from: "Traditions of the Iowas" & "Ethnology of the Iowas," A. Skinner; "Societies of the Iowas" A. Skinner. (Principal informants: MánthreXówe [Chief David Tohee], XómaIñe [Joseph Springer], MáñiHú [Robert Small]); "Origin Legends of the Otoe" & "The Otoe". W. Whitman. (Principal informants identified as: BD, JP, TH, WB, GWD, JK. The presumably identities are: Baptiste Deroin/ Bert Diamond, John PipeStem/ James Pickering, Thomas Hartico, William Burgess, George Washington Daily and J. Kent). Current informants for this author have been: Udásje (Joe Young, Sr.), ThígrePi (Franklin Murray), UxráHgaMi (Mary Dupee Irving), ChéxitaHsjiMi (Betsy Dupee Young) and MadhúweMi (Metee Tohee Diamond).

Auxiliary resources of information: "A Study of Siouian Cults". J.O.Dorsey, RBAE, #11, 1894; "Personal Journal. (at the Iowa, Sac & Fox Mission in Kansas)" by Rev. Wm. Hamilton, JAFL, IV, 1848.