

The White Buffalo Woman's Society began from a dream a man once had when he was fasting out on the hills. He dreamt that he heard a man calling from far away. He kept on fasting and the fourth night the voice was so clear that he could hear the words. The voice kept saying, "Put a child with them." Soon he saw a man come carrying two small children.

The man said, "I am going to give you these two children. Fix up a feast and I will return to you. I am the buffalo. When you fix the feast and I come, you will have plenty of buffalo all the time."

The man who had been fasting came back to the village and told how a buffalo man had promised him that his people were coming to the village to give him two buffalo children. He asked that the people put up a feast of all the different kinds of corn and that two women were to come to receive the two buffalo children.

Soon a party of strange women came and showed them how to give the dance and then ate of the food. When the women left, the two children struggled to free themselves and go along. One got away but the other one was kept behind. The child was raised in the tribe and it was from this feast that the White Buffalo Society began.

Each winter the women came back to see the child. They are the buffalo so the society dances to give the buffalo a chance to see the child. The buffalo women bring the buffalo herds.

Rule is that a woman should not belong to this society until she is beyond the age of bearing children. This was the highest and last society that women could belong in. Women cannot belong while still having menstruation periods as the blood will drive the buffalo away.

The society kept three men as singers.

Before the ceremony of selling is held, the women put up a sweatlodge frame like an inverted(? p. 1) lodge frame like an inverted bullboat frame. The one buying must supply 5-6 hides made into robes for the cover. Each one buying gives a wooden dish and robes to one of the older women and gets her right in the society. One person is selected to buy the leader's robe which is white. As soon as the sale is finished, the new society women line up. The leader will be on the end wearing the white buffalo robe which will have the hair outside. The child, a little girl between the years of 2 and nine, stands in the center of the line wearing a robe hairside out. A woman at the end of the line wears the robe of a summer buffalo and is spoken of as the summer buffalo. All the other women wear their robes hairside in. A woman standing next to the child burns the incense peppermint and smokes the clothing they wear; the child represents the small child left in the tribe by the buffalo women.

The dance is symbolic of the return of the buffaloes. All wear a band of buffalo hide around the arms and forehead, in which are tied owl and magpie feathers. The head woman wears a headband of white buffalo hide.

The dance is put on in the winter just a few days before the shortest days come and its purpose is to bring the buffalo herds back to the villages. It also was believed to bring cold weather causing the herds to desert the flats for the sheltered riverbottoms. Failure to have given the dances would have resulted in small herds or none at all.