

q̄iq̄əməm qe da kodayu
Songs for the Cat's Cradle Game

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transcribed and translated by

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1. Introduction

?onax^wax?idəm meqənoḥ ?əmiasa kodayu.
We used to play the cat's cradle game to pass time.

?ome? gənuḥ^w q̄əutəḥ^w laḥənuḥ^w ?eyəsu. ga?əm
We sing while we play with our hands. These are

q̄iq̄əməm gada qe da kodayu.
Some of the songs to sing while playing cat's cradle.

Autobiography by ?ənica, Mary Dick

(Told to Freda Shaughnessy)

A. The father's side of the family.

d^zawada?anuḥ^w laḥ "Kingcome". hamis
He was a member of the tribe from Kingcome. Right

naqolax laḥis ḡ^wayuxdo?s. ḫa ?oligən ?olakalaxən
from the wolf clan. He must have stayed being

?oxsə?əm beg^wanəm niwaḫa xəse?. gaḫaḫəla ḫ^wuda
a man he never disappeared. It reached this
[Wolf clan]

nalaḫ, gaḫən ḫaḫgən le?gən nug^wa, luḫ^wdaḫ^ws
day, and also to me, and also to

gəḫ ?aqus gənganənəm. doḫ yuḫ hamən ?omp.
you children of today. You as well as my father.

waləskənīs ḫən ?omp. nəgextaḫa
"waləskənīs" is my father. "nəge" was his

nuləs. lami nəge ḫ^wəng^wadaxidəs meyən?iḫ.
older relative. "nəge" begat "meyən?iḫ".

hamis ?əbəmps dadad^zi meyən?iḫ. hamisən
"dadad^zi s" mother was "meyən?iḫ". My father

?ompida čaye?, hami?səs lagə?tus nus?əm ?olakala
was the younger brother, that is why your closely

makeḫa?. ?omas "brothers" hida maluk^w.
related to me. The two of them were brothers.

hamis ḫ^wa?nux^wəs he nəm meyən?iḫ.
The older one was "meyən?iḫ"'s son.

nug^wamis ḫ^wanux se čaye?. haḫa lagis
I was the child from the younger son. The way it

q^wəsaxibidu?, la?e ḫ^wəng^wadəxidi meyən?iḫas
became distant was, when "meyən?iḫ" had "dadad^zi",

dadad^zi, la dadad^zi ḫ^wəng^wadəxidīs kasəlas.
and "dadad^zi" had (your father) "kasəlas".

nəmək^w se mislən ?ome. ?iswəḫən
I'm from a different family also. I refused to

nikiqəla qən "cousin" nuk^wəs "Sam"
accept Sam as my cousin because I always thought

?olaqəla ?om ni?əqəla na?m ?ompən ?omp lawi.
that his dad was my dad, and he thought the same way.
[ie. the families are very close]

hiwaʒəŋ qəʒəlaʒ ɡən.
I didn't know that I was a first cousin to him.

d. The mother's side of the family.

la?əm d'awada?anuʒ yəʒən ?omp gayuʒ laʒ
My father was a member of the "d'awada?anuʒ"

qawadiliqəla gayuʒ laʒa ?oligen. walamən
from "qawadiliqəla" from the "?oligen" clan. My

?abəmpi, me?əmtəgəli ?abəmpəs. yaʒən
mother, her mother was a "me?əmtəgəli". My

?abəmpə? mədətbe?. ?awinag'idad'əs ?icikən.
mother was a Matelpi. They own the land "?icikən".

wala?əm ʒawadida ʒadaqəs sa lig'wəʒdaʒʒ.
A lady married someone from Campbell River.

hanis la ?ompən ?abəmpa da lig'wəʒdaʒʒ.
My mother's father was the guy from Campbell River.

hanisən lagit "half and half" lu wa lig'wəʒdaʒʒ,
that's why I'm half from Campbell River, and the

lu wa me?əmtəgəli, lu wa k'agui. ?olaqələn
Matelpi tribe, and the "k'agui". I'm really

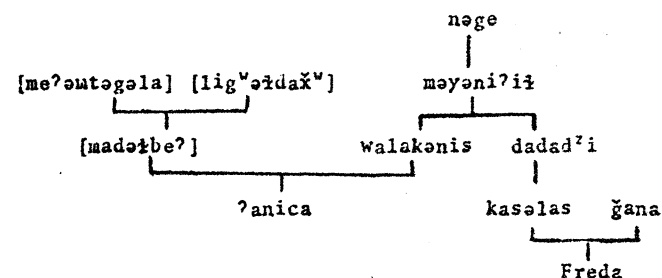
lig'wəʒdaʒʒ.
from Campbell River. ?olaqələn ?abəmpən
My mother is a Campbell

?abəmpən lig'wilaʒsəm. nəmən gayuʒ.
River lady. That's where I come from.

Kinship Diagram

Mother's Side

Father's Side



Autobiography of Freda Shaughnessy

Originally, I came from Gilford Island. I went to the residential school in Alert Bay at the age of six, not knowing a word of English. During this time I spent my summers at Kingcome. At the school we were forbidden to speak our language, therefore, I never learned to speak the language like the old people. Five years ago I moved to Victoria from Alert Bay and finished high school. I enrolled in the Native Indian Language Program at the University of Victoria two years ago, and am now taking a B.A. in Linguistics.

2. Kodayu Cat's Cradle Songs

1. Little Man

ʔoʔms la haḡʷətaqad. laʔəm lalabəndalida
You have it like this. When the little man

bəḡʷanəmbidu laqus haḡʷigilida.
tries to get to the then you do this.

widi ʔalayaʔ, widi ʔalaya
qaga yugʷayaʔ, widi ʔalaya
qaga cəlḡayaʔ, widi ʔalaya
qaga gusayaʔ, widi ʔalaya
qaga kʷəsayaʔ

laʔəm lalabəndala bidawi da ʔaxi "ya nugʷadʔoʔəm
When the little one gets to the end, "Oh its me" he

ḡola" nixti, laʔe maḡidida ʔapsuḡcana. gaḡəm wila
says, just as they let one hand go The fingers

niʔiid maniḡʷ.
all showed up.

2. kayəḡʷ Duck

laʔəm kʷawalida kʷayəḡʷ. lamis, dənḡalida
The duck is sitting in the water. There's a song

qaʔe. lu qu haʔəm la qʷalisəm laḡ dənḡila.
for it. He could sing for himself.

ʔisən qoḡəl
I don't know.

ʔe ʔe ʔe

ʔe ʔeʔa dasidas giḡaməʔs kʷayəḡʷa

ʔe ʔe ʔe

ʔe ʔeʔa gagila gagi ḡuloʔkʷəḡəʔkuḡʷ

giḡaməs kʷayəḡʷa

ʔe ʔe ʔeʔa

dasidas giḡaməʔs kʷayəḡʷa. walaʔəm maḡi caʷi da.
Dive chief of ducks. Let it go.

laʔəm kayoxʷida. laʔəm la dasid.
It disappeared. It dived.

3. bəḡʷanəm Man

ʔigaḡsalaləsida bəḡʷanəm laḡəs xʷakʷəna laḡa
A man was lying in his canoe on the beach.

ḡəmayis. gaḡəm wiḡwatuḡu sida namux.
One came and called him out.

ḡilalənḡuḡi ti.i.gaḡsəlalisə
I'm calling you lying there in the canoe

ḡilalənḡuḡi ti.i.gaḡsəlalisə

qagada nəmḡəm x ḡaqʷaʔaci haʔe

ḡilalənḡuḡi ti.i.gaḡsəlalisə

qagada maʔico ḡaḡaqʷaʔaci haʔe

ḡilalənḡuḡi ti.i.gaḡsəlalisə

qagada yudəxʷsəm ḡaḡaqʷaʔaci haʔe

ḡilalənḡuḡi ti.i.gaḡsəlalisə

qagada musgəm cagaciye? ha?e

?ola ča?e naxlə?. la?əm dax?əi?to qa?e da
Really he said. He ran out for the "cakus".

cakus. ?is lax?aqada xaxaq?a. la?əm
He didn't stand up for the copper. He got

loitu qas la?e.
He got out to leave.

4. ġiwas Deer

xisda x?atəla ġiwasa. ?o?ms
He wasn't a deer to begin with. You hold

nag?ətaqi.
it like this.

walis ma sa, walis ma sa
masən walisi?a
walasəx ġiwas dunak?əla

la?əu ġiwasida la?e ma?icawi da nəm, la?əm
When they let one [hand] go it became a deer, it

ġiwasida la dunak?əla.
became a running deer.

5. xə?bidu Small Black Bear

?og?ala?əm, ?o?m q?id?oy?u?esida ?axə, kodayu.
Its different, you just squeeze the Cat's Cradle.

la?əm ?olaqəla xən kodayu kis wila ?axəla la
Its really a Cat's Cradle game [where] you don't get

wasxəmasəs. ?o?m q?id?oy?os ča?bida?o.
to use all of the fingers. Just hold it squished.

nixd?o?s nixd?o?s, qən wəy?axəlis?a

dax?axəlisə? čabida?owo ho

wə?la ho wə?la ho, wa?la ho wa?la ho

nixd?o?s nixd?o?s, qən wəy?axəlis?a

dax?axəlisə? čabida?owo ho

wo?lo ho wo?lo ho, wo?lo ho wo?lo ho

la?əm dax?axəlis.
He jumped down.

6. Caterpillar turns into a Butterfly

la?əm la paniga?ə?bido? wida qala?ow? ya? la?e
Caterpillar forming into a butterfly.

pəttida hamumu la?əm la k?əlwalabido?.

wi wə k?əlwalabido?

wi wə las qala?i-i

xaxicawən gigi?yana

la? xid?ənes nala

hamusəla?ə ha-a-m-m

7. Grandchildren's Song

laʔəm danʔidi cučəxʷəməs.
His grandchildren sang.

naxʷəʔx naxʷəgəitusəla dʔəm
cala cuwʔa
he·y ya yéy, he·y ya yéy
he·y ya yéy
naxʷəgəitusəla dʔəm cala cuwʔa
he·y ya yéy, he·y ya yéy
he·y ya yéy
qonʔu wədʔeʔ lalaʔu cučəxʷəməma
he·y ya yéy, he·y ya yéy
he·y ya yéy
welaqasu cibadaxiʔʌ laʔa dʷəlayəkʷa
he·y ya yéy, he·y ya yéy
he·y ya yéy
ʔis ʔogʷanəm laʔa wisən
ğəğəlbəlaʔəm laʔ cučəxʷəməma
he·y ya yéy, he·y ya yéy
he·y ya yéy

laʔəm ɣəğəlbəla ʔoʔm sa tigʷəxʷəwəbidu leʔ ɣəlpəʔ.

8. The Two Young Brothers

malukʷ cečəyʷa bibəgʷanəm. "memiʔəs nixlatiʔəs
Two young brothers. "Where are you going

nula." "laʔən pəpəlyəʔ," laʔəm qasidida
brother." "I'm going to pəpəlyəʔ." The older one

nula. leʔe ʔi pəpəlyəʔ.
Walked away. He is on his way to pəpəlyəʔ.

ma·miʔəs ʔe heda, ma·miʔəs ʔe heda
pəpəlyəʔən ce·yʷa biču·
pəpəlyəʔən ce·yʷa biču·
ʔiselala ʔiselala
qən leʔ lasɣaʔmeʔyui nu·la
kʷidəla kʷidəla
ʔeʔəs ʔeʔoyakəlxədi laʔui wi·sa
kʷidəla kʷidəla
ʔeʔəs ʔeʔoyakəlxədi laʔui wi·sa
wəlaʔe wəlaʔe daxʷaqəlsa, ʔui nu·la
wəlaʔe wəlaʔe daxʷaqəlsa ʔui nu·la

we laʔəm ʔoʔm gəgəgəm dida ganənəm. laʔəm
The younger one went ahead. He jumped

ʔoʔm daxʷi qas laʔe gəgəgəme ʔis nula. lameʔ
ahead if of his older brother. They didn't

ləʔ ʔəgəiləm, qu lalaʔ ʔeʔoyaqəlxəde.
allow him to go, he might make his brother go slow.

9. The Old People

?əmlix^w la?e da čidaq qasis ġiġanəm.
The ladies usually baby-sat because they were the wives.

la?e la?es nuk^w ġvigiles nuk^w ?o?m lawis
when they went somewhere to do something the old

k'esəsida q'əlsq'əlyak^w daduq^wa laħ ħis qu
people just sat around watching for their wives

gaħħ nənək^w. la?əm le? wəkəsu.
to come home. And they called to them.

we?əm gesəs nuneməsa.

we?əm gesəs nuneməsa.

daduq^wəla mənix^wənoħa ħ^wən ħa noħ

ġaġanəm kasa qu gaħħ

daduq^wələnoħ^w ħa ħənoħ ġaġanəma

qu gaħħ

[We are watching for our wives to come]

"?e ?ise kelasi laiħ gaħħ." ?o ?o?m lawis
"They are not going to be coming." They [old people]

la wa?očexid. ?o?m la wa?očexi? k'esəmgəs ħa
turned into dogs. They turned into dogs and sat

guk^w le?, ke ?is gaħħəs ġaġanəm.
outside of the house, because their wives weren't coming.

qiqəndəm qe da kodayu IISongs for the Cat's Cradle Game II

by *

?ənica, Mary Dick

transcribed and translated by music score by

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The musical score to the Cat's Cradle songs is presented here transcribed according to a 7 note diachronic scale. For the most part the songs fit into this standard notation, however, frequent pauses between phrases are usually untimed. This transcription is intended as a first approximation and will hopefully stimulate more research into the analysis of Kwakiutl songs.

Our thanks to Miss Laura Kermeen for her assistance in preparing the score.

1. Little Man

Handwritten musical score for '1. Little Man' in 4/4 time. The melody is written on a single staff with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: wi-di za-li-ya wi-di za-li-ya ga-ga, yu-gi-ya wi-di za-li-ya ga-ga, cal-xi-ya wi-di za-li-ya ga-ga, gawl-si-ya wi-di za-li-ya ga-ga, and Ki-si-ya.

wi-di za-li-ya wi-di za-li-ya ga-ga
 yu-gi-ya wi-di za-li-ya ga-ga
 cal-xi-ya wi-di za-li-ya ga-ga
 gawl-si-ya wi-di za-li-ya ga-ga
 Ki-si-ya

2. Duck

Handwritten musical score for '2. Duck' in 2/4 time. The melody is written on a single staff with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: ze ze ze ze ze ze da-si-dos gi-ga-mis ki-yu-xe ze ze ze.

ze ze ze ze ze ze da-si-dos gi-
 ga-mis ki-yu-xe ze ze ze

Continuation of the musical score for '2. Duck' from page 103. It consists of four staves of music with lyrics: ze ze ze ga-gi-la ge-gi gu-la-ka-la-ga-xe-xu-x gi-ga-mis ke-yu-xe ze ze ze da-si-dos gi-ga-mis ki-yu-xe, and ze.

ze ze ze ga-gi-la ge-gi gu-la-ka-
 la-ga-xe-xu-x gi-ga-mis ke-yu-xe
 ze ze ze da-si-dos gi-ga-mis ki-yu-xe
 ze

3. Man

Handwritten musical score for '3. Man' in 3/4 time. The melody is written on a single staff with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: xi-la-lon-xut ti-gax-sa-la-li-sa, xi-la-lon-xut ti-gax-sa-la-lis, ga-ga-da nams-gom xa-ga-a-di he, and xi-la-lon-xut ti-gax-sa-la.

xi-la-lon-xut ti-gax-sa-la-li-sa
 xi-la-lon-xut ti-gax-sa-la-lis
 ga-ga-da nams-gom xa-ga-a-di he
 xi-la-lon-xut ti-gax-sa-la

lis ga-ga-da ma'-sam xa-xa-g'a-za-

ei he xi-la-lon-xuk ei-gax-sa-la-

lis ga-ga-da yu-dox'-sam xa-xa-g'a-za-

ei he xi-la-lon-xuk ei-gax-sa-la-

lis ga-ga-da mus-gam ca-

ga-ei he.

4. Deer

wolis ma sa wolis ma sa ma-sen wa-lis-zi-

xa wa-la-six gi-was du-narkal-a

5 Small Black Bear

nix-dos nix-dos-gan wi-ya-xa-li-si

dox'-a-xa-li-si ce-bi-da-wo ho

wo-la ho wo-la ho wo-la ho wo-la ho

nix-dos nix-dos-gan wi-ya-xa-lis-si

do-x'a-xa-li-si ce-bi-da-wo ho

wo-la ho wo-la ho wo-la ho wo-la ho

6 Caterpillar

wi we las ga-la-wi wi we las ga-la-

wi xa-xi-za-wan gi-ga-ya-

na lax xi d'a - nes na - la
ha - mu - sla - ta ha - m - m - m

7 Grandchildren's
Song

na - x'a - x na - x'a - gal - tu -
sa - la d'am co - la co? - wa
he ya ye hey ya yey
hey ya na - x'a - gal - tu
sa - la d'am co - la co? - wa
hey ya ye he ya ye

gan - xu wa - d'e la - la -
xu cu - cux - x'a - ma he ya ye
he ya ye he we - la -
ga - su ci - ba - dax? - i - xa
xu gal - ya - ka hey ya
hey ya ye he ya ye
hey ?is zu - ga - nam la - xa
wis - an ga - gal - ba - la - am lax
du - cax - x'a - ma he ya ye

he ya ye he ya ye

8 The Two Young Brothers

ma-mi-xas a ha-da ma-mi-xas
 a ha-da pa-pal-ya-xan ca-a-
 ya bi-ču pa-pal-ya-xan ca-a-
 ya bi-ču is-la-la is-la-la
 gan le las-ga-ma-yut nu-u-la
 ki-da-la ki-da-la a-xas-a-
 o-ya-kol-x-s-di la-xut wi-i-sa

ki-da-la ki-da-la a-xas-a-
 o-ya-kol-x-s-di la-xut wi-i-sa
 wal-la-a wal-la da-xa-gal-sa xut
 nu-u-la wal-la-a wal-
 a da-xa-gal-sa xut nu-u-la

The Old People

we-əm ge-sas nu-na-ma-sa we-əm
 ge-sas nu-na-ma-sa da-du-č'la
 mani-xan o-xa x'an xa ne-x a-gan-əm
 kasa gu x'x da du q'la no-xi x-x-mox
 ga-ganama gu ga x'x [spoken very quickly]