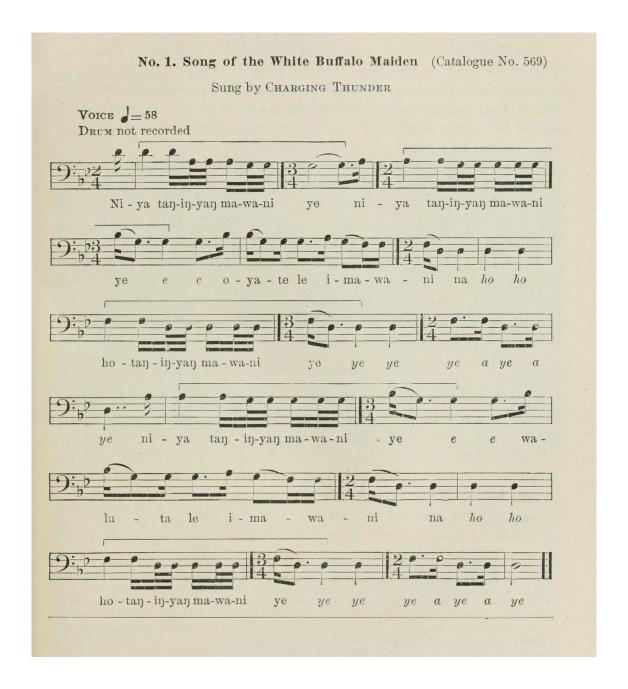
Choosing the Songs

The Densmore Repatriation Project



From Teton Sioux Music (Government Printing Office, 1918)

Frances Densmore was methodical in her categorization of the 240 songs included in *Teton Sioux Music*. Numerous categories include Ceremony and Sun Dance songs, Dream Songs, Healing Songs, Society Songs, Songs of War, Dance Songs and Honoring Songs. As Densmore writes in *American Indians and Their Music*, the words in these songs "are few in number and suggest rather than express the idea of the song."

The collection of songs begins with the The White Buffalo Calf Pipe (Ptehíŋčala Čhaŋnúŋpa), and as Lakota author and artist Kevin Locke emphatically points out, "She didn't choose to start there, they did." Densmore wrote:

"It is fitting that a narrative of the gift of the White Buffalo Calf pipe to the Sioux should introduce the present account of the ceremonies and customs of the tribe. Throughout this memoir, reference will be made to ceremonial acts performed in accordance with the instructions of the White Buffalo Maiden, a supernatural being through whose agency the ceremonial pipe was given to the Sioux."

	WORDS
	with visible breath 1
mawa'ni ye	I am walking
oya'te² le	this nation (the Buffalo nation)
ima/wani	I walk toward
na	and
ho'taninyan	my voice is heard
	I am walking
niya' tanin'yan	with visible breath
mawa'ni ye	I am walking
	this scarlet relic
	(for it) I am walking

Thirty-three songs associated with the Sun Dance are included in *Teton Sioux Music*. According to Lakota singer Courtney Yellowfat, "They go in order, they tell a story."

We will never know if more of these Sun Dance songs were recorded and discarded why Densmore, or if the Lakota elders choose to share only some of these sacred

songs. We do know there are more, because contemporary Lakota singers know them. They have been passed down generation to generation and are still in use.

Suggested video link:

The Story and Meaning of the White Buffalo Calf Maiden (11:09)

For more about the Densmore Repatriation Project go to:

www.lakotasongs.com/

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