

Dakota Love Song

Informant/Performer:
Louis Ballard
1973

Source:
Louis W. Ballard
American Indian Music for the Classroom
Canyon Records 4143

♩ = 96

Drums: | | | | | }

Ink - pä - tä, nä - wä - zhee, Leh - che - ku wä che - chu - sheh

Wä - nä wä - nä Leh - che - ku - wä - nä Leh - che - ku - wä nä.

This being a love song, the text refers to a young maiden waving a shawl on her arm as her loved one rides away in the distance. A translation, not literal, which can be sung to the melody of the original song is as follows:

Waving to my true love,
As he rides away from me.
Far, far away,
Far away from my heart.

Background Information

Known to outsiders as Sioux, the people themselves call themselves Dakota, Lakota or Nakota depending on the dialect. Today they live in the area of North and South Dakota, Montana, part of Minnesota and into Canada, with a population upwards of 35,000. They have always been known as stalwart, aggressive, spirited courageous people. Also, they are noted for their religious qualities and philosophy of spiritual animism. Many of their famous leaders have been vision seekers. In American history the names of Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Red Cloud and Rain-in-the-Face have all blazed a path that will never be forgotten.

Courtship was an important phase in the lives of the people. The young man courted a girl with the help of a "Wiikisho", which was a unique form of wooden flute using a la-pentatonic scale. Love songs, composed by the suitor, were played upon the flute, and this "Dakota Love Song" probably originated in such a fashion.

adopted from the teacher's guide for the recording.