HIGHLIGHTS:

- Explains atonement and reconciliation for murder.
- Describes a skirmish between the Cree and the Blackfeet.
- Describes various games.

Etoihtoepintoo-eoihk -- Hoop Game.

This game is played with a hoop made of several willow withes covered with buffalo willow bark. One to four men on a side. The hoop is rolled down and one side shoots at it with wood pointed arrows, tc-ckin-katooca, or small-headed arrows, akaskocak. The sides stand thirty to forty yards apart and the hoop is thrown about twenty yards before it rolls. If one side registers a hit on the hoop (the arrow must stick in the hoop to count) it is set up against a peg on the other side. Scoring side shoots at it and if hit is made, each man on losing side shoots over one arrow to his partner. When the hoop is rolling they do not shoot at flat angle lest arrow check roll. Shooting is done with bow.
Once I was playing this game in the centre of the camp circle. There was a man called "Small Man" who was not of the kihtco-ckinigu, but could go into the ogihtcitau tipi because of his kindness and good-heartedness. He was not a kihtco-ckinigu because he had not done anything in war. But he had a very bad wife. As he was walking to the ogihtcitau tipi she ran after him calling him all kinds of names and cursing. He took off the cover of his gun case and threw it behind him saying to her, "If you step over that I'll kill you." She did and he did.

As I was holding the hoop (which he had just made for me) I recalled the time when I was playing this game, heard the shot, and ran for my tipi. My wife was related to the woman who was killed. She saw this happen and it was a lesson to her. She was good from then on. The woman was buried the same evening for when someone died in the old days they were buried as quickly as possible.

The man went into the ogihtcitau tipi and stayed there. He had no parents and since his tipi and all were given away upon his wife's death he had no where else to stay.

The dead woman's oldest brother, who was not quite a kihtco-ckinigu, called his three other brothers to hold counsel. He said, "Our brother-in-law has hurt our feelings and has made us cry. Still the way our sister treated him she deserved to be killed. The best thing we can do is to ask our brother-in-law to eat in our tipis and to have our wives look after his moccasins because he was kind to our sister and it all was her fault."

They invited him into their tipis and told him that they would keep him each in turn. They told him not to be ashamed before any of them and thanked him for his kindness to their sister until the accident had happened. They kept him all summer. And all summer he was sore-hearted because he had made his brothers-in-law lonesome and they had treated him kindly.

In the fall he made a war trip to the south. Twenty-five men went out to get horses. Before they reached the enemy country Small Man told them what was in his memory. He said, "I came on this trip, not to return alive, but to do something worthy for my brothers-in-law. When I was in the ogihtcitau tipi after I killed my wife I resolved to sell my life dearly. 'If they were going to kill me,' I thought, 'I will get some of them also.' When my brothers-in-law spoke kindly to me I grew very sore-hearted and that is why I want to pay them."

After he made this speech, one of the Cree said, "You had better get that out of your mind and stop talking about being killed." Small Man replied, "You misunderstand me. I don't mean to go out and get killed but if there is any fighting I will not be afraid. I am determined to do something really worthwhile for my brothers-in-law."
The next morning they found the Blackfeet and at night the leader chose Small Man, apiectcina-peu, and three others to go out for horses. Two of them went into the camp from the north, two went in from the south. They got a good bunch of horses. Small Man got away with ten very nice horses. In the morning the Blackfeet found their horses gone and could track the Cree because the grass was wet with dew.

The Cree put the horses in a cut bank and prepared to defend them. Small Man did not take to the shelter of the bank but fought out on top all the time. Finally when the sun was at about four o'clock he took one of the best horses and said, "I am going out to get some Blackfeet. I am doing this for my brothers-in-law and these horses are for them." He rode right among the Blackfeet. They shot him down and ran away. When the Cree came back to the camp they gave the horses he had taken to his brothers-in-law.

The tipi would have been given away to some non-relative even if the woman had died a natural death.

If one man kills another, the dead man's relatives run out and kill the murderer. Then this man's relatives in turn seek to kill the killers. The kihtco-ckinigi related to one side intervene and the kihtco-ckinigi related to the other side draw off their relations. They take the relatives of the man last killed into their tipi (i.e. the personal tipi of the kihtco-ckinigi). They unwrap the sacred pipe stem and point it at the vindictive relative. He must pass his hand over the stem from butt to mouthpiece, raise his hand and lower it down his face and chest. That resolves the feud and there must be peace. The kihtco-ckinigi themselves never quarreled amongst their own people.

I myself saw one man kill another in a drunk. The killer fled to the southeast and lived among the Montana Stony for many years. When he was fleeing, he ran from camp to camp, stopping only to get some food until he was far away. Years later he came back and was friendly with the dead man's relatives. (No gifts given -- apparently lapse of time had negated vengeance.) This same thing happened another time. The murderer fled to the west and came back after many years. Everything was all right.

Before my time if one man was killed in a battle, they would run away. But if there was a good chance of getting horses they would fight it out.

Among the Cree one of the very highest honors that a man could have in war was to go out on a fighting trip to the enemy country and make friends with the enemy. I myself heard about it but I never cared to try it because on two occasions the Blackfeet scared me very much.

The only braveness the Blackfeet showed was to lure our men
into their tipis with protestations of friendship and, having thus disarmed them, would kill them.

There was one time when the Blackfeet defeated the East people and the Stonies. A war party went out and at the forks of the Belly River they came upon some Blackfeet. It later turned out that these Blackfeet were drunk.

In the fighting a Soto kihtco-ckinigiu was killed and one after the other all the kihtco-ckinigiu fell. Finally the Crees and Stonies had no leaders left and they retreated to the river. One of the chiefs of the East people was mihkwa-westigan -- Red Hair Head. The leader of the trip was "Yellow Hood." They retreated into the valley of the river where there was bush for cover and held off the enemy. But the Blackfeet rolled rocks down on them and hit quite a few. They were thus dislodged and ran into the river. They were in the water up to their hips and the Blackfeet came up and shot at them with guns and revolvers. There was a big bluff on the other side of the river and the Cree made for that.

Two of my cousins and one of my uncles were in that fight. One of them fell in the water. He didn't get up but just floated along. A Blackfoot shot him in the lip. Another of my cousins was shot at with a revolver and was hit in the ear. It was so close that he had powder burns on the side of his head. My uncle didn't get hit.

The Cree had come upon a few tents along the river. They attacked, not knowing that there were many more tipis farther up. After the peace was made, the Blackfeet told us that they had been drunk then. (?) Buffalo and the old chief Poundmaker used to tell this story.

On another trip, twelve went forth. When they had gone a little way, the father of one came running after. The boy's grandfather had had a dream that the bunch were not going to come back, and so that fellow went back home.

As they were crossing a prairie in the Blackfoot country one of the Blackfeet saw them. He signalled to the others by riding his horse back and forth. The Cree dug a pit. I have seen this place. It was on the crest of a ridge. Two winters before, the Blackfeet and Cree had been at peace. One of the Blackfeet visited the Cree and took a Cree wife back to his country.

This woman was sent by the Blackfeet (end of BK.IV) to where the Cree were entrenched. The woman said that the Blackfeet wanted to make friends with the Cree. The leader and one other Cree said that they were willing to go out and meet the Blackfeet. They went out and the Blackfeet sat them down on a fine robe and gave them the pipe of peace. It was done so that the other Cree could see this going on. Then the woman was sent again to persuade the rest of the party to come out.
There was one lone Soto in the bunch. He tried to stop the Cree from going, saying, "If we come out we will not be able to fight. I will not go out at all." After the woman had come a third time, all came forth except the Soto. She came back a fourth time for him. He said, "You have heard me tell my partners not to venture forth. Well, now I'll come out. But you tell the Blackfeet not to touch me or my gun or I will fight right there." He waited for the woman to go and then followed behind her. He went halfway down to where the Blackfeet were, squatted down, and called out, "This is as far as I will go."

Then the Blackfeet turned on the ten Cree who were disarmed and shot them. They also shot at the Soto. He got up and ran at the Blackfeet. He had only a muzzleloader. He shot once, missed. He reloaded, shot again, missed. They hit him, he turned and fell. They rushed up and clubbed him.

That is the way the Blackfeet tell the story. The Cree woman was my aunt. She later came back home. We used to ask her about this story. She said that she was sure that the Blackfeet were trying to be friendly. In fact, one of her relatives, eipikhwe-skane-wisk, "Dusty Horn," was among those killed. The leader's name was wacipectcisk. That is the end of the story. That is how the Blackfeet acted.

When the leader decided to go out on a raid, he would tell a few good young men that he was going. This would be done quite a while before they actually start. These young men would probably tell some of their friends or brothers who would also want to go along and in that way the number of the party would grow. They would secretly prepare for the trip, saving up ammunition, getting a good gun or a bow, having their sister or mother prepare four or five pairs of moccasins. Ten nights (or less) before they leave they go around to all the kihktoc-kinigu tipis and sing war songs and dance. From each kihktoc-kinigu they get some tobacco and some other gift. They do this on the night they leave and then scatter in all directions, each man going past his own tipi. They meet at an appointed place, the leader gets there last. Then they go off in a direction different from the one they really are going to take and sleep in the bush all day.

In the morning they are missing and the people say so and so must have gone off on a war trip. Those who want to go along look for them to the south but since they are in the north they do not often find them. If these youngsters do succeed in finding the party they all laugh to think that he has found them despite all their pains to get away. However if a person is sick or has some kind of trouble so that he might hinder the trip, they drive him back. There are always young men who are very eager to go along on a raid.

Only a man who had been on a raid once before and who had the dream power could be a leader. It made no difference if he had not taken any horses or done much on his first trip as long as
he knew how things were done. I never was a leader of a trip because I didn't have that knowledge in my dreams. Whatever success the expedition had went to the leader's credit. I know one Soto, Iron Child, who did that all the time. No matter how many men he would have with him, he would go out and get many horses himself.

On one of these raids you usually took care (if you were wise) to be on good terms with the others of the party so that if they got some horses and you didn't get any somehow, they would give some to you. If a man boasted a lot on a trip his partners might take a dislike to him. When the horses were stolen and the enemy aroused, they might say to the boaster, "Go back and get horses for yourself the way we did." The man who stole the horses disposed of them as he liked. Once I went out on a raid and got mad at two of my relatives. I got some horses and they didn't. I would not give them any and they came home empty-handed.

Some games I forgot to tell you about before are: epapatowihk -- "Playing With the Ball." Played with hard ball a little larger than a baseball, packed with buffalo or antelope hair. Also with a stick curved at the end. Sticks were placed in the ground as goal line markers. Object of game to drive ball beyond goal line. Not permissible to touch ball with any part of body. Four to six on a side usually from different chiefs. Both men and women played this game but never mixed. One goal is game. No stop until goal is made. Goals 100 to 150 yards apart.

Ekwackwackwin-towehk -- "Tossing the Ball."

Same ball used as in previous game. When two play ball is simply batted back and forth until one player is tired and catches it. Sometimes there are four on a side -- each side standing in a semicircle. Ball is batted from hand to hand around circle. When one player tires he catches the ball. Should he miss one of the spectators will step in and take his place saying, "Your eyes will be dry (i.e. from close watching) before we miss." Played by men and women and mixed.

I often heard tell of a race that was run between one of the Cipiwiyiniwuk and one of the Nutimiwiyiniwuk. They happened to be related but did not know this. Their respective ogihtcitaubet a lot of money on them. They were to run around a hill and back -- ten miles about. Even before they reached the hill, the Nutimiwiyiniwuk had left the Cipiwiyiniwuk far behind. Some men mounted on good horses accompanied the runners and they had to gallop to keep up with the Nutimiwiyiniwuk. The Cipiwiyiniwuk got back when all had already gone to their tipis.

When the people got together in big camps, there always was much foot racing. Both long and short distances were run. The racers went barefoot on the shorter distances but wore moccasins for the longer runs. They also wore breechclouts.
To illustrate this last Fine Day showed his own breechclout that he always wears. It is a strip of soft cloth about eight inches wide drawn between legs and under belt before and behind. He said that the man would not be ashamed to be seen stark naked except when girl relatives were around. "There is nothing to be ashamed of -- every man has one." Then he told me a story of seeing two white men in swimming. He went up to one who had come out of the water, and said to him (through a little boy who was interpreting), "Ho -- you've got a small one. An Indian would be ashamed of it." The white man said, "My partner there has one that is still smaller. We often measure them, one against the other, and mine always touches his belly." (Fine Day presented this as one of his funniest stories.)

Whenever there was a big camp there would be much, much betting on horse races. Even the women would bet against each other. Once I raced against a Soto at Wainwright. The horse I rode was one I borrowed from my nephew who had bought it from this same Soto. All the Crees from the reserves bet on me. The Cree women bet their dishes against the dried meat of the Soto women. About twenty head of horses were bet.

It rained before the race for several days. I kept my horse covered up, the Soto didn't. We raced over a level stretch a quarter of a mile long. I beat the Soto by a long way.

I did much racing like that when I was young. Sometimes I would lose too.

Mici-ga-tciganihk -- Big Th(?) Hiding Game.

This was brought from the Flat Heads by those who fled there after the Rebellion. It is played a lot now but I don't know it very well.

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