



Indian Burial Customs

Louise J. Walker

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NOTES & QUERIES

TWO BALL-BOUNCING RHYMES FROM JAPAN—The following two rhymes, sung by children between the ages of four to eight as they bounce their balls, were obtained from a Japanese librarian and interpreter in Saga Prefecture, Japan, in September, 1949.

Ten ten ten Tenjin-sama no omatsuri ni
Ten ten temari wo kai mashita
Ten ten temari wa doko de tsuku
Wume no o-hana no shita de tsuku.

On the festival of "Ten ten ten, Tenjin-sama,"
I bought a "ten ten temari."
Where am I to bounce the "ten ten temari?"
I am to bounce it under the blooming plum tree.

In the above song, "Tenjin-sama" means Sugawara Michizane, politician and scholar in literature, who lived about the eleventh century A.D. A prime minister, he was plotted against and exiled to Fukuoka where he died. A shrine was built and dedicated to him. Parents who wish to make their children scholars worship and pray to his spirit. In the song, "ten ten ten" is inserted to give cadence. The plum tree is mentioned because Tenjin-sama liked plum trees.

Dekoboko cupee-chan yo agaru
Itsumi issen gato kota nara
Pishagete sokonete cupee-chan
Choina!

The rugged Cupid, lovely, bounces well
If I always give him something sweet, for one sen!
O! It's crushed and damaged!
Choina!

Choina has no meaning but is sometimes added to the end of the folk song to give a euphonious finish.

GWLADYS HUGHES

*American Army School,
Tokyo, Japan*

INDIAN BURIAL CUSTOMS:—One of the most interesting cemeteries of the Chippewa Indians is at Greensky Hill between Petoskey and Charlevoix, Michigan.

At one time, the Indians of Greensky Hill put in the caskets of their dead artificial flowers, tobacco, matches, a gun, shells, a small quantity of seed corn and a cotton tent for the spirit land, but in most cases, this custom has been abandoned. The most curious article of all was a long strap with a hook attached to one end for use in case the Indian came to the wall of the Celestial City and was refused admittance.

Greensky Hill is the oldest Indian burying ground in Northern Michigan and is between two and four hundred years old. Approximately a hundred persons are buried there. Directly behind the cemetery in the woods are many graves poorly cared for. Amid the tall grass and heaved turf, one notices wooden crosses or slabs marked with names and years. Here and there, a more pretentious marker made of cobblestones has been erected. On the top of the children's graves—for many are buried there—the Indian mothers have placed toys, small china animals, and bright colored trinkets.

Although not the oldest, the most unusual Indian cemetery is at Garden Island, the most beautiful of the Beaver Island group. Here is the final resting place of the "good" Indians of the island. It is said to have been used so long that the traditions of the local tribe fail to record its origin.

No Indian has ever been buried in this beautiful tree-sheltered spot who has been guilty of breaking any law of the highest code for the guidance of Indian conduct. This fact may be the reason why the total number of burials during the many decades that have passed since the first red man was buried there, has produced only two hundred graves that can be counted. It is asserted that no grave has ever been permitted to become obliterated through neglect, the one thought to be the first being always kept in good condition.

Every one of these graves has a little house-like structure built over it with a neatly shingled roof to keep the water off; the whole structure resembles a miniature village. Not only are the departed sheltered, but they are also fed. Choice foods are placed at intervals on platforms before the shelters. On those nights, the Indians of Garden Island go to bed early and do not stir out of doors before daybreak for fear of intruding on the midnight meal. It is asserted that every particle of food is eaten because none of it is ever visible the next day.

LOUISE J. WALKER

*Western Michigan College of Education,
Kalamazoo, Michigan*

JUMPING JEREMIAH:—In response to an inquiry from Ray Wood about Peter Simon Suckegg, I am sending a similar item dealing with Jumping Jeremiah. These rhymes were frequently heard in Dallas and Wilcox counties, the black belt section of Alabama, where I was brought up. Occasionally Miss Mariah was substituted for Jeremiah as the jumper.

Jeremiah
Jumped in the fire.
Fire was so hot
He jumped in the pot.
Pot was so black
He jumped in the crack.
Crack was so narrow
He jumped in the wheelbarrow.
Wheelbarrow was so rotten
He jumped in the cotton.
Cotton was so yellow
He jumped in the tallow.
Tallow as so soft
He jumped in the loft.
Loft was so low
He jumped in the snow.
Snow was so white
He jumped out of sight
And stayed all night.

While Jeremiah and Peter Suckegg indulge in different activities, the similarities between the two items might indicate a common origin.

MARGARET GILLIS FIGH

*Huntingdon College,
Montgomery, Alabama*