

# SHAMAN

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*Front cover:* A Korean shaman standing barefoot on chopper blades.  
Photograph: Seong-nae Kim, around 2000.

Photograph from Daniel A. Kister, *Dramatic Characteristics of Korean Shaman Ritual*

*Back cover:* Detail of a deer-stela near the town of Mörön, Khövsgöl Province in northern Mongolia. Photograph: László Kunkovács, 1990

Photograph from Ágnes Birtalan: *Some Animal Representations in Mongolian Shaman Invocations*

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## The “Shamanic Disease” in Uzbek Folk Beliefs

V. N. BASILOV

MOSCOW

*The Uzbeks believed that the shaman's career began with a special disease caused by the spirits. The case study of an Uzbek woman, Ochil, reveals that she was haunted by spirits, went mad and, finally, on the advice of a Muslim holy person (išan), became a shamaness (qušnač). Later she was visited several times and instructed in divination and healing by a helping spirit that appeared in the form of an old man. In Central Asia the “shamanic disease” sometimes manifested not as mental but as physical illness. Such ailments might strike not only the shaman but also members of his or her family. The nature of the “shamanic disease” is determined by the traditions of the given society and its culture.*

“Shamanic disease” is one of the most interesting manifestations of the complicated and intense psychical life of a shaman. For a long time this disease was viewed as evidence that a shaman was an “abnormal” person—as evidence of a psychomental malady. This view is rejected by contemporary science. However, new data that throw light on the nature of “shamanic disease” are drawn to the attention of students of shamanism in this paper. These data were obtained in the course of anthropological fieldwork among the Uzbeks of Central Asia. Although Islam began to spread in Central Asia in the 7th century, remnants of shamanic practice and experience have survived in the region, especially among the Uzbeks and Tajiks.

Like many other peoples who preserved shamanism in their cultures, the Uzbeks believed that the beginning of shamanic activity was related to a special disease caused by the spirits. Of course, the influence of Islam over a period of more than one thousand years destroyed or significantly modified the ancient concept of this strange disease, and in folk beliefs it was often considered to be a punishment meted out by the spirits to a person who refused to obey their command to become a shaman. The descriptions of the “shamanic disease” given by some Siberian

peoples suggest that the type of illness suffered by a person predestined to be a shaman was determined by the traditions of the culture of his/her society. The significance of the event was that, during the illness, the spirits stole a person's soul and transported it to another world.

The aim of the spirits was to change the shaman's nature and make him or her into a new person. To this end they cut his body into pieces, cut his head off, boiled and ate his flesh and later resurrected him. In the course of these operations a shaman was endowed with supernatural knowledge and capacities.

In fact, the hallucinations which a shaman experienced during his "shamanic disease" reproduced the actions that in time immemorial were performed really or symbolically during a rite of initiation (rite of passage).<sup>1</sup>

Experiencing these operations in a realm of hallucinations, a shaman, naturally, felt torment. Thus, the painful visions seen by initiates at the very outset of their assumption of the role of shaman were suggested by the ancient beliefs of their societies.

That the nature of the "shamanic disease" was socially determined can be proved by an analysis not only of the hallucinations (which, in general, have a clear logic based on the archaic worldview), but also of the development of folk beliefs concerning the reasons for and manifestations of the disease. The purpose of this paper is to draw the attention of scholars to Uzbek ethnographic data that help us to trace this evolution.

The traditions of the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan have preserved some vestiges of the concepts that underlie the archaic forms of the "shamanic disease." For instance, in folk stories about the illness one can find survivals of the belief in the death and resurrection of the shaman (Basilov 1984b: 237), although this motif is now rare. Other ideas are represented much more widely, namely: (1) the necessity for a shaman to suffer; (2) the kidnapping of a shaman by the spirits and his/her isolation for a period; (3) indications that a shaman must receive instruction. All three motifs are illustrated in the story told by an Uzbek shamaness, Ochil, who was born about 1910 and lived in the Nur-ata district of Samarkand *oblast'* (now *viloyat*), Uzbekistan. I interviewed her in 1976, together with B. Kh. Karmysheva and K. K. Kubakov. The conversations were recorded on tape.

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<sup>1</sup> See Eliade 1974; Basilov 1984a and Balzer (ed.) 1990.

Ochil’s son, born in 1936 and a school teacher by profession, stated that Ochil became a shamaness in 1944–1945. One day she went to an underground storeroom to fetch some wood. There, to her surprise, she saw a group of dancing girls. One of them resembled her elder brother’s wife (*yanga*), who lived about 30 km away. “What are you doing here?” Ochil asked. The sister-in-law made an abrupt reply and the two women quarreled. Ochil tore out one of her sister-in-law’s hairs, ran back to the house and threw the hair into a fire. As she did so, she felt someone kick her shoulder. After this she went mad. Ochil’s son remembered that during this period of temporary insanity she once threw his small brother, a baby, to the ground from the roof of the house. Because of her violent behavior her husband bound her hands and legs. He fixed a pole in an earth floor in the middle of the house and tied her to it, locked the door and windows and left her for the night. When he returned the next morning, all he could see was the pole and the rope; a large hole had been made in the earthen wall. When Ochil was found she was taken to a famous *išan* (holy person), who read prayers to heal her. Although these helped and her mind became normal, she would often sit in a corner of the house, immersed in her visions and summoning various saints and spirits (*pari*). On being taken once more to the *išan*, he said it would be better if she became a shamaness (*qušnač* in the local Uzbek dialect). From that time on Ochil told fortunes and cured the sick. She did not use a drum, her ritual object being a whip.

Ochil’s own recollection of the beginning of her shamanic activity was as follows. She was already the mother of two children. One day she was sitting outside the house when she suddenly realized that she was not alone: there was an old man by her. “My grandfather, who are you?” Ochil asked. The reply was: “My name is Gadoy-Selkin-bowa. The whole country is now in difficult circumstances.<sup>2</sup> I ask God the same as the people of the country ask (*jurtding tilagini tilab juribman*). I want to promote you to a high position (*seni bir amalga čiqaray*).” On another occasion the old man said: “I am a defender of the people (*mamlakatding qoriqčisi*).” Ochil was afraid to tell anyone of the old man’s visits. Finally Gadoy-Selkin-bowa said to her outright: “You too should be a defender of the people. You will pray for the people.” Ochil agreed to this.

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<sup>2</sup> World War 2 was still in progress.

A week or more passed. While busy cooking food for her sick son she went to the cellar, where she saw a girl with golden hair. Ochil returned to the house and began to feed her son, but her heart was pounding and she was consumed with a desire to return to the cellar. She did so and grasped the girl's hair. Suddenly many girls appeared in front of her. Ochil tore out a lock of the girl's hair and left the cellar. As she continued to feed her son, she threw the hair into the fire. At that very moment the girl came into the house and exclaimed: "You have burnt my hair!" She kicked Ochil's shoulder and disappeared. After this Ochil lost her reason. She recalls that she could not see well: it was as if there was a black dust in her eyes.

At this point a brief comment is called for. From her description it is clear that Ochil met a spirit known in Uzbek beliefs as "the yellow girl" (*sari qiz*) or *albasti* (Basilov 1980: 58). As my field material shows, it is a well-known situation in both Uzbek and Kazakh folk beliefs that a shaman's disease begins with an encounter with the *albasti*. Ochil calls the girl she saw "my grandmother *sari kiz*," but at the same time relates that the girl said to her: "I am your Nurgul-mama." This suggests that Ochil met a saint whose venerated grave is located in the vicinity of Nur-ata city. Clearly, two different images were combined in her visions.

Ochil followed all the instructions of Gadoy-Selkin-bowa. She recalled: "He says to me: 'Tell this,' and I tell. He says: 'Tell that,' and I tell." One day Ochil, obedient to his suggestions (or, possibly, to those of the *sari qiz*—it did not become clear), threw her younger son to the ground from the roof of the house. The boy was dangerously ill for forty days. "My brother's wife always cried when she washed the boy," Ochil recalled. After this event her husband was obliged to tie her hands and legs with a rope and leave her alone in a room. However, as Ochil explained, Gadoy-Selkin-bowa appeared and set her free. "I left through the flue in the roof (*tuynuk*) with a sacred grass (*adirasman harmala*) in my hand; Gadoy-Selkin-bowa took me away." The old man transported her to the Langar mountains (Nur-ata district), where he continued to instruct and teach her. He told her about the past, about the current situation in the country and about the life of women.

Ochil explained that Gadoy-Selkin-bowa was a Muslim saint who roamed the world (*u kiši dunyoni bir aylanib kezib juradi*) and did good for people. He was a pure and beautiful man. His right half was yellow and his left half was white. "The war will end," he told her when she was in the mountains, "the young people will come back home.



Ask God what people ask. The situation is very difficult now. The war is spreading. But we shall stop it.” Ochil was sure that the old man succeeded: he stopped World War 2 (*ana aytganday tokhtatdi, u kiši*). Having accomplished this, he went away and did not return. Ochil did not know where he was.

Ochil recalled: “I was with this old man for 17 days.” At first she was afraid of him. He would speak to her for a while and then disappear. Ochil thought that he had hidden himself somewhere (*bir jerga kirib ketadi*). While in the mountains the saint gave her food and drink. She cried constantly, missing her children, and explained this to the old man. He replied: “Do not cry, my child; we ourselves are looking after your children. Some time will pass, and your children will be all right and you will have a good life (*kun čiqadi segan ham*); do not cry.” Once he even showed her the children and then took them away. Usually, however, he simply told her what the children were doing. The news was not joyful. “Today your children are hungry,” the old man reported, for instance. “They warmed up a piece of bread in a dirty kettle and ate it.” On another occasion he said that her husband had taken the children to his place of work in the fields and that they had slept there. “I have seen such troubles (*šuytib azob kurdik-da*),” the shamaness concluded, describing this period of her life.

Ochil tried to protest. “I shall not tramp around like a beggar (*šu duvonačilikdi kilmayman*),” she said to the saint, but he paid no attention to her words (*u qoymaydi-da*). When Ochil addressed her complaints to God, crying, Gadoy-Selkin-bowa persuaded her: “Do not cry. Nobody will place you at once on the roof of a house.<sup>3</sup> Let us be the people’s defenders. Ask God to send good for both worlds (*u dunyoning ham mobatini tila, bu dunyoning ham*). Request from Him happiness, longevity, wealth and prosperity for people. People will live as long, as much you ask. Say, my child: let our *padišah* rule; say, my child: let young people be happy. Ask God what these young people ask; ask what the *padišah* asks. Ask for longevity, be a supplicant on behalf of the people. It is a very hard time for the country now. I am also a supplicant for the people (*mamlakatding tilavčisi man*). Do not foster any violence.”

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<sup>3</sup> Here a position of honour is implied.

The saint told Ochil to divine and heal, in particular, with a method that was widely practised in Central Asia in the past: a shaman or other kind of healer recites prayers and spits on the sick. It was believed that spittle conveys the sacred strength of prayer to a sick person. Gadoy-Selkin-bowa used to say to Ochil: “If you cure people with spittle,<sup>4</sup> you yourself will be healthy (*tupirsang, ĵan topasang*). Go, give the light of your eyes to people (*kūzingning nurini sal*).” He taught her to help women who were about to give birth but for whom the evil spirits made obstacles (*qora bosqan khotinga bor, dedi*). “If you support those pregnant women who are harmed by the [spirits known as] black *devs*, your health will be good (*qora dāwlarning bosqaniga borsang, sen ĵon topasang, dedi*). Be equally merciful to both Muslims and Russians (*momin būlsin, urus būlsin, hammosini yak dey*).”

Another teaching of the saint was “When visiting patients, avoid mean-spirited conversations.” He stressed that payment for her help was not an important consideration: “My child, even if people give you only a piece of bread or one small coin for your help, do tell fortunes, do cure. Your main task is to give relief to a patient.” Referring to his words, Ochil told us: “You may give me one rouble or one kopeck, it does not matter to me.” She explained that she gave a part of her honorarium to poor people when she went on pilgrimage to holy places. “It is not good to break this rule.” The saint instructed Ochil that when a sheep was slaughtered as a sacrifice for a shamanic rite, she must give one kilogram of the meat to a butcher and one kilogram to a miller. She was not to use her own share of one kilogram for her family only but should invite some other people for a meal (*qušnačding hoki ham bir kilo, deydi, buni ham sadakaga ĵegizadi*). “Do not be greedy, do not look for profit,” the saint taught her, “help people for the sake of your own life [i.e. health].”

Gadoy-Selkin-bowa consulted a big book for his instructions. He gave the book to her, but she was unable to keep it in her possession. Once, when her child was crying, she dropped the book into running water and it disappeared. Later, she was given a whip, which she used for her ritual healing. “They did not command me to take a drum. With my whip and a bunch of rods I perform my rites (*čildirma buyurgan yok menga, čirogim, čibikman qamčiman qilaman*).”

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<sup>4</sup> And prayers.

With its many details, Ochil’s story is interesting. For instance, it is unusual to find the concept that shaman’s role bestows a high and noble social position reflected so clearly. This is an echo of the ancient, pre-Islamic beliefs. Today, with the total dominance of Islam, shamanism is a marginal, non-official religious cult. But, centuries ago, as some medieval narrative sources report, the shamans occupied an important position in the local societies of Central Asia (Boyle 1972; Potapov 1978). Furthermore, Ochil’s story throws light on a phenomenon of the shaman’s training—how a shaman obtains the knowledge necessary for his or her professional activity. There are some indications in the ethnographic literature on Central Asia and Kazakhstan that a novice has to be taught by an experienced shaman (A-ov 1894; Zhiltsov 1894). Thus, a Kirghiz shaman called Sharmat lived for fifteen days in the house of an elder shaman, Mamitkan. During this period he became able to see not only good spirits but evil spirits also (Iliasov 1945: 183). A Kirghiz shamaness, Kokulay, lived for one month with a well-known and respected old shamaness named Ayimkan and “participated in her séances” (*oyun* ‘game, play’ in Kirghiz) learned the shamanic profession” Baialieva 1972: 127). Among the Uzbeks of the Khorezm oasis “a young shaman accompanied an old, experienced shaman for a period, learning his traditional methods” (Snesarev 1969: 48). Among the Uzbeks of Afghanistan, where the shaman’s profession lost its hereditary character, a neophyte who showed a predisposition to shamanic practice had to obtain his instructions from another *baqši* (Centlivres and Slobin 1971: 168). Information of this kind is scarce and superficial, and one may doubt whether the tradition of a “shaman’s education” really existed in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. For the most part the available data do not support the idea that a shaman had to undergo a special education: a shaman is given his/her knowledge by the tutelary or helping spirits. For instance, Oken, a Kazakh shaman, reported that he had never taken a *qobiz* (a musical instrument) in his hands until he was chosen by the spirits (Nevol’nik 1896). The story of a Kazakh shamaness, Dzhumagul, tells us that a shamanic séance was performed to cure her when she had fallen ill and that in the course of this ceremony she recovered and began to shamanize herself (Basilov 1975: 117). My field material collected among the Uzbeks living in the Dzhizak and Samarkand *oblast’* of Uzbekistan in the 1970s shows that an old and experienced shaman or shamaness gives a blessing to a novice in a ritual way. After this ceremony a novice must live in

ritual isolation for a period. Isolation is believed to be an essential part of the rite. If a shaman does not observe the rules and, especially, the prescribed period of isolation, everything will be spoiled and alliance between the shaman and the spirits will not be achieved. There is no evidence, however, that an old shaman visits the novice and gives instruction during this period of isolation. It should not be concluded that information on the “shaman’s education” is scarce because such education was kept secret. This would be impossible to conceal under the conditions of a local way of life, where a person’s private affairs are completely open to his/her numerous relatives. If the custom of the “shaman’s education” really existed it would be a matter of common knowledge, and even an outsider would be able to obtain information on the matter without difficulty.

The fact is that a formal education is not a requirement for a shaman. With no intervention by other parties, a person who is by his or her nature attracted to the shamanic profession accumulates the knowledge that will be useful when they become a shaman—the folk beliefs, the customs, the legends, the order of ceremonies and so on. Later, when a decision is made—or the impulse is felt—to become a shaman, that person summons to memory all that is required for their new profession. At the very beginning of assuming the role, ritual isolation was important. In seclusion, the novice shaman concentrated on his visions, mobilized his knowledge and spoke to the spirits who appeared to him and gave instruction. It is possible and natural that some neophytes felt the need to be present at ceremonies performed by long standing practitioners in order to acquire some of their experience, but “education” of this kind was not the rule. Everything depended on the talent of a novice, on his capacity to assume the new role of shaman. In any case, an ancient belief that a shaman’s skill is given to him/her by the spirits persisted. That is why Ochil’s story reflects initial, archaic beliefs related to “shamanic disease.”

Let us consider the fact that Ochil’s illness, or temporary madness, did not disappear immediately after she had agreed to become a shamaness. Moreover, the saint’s remark that “Nobody will place you at once on the roof of a house,” demonstrates that a neophyte’s sufferings are to be considered an inevitable precondition of a person’s induction into shamanic activity and not as a punishment. Only a person who has suffered can be recognized as a shaman. But Ochil’s story does not explain why a shaman must suffer. The archaic beliefs that make clear the logic of a

shaman’s sufferings are forgotten. It is not without reason that Ochil does not suffer alone; her small children suffer with her, too.

The manifestations of “shamanic disease” in Central Asia and Kazakhstan are very diverse. The illness often displays itself in forms other than mental disorder. A shaman could be struck by paralysis, by temporary blindness or by pains of a rheumatic nature. It is likely that this diversity in the forms of “shamanic disease” only became possible once the ancient stereotype—which determined the specifics of the neophyte’s hallucinatory experience and behavior—had been forgotten. Such diversity is perhaps characteristic of a late historical epoch, when shamanism was in decline and becoming a cultural survival. In Central Asia the degradation of shamanism was promoted by Islam.

Our material shows that the idea that it is not the shaman alone who must experience the disease gained prominence during the process of degradation of shamanism. Ochil became ill, but her sickness brought suffering to her children also. Another shamaness, Momokhal, was ill herself—but this did not satisfy the spirits, who brought about the death of her children (Basilov 1986). Instances of a woman becoming a shamaness only because of the death of her children were not rare in Central Asia. For example, an Uzbek shamaness called Ayday (born sometime between 1900 and 1905), who lived in the Galla-Aral district of the Dzhizak *oblast'* (*viloyat*), Uzbekistan, received the blessing for the start of her shamanic activity at the age of 26 after the death of two of her children. Ayday hoped that her service to the spirits would preserve the lives of her surviving children. There are many other examples of this kind. The idea that a person must suffer to become a shaman is still strongly held in Uzbek folk beliefs, although in many cases this suffering is caused not by the shaman’s own illness but by his/her children’s sickness or even death.

Thus, the manifestations of “shamanic disease” are determined by the traditions of a society, by the specificity of its culture. It should be noted that in the 19th and 20th centuries the shamans in Kazakh and Turkmen societies were, as a rule, men. This does not mean that the women of these peoples had some immunity to “shamanic disease.” Another phenomenon was responsible: with their patriarchal traditions, the Kazakhs and Turkmen considered shamanism to be a masculine profession. In contrast, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century shamanic practice among the Tajiks and Uzbeks was rapidly becoming a sphere of predominantly female activity. Correspondingly,

the manifestations of “shamanic disease” among men were rare. The reason for this peculiarity is to be found in the changes in traditional views. Under the lasting influence of Islam shamanism was coming to be considered as an occupation that was not prestigious for a man.

It is not sufficient to say that the visions experienced by a shaman during a period of “shamanic disease” represent a cultural stereotype or reproduce ancient social norms. These visions show that the shamanic traditions, although based on views common to a whole society or culture, continue to preserve ideas and images that have already disappeared from folk beliefs. An example is seen in the story told by the Uzbek shamaness, Momokhal: her patroness, the Universal midwife (*enaga*), who lives in heaven and can be easily identified as Umay (or Ayīisit), the Turkic pagan goddess of fertility, is already forgotten by the people. In Ochil’s story we can find another relic of the pre-Islamic epoch in the appearance of her saintly patron, whose body is half white and half yellow. None of the numerous Muslim saints venerated in Central Asia today is associated with such an image, and one might think that this description of the saint was inspired by the personal imagination of the shamaness. However, it may be significant that similar depictions are seen in certain deities of Hindu iconography in which two different deities are combined in a very similar fashion, one half representing one deity and the other half another deity (Guseva 1971: 78). This tradition, which possibly has its roots in the Aryan epoch, could have existed in Pre-Islamic times among the peoples of Central Asia.

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## Some Animal Representations in Mongolian Shaman Invocations and Folklore

ÁGNES BIRTALAN

BUDAPEST

*Wolf, dog, crow, snake, deer, owl, swan, eagle and raven are some of the most important animals to feature as totemic ancestors in Turkic, Mongolian and Manchu-Tunguz oral tradition and written sources. The study, based in part on shamanic invocations and shamanic folklore collected by the author in Western and Northern Mongolia recently, discusses the animal references characteristically found in Inner Asian mythology. Totem animals such as wolves and deer, we learn, function as mounts (Written Mongolian *külüg*, *unaši*) for the shaman, while dogs and ravens are the shaman's helping spirits (Written Mongolian *kelemürči*, *dayayul*). Possible connections among the different functions of the animals are also discussed.*

Wolf, dog, crow, raven, snake, deer, owl, swan, eagle and lynx are some of the most important animals to feature in the Mongolian shaman's performance and are mentioned in the invocations of Darkhat<sup>1</sup> shamans among others and in Mongolian folklore texts. This paper is devoted to the problem of animals as the mounts (wolf and deer) and helping spirits (raven and dog) of shamans.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> As a member of the Hungarian–Mongolian Joint Expedition for Collecting Mongolian Linguistic and Folklore Material I did fieldwork among the Darkhats, who live in the northernmost Khövsgöl district (*Xövsgöl aimag*) of Mongolia, in 1992, 1993, 1997 and 1998. The research is still an ongoing project sponsored by a series of supports of the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA K 62501 among others) and also by the British Academy (small research grants).

<sup>2</sup> After the appearance of the original version of the present article in 1995 the author published an elaborate study on the mythology of the Mongolian folk religion, where all the here mentioned subjects are discussed in details (Birtalan 2001).

## The Mounts of the Shaman

The different roles of the animal phenomena present in the shaman's world and their historical and cultural background must be specified and clearly distinguished. It is not correct to state that all the animals mentioned in the texts, whether acted by shamans during their performances, represented as protective spirits (*ongons*), kept in the sacred place in a dwelling or symbolized by feathers, paws, bones, etc., on the shaman's garments or anywhere in his world of objects where their magic power is needed, must be totems. Some totemic animals, like the swan or eagle, figure in the invocations as totems *par excellence*:

*Xun cayaan šuwuun exetee*  
*Xürin ereem bürgüid šuwuun*  
*Ecegteexen . . .*

You who have a white swan as mother,  
 You who have as father a brown-striped eagle. . .<sup>3</sup>

In other cases, however, such well-known totemic phenomena as the wolf and deer, late manifestations of originally totemic animals of Mongolian and other (Turkic, Indo-European) tribes, play quite different roles.

The she-deer and her fight with the beast of prey, known throughout almost all of northern Eurasia (or in “cultural Inner Asia” in a wider sense), found early representation on cultic objects, furniture and grave monuments. Artefacts decorated with details in animal style, sometimes called the Scythian animal style, may represent the first “narration” of the ancient legend of tribes of deer (figs. 1, 2).<sup>4</sup> The until recently little-known deer-steles, which probably symbolize warriors with tattooed

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<sup>3</sup> *Xun cayaan šuwuun* literary means ‘swan-white bird’, see “Invocation de Čagadai et de Čangqulang” in Rintchen 1975: 88–89.

<sup>4</sup> It is mainly some groups of the Indo-European population that were referred to as “tribes of deer”; cf. “Členova hält nun den Hirsch für das Stammestotem der Saken. ‘Sag’ bedeutet im modernen Ossetisch ‘Hirsch’. Die Saken hätten sich also ‘Hirschleute’ genannt. Tatsächlich kann man in ihrem Siedlungsgebiet östlich vom Aralsee zwar nur wenige, aber wichtige Hirschdarstellungen nachweisen. In Tuva gibt es die sogenannten Hirschstelen, die zweifellos Menschen, berühmte Krieger meinten.” (Jettmar 1980: 239–240)



Fig. 1. Deer-stele near the town of Mörön, Khövsgöl Province in northern Mongolia.  
Photograph: László Kunkovács, 1990.

deer on their chests, are also common in the territory of Mongolia, and the genealogical myth of the Mongolian khan's lineage refers to the possibility that some Mongolian tribes may have belonged to the Inner Asian tribal confederation, which worshipped the she-deer (see below).

How important a phenomenon the deer is even nowadays is demonstrated by data from Mongolian folklore. In the usual starting formula of Mongolian myths, heroic epics, etc., describing the beginning of the World, when all natural things and living beings had just come into existence, the grey deer (Khalkha Mongolian *jagal buga*) is included among the most important entities present at the very beginning, such as Mount Sümerü, the Milk Ocean, the World Tree, the almighty Khan and in the buddhicized versions the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. This type of epical beginning gives a clear indication of the importance of the deer. The following example is chosen from a shaman invocation to Čangkilang xatan, a female protector spirit, that was collected in the Khövsgöl district of Mongolia:

*Sümbür uuliig güwee waexudu,  
Sün dalaе čalčag [sic!] baexudu,  
Jaxiim modiig juljaga waexudu,  
Jayal buyiig tuyul waexudu.*

When Mount Sümerü was a hill,  
When the Milk Ocean was a pool,

When the tree on the horizon<sup>5</sup> was a young plant,  
When the grey deer was a deer calf<sup>6</sup> . . .

This early importance of the she-deer, a tribal totem and in existence from the moment of creation, survived in myths and later shaman invocations, as did the beast of prey (panther, gryphon, etc.) that attacked her. The two may represent different tribal totems, and a later variant of the panther or gryphon is probably the wolf (cf. the fact that the ancestor of some Turkic tribes, explicitly in the khan's lineage, was a wolf).

*The Secret History of the Mongols*, a chronicle from the beginning of the 13th century, preserved the tradition of the probable uniting of the two tribes or tribal unions with different traditions—that of deer worship and that of wolf worship. The union is represented in the ancient history of the khan's clan of the Mongols as follows:

There was a bluish wolf which was born having (his) destiny from heaven above. His spouse was a fallow doe. They came, passing over the Tenggis. (Cleaves 1982: 1. §1)

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<sup>5</sup> Other folkloric texts refer to the World Tree under its Sanskrit name *Kalpavṛkṣa*:

*Galwāragši sandam modīg*  
*bot wēhō uyid . . .*

“quand l’arbre santal *Galwāragš*  
n’était qu’un buisson . . .” (Kara 1970: 55, 103–104)

<sup>6</sup> See “Invocation de la reine Čangqulang” in Rintchen 1975: 84. Another example from *Gurwan nastai gunan ulaan baatar*, “The three-year-old Gunan Ulaanbaatar,” a Khalkha Mongolian epos:

*Naran saya ǰargaǰ baixad*  
*Nawč ceceg delgerč baixad*  
*Jaxiin modiig juljaga baixad*  
*Jagal bugiig yanjaga baixad . . .*

When the Sun was just rising  
When leaf and flower were just spreading  
When the tree on the horizon was a young plant  
When the grey deer was a calf . . . (*Mongol ardiin baatarlag tuuli* 1982: 50)

This laconic initial paragraph from *The Secret History of the Mongols* could refer to an ancient confederation of two previously hostile tribes (the tribe of the she-deer and the tribe of the wolf, in this case a male).<sup>7</sup> After the establishment of the confederacy there are no more representations of the fight of the deer and the beast of prey (later, the wolf).<sup>8</sup>

Both the deer and the wolf survived in Mongolian shaman tradition as mounts of shamans and those of their protector spirits alike. As was mentioned at the outset, the differing roles of the various animal representations in Mongolian shaman invocations must be clearly distinguished; thus, on the basis of the examples that will be considered here, the deer and the wolf appear to be regarded as riding animals (Mongolian *böge-yin küliig*). For example, in a Mongolian shaman invocation published by Haltold:

*Dalan deeree saran tamgataixan*  
*Magnai deeree naran tamgataixan*  
*Xöx xaljan bugan xölögteixen*  
*Xaa xöö,*  
*Bal бүхий Šarai nuruu buudaltaixan*  
*Ariin Xambuу tolgoi güidelteixen*  
*. . . . xongio taniig*  
*Urin jalan duudya.*

You who have as a mount a blue deer with a blaze,  
With Moon-*tamga*<sup>9</sup> on his shoulder,  
With Sun-*tamga* on his forehead,  
Khaa, khöö,  
You who have a dwelling on the honeyed Sharai ridge,  
You who run on the northern Khambuу hill,  
You . . . . Khongio,  
I will invite, call you. (Haltold 1966: 75–76)

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<sup>7</sup> An elaborate study of this phenomenon is Uray-Kóhalmi 1987.

<sup>8</sup> The cessation of animal representation on ornament may be explained by the replacement of the rule of Indo-European tribes by Turkic and Mongolian tribes. Jettmar (1980: 240–241) suggested that animal motifs remained as the tribal symbols of ruling clans. It could be stated that originally they were also tribal symbols.

<sup>9</sup> The *tamga* is the “cattle-brand” used to indicate the ownership of the nomads.

I would add to the phenomenon of the deer the representation of the antelope as a possible variant; instead of *küliig* ‘mount’, the synonymous *unaši* ‘id.’ is used in the following invocation:

*Xeei . . . Buxal xara görööse unaši mini,*  
*Xeei . . . Xaǰar xara bawgää xölbörge mini,*  
*Xeei . . . Xara erüün moyää loo janggiralta mini,*  
*Xeei . . . Xotää xara börgöt debelge mini*  
*Xeei . . . Xon’in šara čubuun [sic!] nöxöcölöge mini,*  
*Xeei . . . Xon’in cooxor šülüüs xandlaga mini.*

The black antelope bull is my mount,  
 The vulture (?) black bear is my cart,  
 The black-striped snake is my tie (i.e. my reins),  
 The *xotää*-black<sup>10</sup> eagle is my flight,  
 The sheep-yellow owl is my companion,  
 The lynx, spotted as sheep, is my trustee.<sup>11</sup>

The wolf, another mount of the spirits, appears in the invocations either with a rabid character or distinguished by its color, which is mostly *xöx* (‘blue’ in Khalkha Mongolian), and *börte* (probably ‘grey’ in Middle Mongolian), which is mentioned in *The Secret History of the Mongols*. Compare the examples given below:

*Xüni maxxan künestengüüd,*  
*Xürel čuluun jürixtengüüd,*  
*Gal mogää tašuurtanjuud,*  
*Galjuu čonon küliigtengüüd . . .*

You who have human meat as provision,  
 You who have a heart of bronze and stone,  
 You who have a fire snake for a whip,  
 You who have rabid wolves as a mount . . .<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The expression *xotää* is undeciphered.

<sup>11</sup> An invocation to the protector spirit “One of the Origin/Roots” “Ozurää yuum” in Dulam 1992: 49.

<sup>12</sup> “Invocation de Dayan degereki par le chaman Damdine” in Rintchen 1975: 94.

The next extract is an example from my own collection of a wolf as the mount of the shaman's protective spirit (*ongon*):

*Yüsiin xeree tolgootoe,  
Xöx čonoon xölögtää,  
Doloon xar xereen tolgootoe,  
Tawn xöx čonon xölögtää . . .*

You with nine crow heads,  
You with a blue wolf as a mount,  
You with seven black crow heads,  
You with a mount of five blue wolves<sup>13</sup> . . .

Shamans, obviously, have other riding animals besides the above-mentioned mounts; these are very often horses—as, for example, in the invocations to a very important Mongolian protective deity of shamans, Dayan deerx (Mongolian Dayan degereki):

*Fučin yurwan šarya morin xüliigtee,  
Xan Darxan buural aawamini!  
Yösön šaryal xaljan morin xüliigtee . . .*

You who have thirty-three yellow horses as mounts,  
My grey-haired father, Khan Darkhan!<sup>14</sup>  
You who have nine yellow horses with blazes as mounts<sup>15</sup> . . .

According to one legend, Dayan deerx abducted Jingis Khan's youngest daughter (in another version, the khan's wife) and was followed by the Great Khan as far as the northern Khöwsgöl district of Mongolia. When the khan caught up with him and cut him apart with his sword, Dayan deerx was transformed into a stela,<sup>16</sup> after which he was worshipped

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<sup>13</sup> Collected from a Darkhat man with shaman antecedents, Pürewiin Mijidiin Dorjürew, in August 1992.

<sup>14</sup> “Invocation de Dayan degereki” in Rintchen 1975: 89.

<sup>15</sup> “Invocation du Roi Sublime Dayan degereki” in Rintchen 1975: 90.

<sup>16</sup> For some versions of the legends of Dayan deerx, see *Mongol ardiin domog ülger* 1989: 150–152.



Fig. 2. Deer-stele near the town of Mörön, Khöwsgöl Province in northern Mongolia.  
 Photograph: László Kunkovács, 1990.

as a local mountain deity and protector of shamans. As can be deduced from his life story, he was a deity whose origin was rooted in the nomadic way of life, and this corroborates the importance of horses as mounts in invocations to him. How widespread his worship is demonstrated by data collected during our fieldwork in western Mongolia in 1992, when we met a shamaness in the Uws district. Although her family came from the south Siberian Tuva and were originally Turkic speakers, the Mongolian Dayan deerx was one of the main protector spirits in the family's tradition.

The deer and the horse are closely connected in Mongolian folklore. The horse of the epic hero in the Buriat epos grazes together with his she-deer "friends" on a far mountain pasture (usually located in Altai) and returns to them there after a fight or the death of its owner.

*Altai xolo daidada*  
*Arban gurban hogoonor*  
*xulanšaži, belšiži . . .*



On the distant territory of Altai  
With [his] thirteen she-deer  
Grazes he together . . . (*Buriatskiĭ geroicheskiĭ épos* 1991: 86)

When the hero calls his mount the horse and she-deers exchange advice and bless each other before the horse's departure. An example from the Buriat heroic epos *Alamži mergen* of the blessing given by the she-deer to the horse:

*Yabaha-lan gazartaa*  
*Yargaltai yabaarai,*  
*Zorihon gazartaa*  
*Zoltoi yabaarai!*  
*Xüxü ulaan xadadaa*  
*Xüxü büriin dolyooxo*  
*Zoltooor yabaarai!*

On your way  
Go happy,  
Your destination  
Attain luckily!  
On the red rock of Mount Khökhii  
Lick the saline soil on whole Mount Khökhii  
Go luckily! (*Buriatskiĭ geroicheskiĭ épos* 1991: 92)

The group of deer in the distant mountain fastness of Altai symbolizes a mythical, bygone world, the ancient home of nomads and the hunting society. This ancient world might have passed away but it could still be the source of exhortation and advice, as in the comments for the horse to heed on its return.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Lőrincz (1986: 46–47) suggested an origin for the role of the deer and the horse based on astral myths. The number of deer is usually 13, the horse forming the 14th member of the group, and Lőrincz attempted to relate this to the myth of the lunar eclipse.

## The Helping Spirits of the Shaman

The phenomena of the raven and the crow have numerous aspects in mythology, and it is thought that the raven (Mongolian *qon keriy-e*, Khalkha *xon xeree*) may have been a totem for the Kereyits (Dalai 1959: 12), a well-known western Mongolo-Turkic tribe. However, this cannot be convincingly established, and this kind of interpretation—based probably on popular etymology—requires further research. Nevertheless, the raven is one of the shaman's assistants, most often the messenger (*kelemürči*, 'interpreter' in Mongolian), an aspect that is also seen in Mongolian folklore.

*Xeree šuwuun xelmerčitee,*  
*Šajyae šuwuun šakšalaytae,*  
*Šar šuwuun dayuultae,*  
*Doloon čonon dowlolyotoe . . .*

You who have a raven as an interpreter,  
 You who have a magpie as a cackler,  
 You who have an owl as a companion,  
 You who have seven wolves as attackers<sup>18</sup> . . .

Among the Darkhat shamans the number of ravens possessed by a shaman or represented on his *gariin ongon* ('hand idol', a magical object used for calling spirits by holding it in the hand during the ritual or attaching it to the lattice wall of the yurt above the shamanic altar) indicates his power, one who has nine ravens being the most powerful. Diószegi (1963: 68, fig. 17a, pl. 1) mentions a deceased Darkhat shaman represented as a bird-headed figure as well as a similar representation of a spirit among the Tuva living on the western shore of Lake Khövsgöl, northern Mongolia (1963: 68, fig. 17b, pl. 2). According to my fieldwork material, it seems that shamans with nine ravens existed in the legends, but the *ongons* I saw had only one raven head, made of wood or copper. The invocation to a powerful protector spirit quoted earlier speaks of the protector spirits as having nine or seven ravens. This might be taken to mean that the legendary shamans, having more

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<sup>18</sup> "Prière aux dieux et aux esprits ancestraux" in Rintchen 1975: 124.

raven helping spirits, could use them to call on the help of more spirits by sending them as messengers in several directions at once.

Two very important followers and helping spirits of the shaman, the raven and the dog, sometimes appear together. The raven is sent to make the shaman's wishes known and the dog to find enemy spirits<sup>19</sup> and defend his owner from them:

*Tangnään taban šara noxää tuxiralʻya-mni,  
Yösön xara xerää medeeči-mni . . .*

My five yellow dogs of Mount Tangnu are set on,  
My nine black ravens are messengers . . .<sup>20</sup>

The Darkhat shamans are famous for hating Buddhist lamas to such an extent that they may kill or “eat” them. In one story the shamaness Sünčig kills her only child, who was in a Buddhist monastery and did not want to become a shaman. The invocation (*tamlaga*) to the shamaness' *ongon*-spirit, who is called Caxiriin eeĵ “Mother from Tsakhir,” curses her child, the lamas and Buddhist rituals in general. Mentions are made of the dog and the raven, by whom the tongue of the follower of Buddhism must be pulled out. This fragment establishes the role of zoomorphic helping spirits in being called upon to harm the betrayer of ancient belief.

*Saxilaa gajart buluul,  
Sanwaraa modond ölgüül,  
Xel amaa  
Xeree noxoind suga tatuul . . .*

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. also an extract from a Nanai shaman song:

*Dolbodun aja taučiuri  
Indaselbi de [sic!] ambamba geleri.*

[It is] at night when it is easy to shamanize  
My dogs will search for the evil spirit. (Diószegi 1972: 123, 125)

<sup>20</sup> The protector spirit “The venerated [One] from Agar [River]” “Ayarää Xäirxan,” Dulam 1992: 63.

May your vow dig in the ground,  
 May your pledge hang on a tree,  
 May your tongue  
 Be pulled out by raven and dog . . . (Badamxatan 1965: 226)

According to both published material and our collected material, the dog played as important a role in Mongolian and Inner Asian mythology as the wolf, and it is wrong to consider the former merely as a variant of the latter. The dog has its own mythological background and role, which can be clearly distinguished from those of the wolf discussed above. In most cases the dog does not feature as a totem among the Mongols (apart from the data concerning the Xianbei).

The dog's role is rooted in hunting society; it was domesticated at an early stage in Inner Asia and played an important role in sacral activity. The Mongolian hunting custom of severing the head from the quarry together with the tongue, lower jaw, throat, lungs and heart, which the hunter responsible for the kill can take and does not have to share, is preserved in a shaman invocation. The invited spirit obtained a black dog as booty and took its *jüld* (Khalkha form, Written Mongolian *jülde*) part for himself (this black dog could be the protector spirit of another shaman):

*Arwan γurwan owaa sandal'tae,*  
*Arxan Xangyae güideltee,*  
*Xara noxae dzüldelen iredek*  
*Xan Tömörölen baatar*  
*Taniiyaan uriyaa!*

You who have seats on the thirteen *oboos*,  
 You who run on Northern Khangai,  
 You who come disemboweling<sup>21</sup> a black dog,  
 Khan Tömörölen baatar  
 I invite you!<sup>22</sup>

Data on the place of the dog in Inner Asian mythology and sacral sphere published by Tryjarski (1979), Sinor (1992) and Sárközi (1993)

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<sup>21</sup> Khalkha Mongolian *jüldl*- 'to take the attached head, throat, lungs, heart, etc.'

<sup>22</sup> "Invocation de Qan Temürleng" in Rintchen 1975: 82.

are an exhaustive mine of information on this topic. Nevertheless, some new aspects can be added to these sources on the basis of Mongolian shaman invocations and Mongolian folklore.

Of interest is the role of the dog in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, which also contains elements of folklore. The ancestors of the Mongols were a tribe with deer and wolf totems, as discussed above, but a dog features in an intervention by the world of spirits whereby Alan Qo'a, an ancestress of Jingis Khan, was conceived by a spirit that made its appearance as a light and departed in the form of a yellow dog. When Belgünütei and Bügünütei, two earlier-born sons of Alan Qo'a, asked their mother why she bore children after the death of their father, she spoke of the supernatural origin of her last three sons:

Every night, a bright yellow man entered by the light of the hole at the top or (by that) of the door top of the tent and rubbed my belly. His light was wont to sink into my belly. When he went out, like a yellow dog he was wont to crawl out by the beams of the sun or moon. (Cleaves 1982: 4. §21)

It is remarkable that a dog figures in this passage and not a wolf, which, being originally a totem, must be the symbol of procreative power. The role of the dog may be explained by considering the analogy of the supernatural spirit of the "sky-dog" that appears in Chinese Mongolian and Tibetan mythology. A detailed description of the Tibetan sky-dogs has been given by Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1956: 295–296):

There are two black sky-dogs (*gnam khyi nag po*), a male and a female. The male has the body of a dog, the wings of a bird, the hump of a pig and the tail of a snake, with a human head in its coils.

The possible connections between these Mongolian and Chinese or Tibetan phenomena require further investigation and confirmation.

M. N. Khangalov published numerous data concerning the role of the dog in Buriat folk beliefs, including some information on the concept of the relationship of the dog to fertility:

A dog running into a house or a yurt and urinating there is considered to be very lucky: a son will be born into that family, or they will receive money from some

unexpected source. A dog urinating on a sitting or standing person is likewise a very good omen: that person will have a child. (Khangalov 1960: 66–67)

These data confirm the tradition of a possible connection between the dog and fertility represented in *The Secret History of the Mongols*.

N. M. Khangalov also mentioned the so-called “shaman dogs” that are able to foresee the future of their owner and defend him against evil spirits.

## Conclusions

The animals of totemic and non-totemic origin that have been discussed play an important role in Mongolian shamanic invocations and folklore genres. Those which were totems *par excellence*, such as the wolf and the deer, become mounts in shamanic invocations and also act as mounts for the spirits (most of whom were also former shamans of the clan) or for those shamans who serve as representatives of their clan in the other world, and it is obvious that the totem mounts help their clan’s descendants to fly between the worlds. As regards the helping spirits, the raven and the dog are two of the most important. The raven assumes almost the same role in both folklore and shamanic invocations inasmuch as it is the messenger and represents the shaman’s power and, together with the dog, is an executor of his wishes. In folklore the dog is connected, among other things, with fertility and it protects the shaman from evil spirits. It can be concluded that the wolf and the dog are not simple alternatives either in folklore or in the invocations, although there are instances—for example in a Darkhat invocation—of the wolf assuming the role of helping spirit and follower rather than the dog:

*Xaǰar xara bawγää xürxerelt-mni,*  
*Xara erüün moyää ončiralta-mni,*  
*Örbe xara börgöt debelge-mni,*  
*Ölön cayaan čono dayuul-mni,*  
*Xaltar zar’i unaa-mni . . .*

The vulture (?) black bear is my growl,  
 The black-spotted snake is my entanglement,

The *örbe*-like<sup>23</sup> black eagle is my flight,  
 The hungry white wolf is my companion,  
 The gelded reindeer with white muzzle and breast is my mount . . .<sup>24</sup>

The importance of other animals that have been mentioned in the course of the paper and of other aspects of the animal phenomenon in the symbolical background of shamanism will form the subject of a further study.

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<sup>23</sup> The expression *örbe* cannot be explained.

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## Dramatic Characteristics of Korean Shaman Ritual

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*In Korean shaman rituals, worship and lively theater become one to form a rich, sometimes sophisticated body of drama. Rites dramatize a Spirit's presence and power by means of costumes, role-playing, and feats of wonder that strengthen believers' faith in a Spirit's words as proclaimed by the shaman. Many rites use role-playing and humor that, with the believed aid of deceased ancestors, provide family healing. Dramatically the richest rites present theatrical symbols and comic scenes of daily life in a way that draws believers and non-believers alike into a typically Korean sense of the mystery, complexity, and humor of human life.*

In "Urdrاما," E. T. Kirby (1975: 2) has argued that the world's theater has its origins in shaman ritual séances. He conceives shaman ritual in the broadly defined sense as typified by "possession in a trance by a spirit who speaks from within the medium and determines his action"; and he stresses that such ritual is inherently dramatic in that it "depends upon the immediate and direct manifestation to the audience of supernatural presence." Kirby touches on Korean shaman ritual only briefly (1975: 31); and his definition applies only to those rites performed by initiatory shamans, or *mudang*, in and north of Seoul, not to the hereditary *mudang* of other areas. But both kinds of Korean shamanism, initiatory and hereditary, provide instances of vivid theatrical ritual that give evidence for his argument.

### Spirit Drama

Theater and religious worship become one in a full shaman ritual, or *kut*, which is a highly theatrical event consisting of a series of episodes

that may last several hours or days, take account of natural setting and social context, employ colorful costumes and props, demand the services of a band of *mudang* and musicians, and include the whole neighborhood for an audience. In a typical segment of a Seoul-area *kut*, the initiatory *mudang*, usually a woman, begins with a dance, first slow then fast, to induce a trance-like state. While in this state, she is believed to serve as the medium for a Spirit, such as the Mountain Spirit, the Spirit of the Big Dipper, the Abandoned Princess Spirit, the Spirit of an illustrious general of Korean history, or the soul of a deceased relative of those sponsoring the *kut*. An old-style military uniform, weapons, and a fierce demeanor on the part of the *mudang* exhibit the authority of the General Spirit. A whining voice and peevish gestures give theatrical life to the Spirit of an ancestor who died as a young girl. In the role of the Mountain Spirit in a new shaman's initiation rite, the officiating senior shaman may shed tears of sympathy for the hard life the new *mudang* is entering. As the soul of a deceased father in a rite for the dead, she may give the son a big hug and then comically upbraid him and his wife for not yet providing the family with a son. Costumes and mimetic gestures give the presence of the Spirit theatrical life so that when the Spirit gives advice and encouragement to the *kut* sponsors through the mediumship of the shaman, they take the advice as, indeed, coming from the Spirit's own mouth.

In evoking the presence and power of the Spirits, initiatory *mudang* employ not only mimetic gestures, but feats of wonder. Since a *kut* conveys no body of abstract doctrine, it may seem not to qualify as religious activity in the sense of the Korean term, *Chonggyo* (宗教), which includes associations of teaching in its root meaning. It is religious, however, in that it arouses what Rudolf Otto identifies as the primal reaction in the face of the sacred: "blank wonder, an astonishment that strikes us dumb, amazement absolute" (1950: 26). Such wonder cannot be taught; it can only be "induced, incited, and aroused" (1950: 60). As Korean shamans well know, the theater is admirably suited to induce such wonder.

Mircea Eliade has noted that a shaman séance ends in a wondrous "*spectacle* unequaled in the world of daily experience," a spectacle revelatory of "another world—the fabulous world of the gods and magicians, the world in which *everything seems possible* . . . where the 'laws of nature' are abolished, and a certain superhuman 'freedom' is exemplified and made dazzlingly *present*" (1964: 551). Initiatory *mudang* from the northern province of Hwanghae-do are most adept

at such wondrous displays. They bedazzle spectators as they precariously balance large pots of rice cake on the edge of a liquor bottle, or a newly slain pig's carcass on a huge trident. They do a lightning-swift knife dance or, in the feat most awaited as a display of a newly initiated shaman's freedom from the ordinary laws of nature, stand barefoot perched on high raised straw-chopper blades (fig. 1). To a shamanist believer, this theatrical gesture amounts to a wondrous sacramental sign of the freedom and power that marks contact with the Godhead.

Of course, a theatrical feat in itself does not constitute a sacramental sign. The acrobats of Beijing Opera do more astounding feats than a Korean shaman, without any pretension to divine power. Robert R. Wilson, in *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, has stressed that shamans and other intermediaries with supernatural powers have a role only within a society or sector of society that believes "that those powers can influence earthly affairs and can in turn be directly influenced by human agents" (1980: 29). A Korean *mudang*'s feats may arouse wonder in anyone; but they constitute a sacred sign of the Spirits' presence only for the group of believers who expect such a sign.

Believers expect a sign, moreover, because they stand in awe of the greater wonder of the *mudang*'s own life. Marked out by the destiny of a Spirit's call, an initiatory *mudang* has died to the ordinary patterns of human life and lives anew in the service of the Spirits and of human beings in distress. A hereditary *mudang* becomes a shaman simply by being born into a shaman family and learning the shaman's trade; but an initiatory *mudang* in or north of Seoul acquires shamanic powers through a long initiatory process of visionary dreams, psychic disturbance, and social alienation. This painful process leads through a prolonged period of suffering to final reintegration into a new state marked by bondage to a Spirit, with believed Spirit-given powers of divination and healing.

From the point of view of drama, ritual displays of the Spirits' presence and power through mimetic gestures and spectacular feats remain at a naive level of "Urdrama" that has no significance for non-believers. A *kut* demonstrates its mature power as drama only when it goes beyond inciting "blank wonder" in a small band of believers to objectify a broader spectrum of human emotions in a way that has more universal appeal.



Fig. 1. Standing barefoot on chopper blades. Photo: Seong-nae Kim, around 2000.

## Psycho-Drama

Sometimes, a *kut* clarifies and objectifies complex feelings in the form of lively psycho-drama. Theater and religious worship become one with psycho-therapy as the *mudang* employs the dramatized presence of the Spirit, comic banter, and the sympathetic audience of the client's friends and neighbors to bring a family's troubles, pain, and grief out in the open, provide objectifying perspectives on the problem at hand, and encourage release from pent-up feelings in tears and laughter. It is not uncommon for psychotherapists to use dramatic techniques to allow clients to work out emotional problems and conflicts in a group forum. Psychotherapists could profit from the *mudang's* centuries of expertise. Of course, belief in the physical presence of the Spirits plays an essential role in the healing process. But theatrical techniques are also important. In particular, the public use of the stage comedian's humor provides a liberating and objectifying perspective on the client's problems. It gives one relief to be able to laugh at one's pains and insufficiencies out in the open in the presence of a sympathetic audience.

A *kut* for the dead includes a ritual episode in which the soul of the deceased is believed to address bereaved family members, work out with them any lingering resentments or ill feelings he or she may have, and say final words of farewell. One who has died an untimely or violent death is believed to have a particular need of the *mudang's* services in this rite to ease resentment he may hold against his family and rid himself of bitterness he may have about the limitations of his life or about death itself. Only then can he or she attain peace in the next world; and only then can those left in this world be free from the anxiety of threats from an unsettled ghost. Whatever this rite may be believed to achieve for the deceased, moreover, it surely provides an opportunity for the easing of pent-up grief, anger, and regrets on the part of the bereaved family. Family members work out in the presence of the deceased whatever burdensome feelings they, themselves, have with regard to the dead person and the event of death.

In a Seoul *kut* for the dead, or *Chinogwi-kut*, an elderly man who had died at home the year before had his presence dramatized through the mediumship of an initiatory *mudang*, who wore the stylized garb of a dead person. With a big hug, the dead man greets his son, whom he has not seen for a year, and is overjoyed at the opportunity for reunion. But he then suddenly falls on the floor and begins writhing around in

what appeared to be an enactment of the moment of death. Frightening though this sudden, vivid enactment was, it also left room for humor; and it gave way to a festive mood as father, son, and American daughter-in-law sat down for a subdued, but lengthy, family conference. In this case, with no mutual resentments or burdensome feelings to be resolved, the father merely chided his son for not yet having a child. He suggested that perhaps the son should not have married a foreigner and said that, no doubt, the two were making too frequent use of contraceptives. The father assured his son, however, that, no matter what, the son is his, and is as good as gold.

A *Chinogwi-kut* offered by a widow for her recently deceased husband gives a taste of the humorous turn that the encounter between the deceased and the bereaved family can take (Yi 1988: 167–168): The deceased husband “weeps over the death and falls into a faint.” Then he “grasps his wife” and sympathetically asks, “What will become of you alone in the future?” For her part, “the widow weeps bitterly, grasping the deceased,” and then screams in irritation, “I said I wanted to die first. Why did you die first?” Husband and wife accuse each other of getting “hot-tempered” and get embroiled in a quarrel; but “they are then parted, drink together, and smoking cigarettes, are reconciled.” The deceased then turns to his daughters-in-law, wishes them a happy life, and tells them to “have affection for each other.” He tells his wife, “Please take good care of the housekeeping in my absence,” at which the members of the family “embrace each other and weep.” As the episode continues,

the deceased claims his possessions (his watch, his hat, and clothes) but is irritated by the fact that the clothes are winter-clothes stuffed with cotton, and not summer-clothes. The deceased cries, “Where can I go on this sultry summer day with these cotton clothes on?” Then a comic skit with the clothes takes place. At last, he asks for a digestive aid for his stomach pain. His wife answers, “You’ve already died. Isn’t that enough? Why do you, a dead person, want some medicine?”

The relatives ask the deceased to leave in peace, saying, “Why don’t you stop complaining?” and “Please give help to your son and daughters.” To this, he replies, “I’ll give you no more grief. Don’t worry (about me), but take good care of your lives . . . Now I’m leaving.”

In another Seoul *kut* that I once chanced to witness, a wife was offering the *kut* for her husband who had been murdered by his mistress. In this instance, the spectacle became quite terrifying in its vividness and, no doubt, served a grave therapeutic need on the part of the wife.

Essential to the healing process throughout a *kut* for the dead is belief in the immediate presence of the dead person's soul. In and north of Seoul, as has just been seen, this presence takes dramatic form in the person of the initiatory *mudang* herself as spirit-medium. In *kut* in other areas, it may acquire dramatic focus in a physical object, such as a "Spirit basket" or small staff tipped with paper flowers. Held by a family member or other participant, the object shakes in response to questions asked by the *mudang*. Interpreting the meaning of the shaking, the *mudang* is said in such cases to serve as spokesman, but not medium, for the soul of the deceased (Yi 1988: 169; T. Kim 1983: 268). In the drama of the moment, however, one wonders whether participants recognize the distinction. Granted the tendency on the part of *kut* believers to accept the chanted words of a shaman as, in any case, communication from the deceased, the distinction between mediumship and role-playing seems rather academic.

In the case of the deceased son of a widow woman, a young Mr. Kim who drowned while fishing in the East Sea, the presence of the deceased took dramatic form in words chanted by an assistant *mudang* seated opposite the mother before a small, unadorned table of offerings set up in a room of the family home. The dead son assured his mother that as he was drowning he thought of her and called out, "Mother, Mother," like any person who dies at sea. He went on to complain, "Money is the enemy. If we had money, I could have gone on to study and got a good job like others. I would not have become food for fish." He recalls poignantly that at the time he set out to sea he said, "It would be better if I did not go."

It does not take much to imagine that, if Mr. Kim's mother had urged him to go out on his first fishing expedition even though he himself did not think he should go, her heart must now be filled with a burden of guilt and regret that complicate the ordinary sense of sorrow and loss. Whatever this quiet dramatic encounter between mother and son may be thought to accomplish for the deceased, it surely has a therapeutic effect on the mother. During the course of the encounter, the *mudang* sympathetically commented on the mother's need for this kind of

therapy: “Some say this is just superstition, but this woman wants to hear the words of her son’s spirit.”

In this particular instance, the *mudang* did not seem, strictly speaking, to speak as a medium for the deceased son, but simply to give a first-person rendition of what anyone might guess he wanted to say to his grieving mother at this moment. What took place seems not all that different from what happens in a Byzantine Christian Burial Rite, when a spokesperson for the deceased addresses participants in set first-person form:

Brethren, friends, relatives and neighbors, weep for me as you see me here speechless and lifeless. Yesterday I spoke with you and suddenly there came upon me the awesome hour of death. Come, all you that love me and bid me farewell; for I shall no longer walk with you or speak with you. (*Office of the Christian Burial According to the Byzantine Rite* 1975: 20)

*Kut* believers tend to accept words spoken in the name of the dead as, indeed, communication from the dead; Christians do not. But in both a *kut* and a Byzantine Christian rite, the basic belief that empowers words spoken in the name of the deceased is the same: a belief that the soul of the deceased still exists and is somehow present to those offering the rite.

It is not only in *kut* for the dead that deceased family members are believed to communicate with the living. Many *kut* seek the source of inexplicable illness or family adversity in an unsettled ancestor Spirit that has intruded into the family’s peace and needs to be consoled or appeased. Perhaps the grave of the ancestor is seeping water or has been otherwise disturbed. Perhaps the Confucian rites due to the dead have not been properly performed. A shaman summons, entertains, cajoles, and pacifies the Spirit, giving him or her a forum in which to vent ill feelings and tell the family how to correct an affront.

As with most works of dramatic literature, the roots of present conflicts lie in the past. The past that a *kut* brings to dramatic life is primarily that of the distressed family. But as Kim Seong-Nae has so captivatingly shown, in Cheju-do, the linguistically and historically distinct island province at the southern tip of Korea, the past that a *kut* brings to life can include the violent history of Cheju-do itself; and the *kut* drama of any one family can turn out to be the drama of the



whole Cheju People (1989b: 251–256). In first-person ritual laments of deceased ancestors, Cheju-do shamans, or “*shimbang*,” usually male and acting as “helpers” of the Spirits, not mediums, arouse sobs and tears on the part of family members present. These laments regularly uncover not only areas of a family’s past, but “deep layers of popular experience and understanding of a violent history” (1989b: 260).

In one healing ritual, two days of laments formed a family saga that brought to life a social history spanning a hundred years (1989a: 256–271). The *kut* was held to honor the ancestors, seek healing for chronic headaches of the host’s wife, and divine whether a family member who had disappeared after going to North Korea years before was still alive. The lamentations included a vivid, personalized image of the tragic division between South and North Korea:

Although this land is the same land, there is no way we can go and come between the two halves. Trying to kill, we hold guns in our hands toward each other. (1989b: 262)

The rite evoked another poignant image when the *shimbang* prayed at the end for the soul of the lost family member, who was divined to have died:

Please be reborn . . . into the body of a blue butterfly or red butterfly. You pitiful soul! Wherever you go in the other world, please take away the iron net around the head of the wife. (1989b: 263)

Whatever peace Cheju-do healing rites may be believed to achieve for the ancestral victims of history, they have a cathartic effect on the living that entails more than simple weeping. The laments ease the burden of history by situating images that haunt family dreams in “a collective memory” and by activating the “iconic power” of these images. Performed, moreover, as “first-person narration by the victims,” they create “a powerful counter-discourse of death itself by dramatizing the experience of being killed.” At the same time, “like Brecht’s epic theater,” the rites alienate participants from “the tragic feeling of the dead.” They do so “by making the extraordinary reality of the historical violence the ordinary matter of personal cure” (1989b: 277–278).

The rites also create an alienation effect by provoking “almost senseless laughter” in the midst of sorrow, in “conscious defiance of tragic emotion” (1989b: 278). At one point in the *kut* just mentioned, the hostess suddenly fell flat on the floor, struck by a Spirit, who turned out to be her dead sister-in-law and wept loudly in the voice of the hostess for twenty minutes. Then the chief *shimbang*, who was sitting at a distance, suddenly called upon the woman *shimbang* who was attending on the possessed hostess. He started to interrupt her act by saying filthy words and making fun of her personal life. The woman was finally disturbed so that she gave up the patient and ran to the chief *shimbang*. The *shimbangs*’ playful games among themselves successfully drew the attention of the audience. In the midst of this noisy display by the *shimbang* at a distance, the possessed hostess gathered herself up and left the floor. (1989a: 299)

In his provocative essay “On the Essence of Laughter,” the poet Baudelaire has said that laughter and tears “are both equally the children of woe,” the woe of the limitations of life depicted in myths of the loss of paradise (1981: 313). The laughter that springs up in the midst of Cheju-do laments, and *kut* laughter in general, has its roots in woe, in a feeling for the bitter limitations of life that in Korean is termed “*han*” (한). Rooted in woe, *kut* laughter provides, nonetheless, a healthy distancing, cathartic release, bold defiance, and at times even joy in the face of woe.

## The Dramatic Illusion

Family and social history takes on a mythic dimension in Cheju-do laments when it is grafted onto the story of the ancestral Maiden Spirit, a mythic figure that resonates at the same time with historical realities (S. Kim 1989a: 248–256). More purely mythic is the tale of the Abandoned Princess told in *kut* for the dead in the Seoul area and on the East Coast. As a myth, the tale unfolds in an atmosphere of miracle and establishes the credentials of the *mudang*, as the Abandoned Princess Spirit, to lead human beings through the rigors of death. At the same time, however, the tale unfolds as a colorful drama of human feelings, choices, actions, and events.

The tale goes as follows: When the seventh daughter was born to a king who as yet had no male offspring, the king had her cast out. Through the aid of the Dragon Spirit or the Buddha, however, this Abandoned Princess does not die, but is entrusted to the care of an elderly couple across the sea. Many years later, she comes back to her father's palace at a time when he is dying of a disease. A magic remedy can save him, but only a person willing to undertake a long and arduous journey can seek this remedy. Though her father had tossed her out as a baby, the Princess now undertakes the arduous journey out of filial devotion to her father.

After numerous hardships and adventures, some quite humorous, the Princess finally arrives at the place where a Spirit guards the magic remedy. The Guardian Spirit says he will give her the magic remedy, but weds her first. After giving birth to several sons, she eventually returns home with the magic remedy, but only to find that her royal father has just died. Using the magic remedy, however, she revives him. Sorrow and hardship thus changed into joy, the story ends in wonder as she returns to her Spirit husband and they take their places in the heavens. The Princess is believed to be the archetypal *mudang* Spirit, with powers to lead persons through death and assuage death's hardships.

Other *kut* tales are the bawdy comic myth of the Maiden Tangum that is chanted in rites honoring the Grandmother Spirit of Childbirth and the moving tale of the Blind Man and his Daughter that rouses the audience to tears far into the night in a village *Pyölshin-kut*. Though employed in *kut* to honor the Spirits, such tales move spectators to laughter and tears because of their intrinsic human interest. They project, moreover, the gripping sense of inevitable forward movement that the literary critic Susanne Langer finds essential to the "dramatic illusion" (1953: 307). Drama, she says, imitates that fundamental aspect of experience "which distinguishes human life from animal existence: the sense of past and future as parts of one continuum, and therefore of life as a single reality" (1953: 311). Drama presents "the ominous forward movement of consequential action"; its mode "is the mode of Destiny" (1953: 307). Langer refers to masterpieces of stage drama, not oral folk tales; but her words highlight an aspect of *kut* drama that we have not yet seen, but that the myth of the Abandoned Princess admirably exemplifies.

In a Seoul *kut* for the dead, the *Chinogwi-kut*, the *mudang* chants this myth, seated at her drum and dressed in the elegant robes of the Abandoned Princess. The chant lasts about an hour, but can take only five minutes when time is short. Though merely chanted, not enacted, the tale is inherently dramatic in Langer's sense; and it forms, moreover, a part of the larger dramatic movement of the *Chinogwi-kut* as a whole. Many *kut* include moments of dramatically vivid theater, but remain on the whole episodic medleys with little sense of the inevitable forward movement that constitutes true drama. A *mudang's* initiation *kut*, however, and especially *kut* for the dead create a unified dramatic illusion of movement toward a destined end. This end may be pre-figured from the very beginning in symbolic props on view in the background—in the case of the *Chinogwi-kut*, a papercraft flower-bedecked “gate of thorns” to the other world and pictures of the Buddhistic Ten Kings of the World of Darkness, rulers and judges of the underworld. From the beginning, these props point to the destined end of the deceased. The chanting of the tale of the Abandoned Princess just before the climax of the rite sets the stage for the attainment of this end by authenticating the Princess' power over death and providing the immediate imaginative context for the climax.

Once the *mudang* has concluded the tale, she ritually fulfills the Abandoned Princess' role of guide to the next world. Still dressed in her elegant royal robes, she activates the symbol of the flower-covered “gate of thorns” in the background. In a slow-paced, graceful dance around the tables of offerings and before the gate, she leads the deceased, symbolized by white funeral clothes carried on a small table by a member of the family, to his or her destined end. Moving now forward, now back, and then slowly around in a solemn trance-like dance, the shaman, as the Abandoned Princess Spirit, processes twelve times around the tables to the accompaniment of the stately music of the drum, cymbals, and pipe—three rounds as a butterfly, three rounds displaying long flowing sleeves in a gesture of leading, three displaying a fan to sweep away evil spirits that stand in the way, and finally three rounds displaying a knife imaginatively to cut away obstacles, tossing it back and forth to an assistant over the offerings and through the flower-covered gate (pl. 3 a).

The deceased then takes final leave through the voice of the *mudang*; and the *mudang* ends the *kut* as she splits a long white cloth held out lengthwise by assistants. Running through the tough cloth

with abandon, and at times with a touch of humor, she tears it with her whole body. It is not at all easy to do this; and by so doing, she is believed to demonstrate her Spirit-given powers. At the same time, she gives dramatic ritual expression to prayers for the deceased's final departure for the other world and seeks magically to effect such departure in peace.

In an East Coast *kut* for the dead, the *Ogwi-kut*, the *mudang* chanting the myth of the Abandoned Princess has no special costume; but she enlivens the chant with a partial enactment, lasting several hours, of various incidents in the narrative. In this case, the symbolic props prefiguring the deceased's destined end include colorful Buddhist paper lanterns, a paper boat that the deceased takes to reach the "other shore" (彼岸, nirvana or the other world), and a long white cloth that symbolizes in this case the path over water to the "other shore." Whenever events in the myth bear association with these props, the shaman makes use of them by way of theatrical illustration; and whenever the events bear a resemblance to the situation of the deceased, she makes reference to the deceased and brings the family into the action.

In an *Ogwi-kut* performed for a Mr. Kim, who drowned at sea, leaving a young widow and grade-school son, the shaman tells us that, just as the Abandoned Princess was cast out to die, so Mr. Kim has been cast out in death, and we weep for him. Just as the Princess had to cross over to the other shore to seek the magical remedy, so Mr. Kim must now pass over to the "other shore." The shaman at this point draws out the long white cloth and calls attention to the colorful paper boat. She does not fail to elicit financial assistance from the spectators in the form of actual money to help pay the boatman, using the opportunity to hike up *kut* fees while providing an occasion for comic banter.

Once the shaman has concluded the narration, she proceeds to the climax of the *kut* in two ritual actions that activate the symbolic props in the background. The first action centers on a large colored paper lantern that seems to symbolize a heavenly mansion for the dead man's soul. The shaman raises the lantern high above the altar and, dancing a slow, mournful dance, tells Mr. Kim, "Now ride the lantern and ascend to the skies."

The second action focuses on the cloth symbolizing the path over water to the "other shore" and on a staff tipped with paper flowers, which represents the deceased. The *mudang* stretches out the cloth and sadly tells Mr. Kim, "Now we must load the boat and you must go."

As an assistant takes down the paper flowers, lanterns, and decorations from the table of offerings, the *mudang* does a slow-motion dance with two of the small paper lanterns, imaginatively loading them onto the boat. She then holds the flower-covered staff to the heads of the wife and son and speaks Mr. Kim's words of farewell. An assistant passes the paper boat and small paper lanterns slowly over the length of the cloth; and, saying for the final time, "Now let's go," the *mudang* slowly but firmly splits the white cloth lengthwise by means of the staff. With the cloth split, Mr. Kim is believed to have gone indeed to the other world; and except for a brief rite to chase away unsettled spirits who have come to watch, the *kut* is over.

A great deal of the force of the dance before the flower-covered "gate of thorns" in the Seoul *kut* and of the splitting of the cloth with the flower-tipped staff in the East Coast *kut* derives from the position of these actions at the climax of a dramatic symbolic movement that has been progressing toward the deceased's destined end from the very beginning. Though only *kut* believers may believe that the *mudang* actually accomplishes this end for the deceased, the *kut* dramatizes the wonder and mystery of an individual's entry into his or her final destiny in a way that can move a non-believer as well.

Of course, a *kut* for the dead does not have the carefully plotted, tightly structured movement of literary drama. Nor does it trace the realistic progress of a great tragic figure determining his or her own destiny. Like the Medieval English play *Everyman*, it dramatizes symbolically our common human destiny. It has the force, moreover, of being not just playacting, but for real. It expends a huge amount of time, effort, and expense to insure the actual destiny of an ordinary human being.

## Comic Play

One cannot think of *kut* drama, even in rites honoring the dead, without laughter. We saw how a *shimbang* uses laughter to keep woe at a distance in Cheju-do ancestral laments. In a lighter vein, a *mudang* may add spice to an East Coast *Ogwi-kut* with a comic interlude in which she describes the building of the mansion for the deceased in the sky. First she fashions tools, mimicking a blacksmith in stylized gestures employed in other *kut* as well. She gets injured in the process, however,

and raises peals of laughter with a comic grotesquerie of a crippled person's deformities.

A Seoul-area *Chinogwi-kut* regularly includes a lively episode of comic psycho-drama in which the Messenger Spirit from the Ten Kings of the World of Darkness comes to snatch away the deceased to judgement for sin. In some instances, the wildly flailing Messenger evokes the terror of death in a way that threatens all present. In others, he evokes billows of healing laughter. Mouth grotesquely stuffed with rice cake, he makes his appearance as a rapacious villain who tries to lasso the soul of the deceased, symbolized by white papers attached to papercraft flowers on the table of offerings. The family of the deceased gleefully fend the Messenger off in mock battle. In one instance, the deceased is portrayed as wryly complaining, "I have a wife, son, and large family, but no one to go in my place. I have a lot of close friends, but no one goes in my stead" (T. Kim 1971: 59). His words are reminiscent of the words spoken by Everyman in the Medieval morality play when, with unconscious self-irony, Everyman desperately tries to avoid Death's call and begs Fellowship, "Bear me company. . . in this journey" (ll. 246–247).

Just as Medieval Christians could fear death and the Devil and yet treat them comically because of their faith in Christ's power, *kut* participants can both fear and make fun of the Messenger Spirit because of their trust in the power of the *mudang*. Actually, the *Chinogwi-kut* borrows the motif of judgement from Buddhism; it seems to manifest little intrinsic concern about guilt or personal responsibility for the evil of our lives that may call for judgement. In any case, believers and non-believers alike can shudder with fear at the approach of the Messenger of Death, laugh at his antics, and appreciate the episode as a vivid dramatization of a typically Korean, zestful challenge in the face of danger and risk.

These two episodes from *kut* for the dead are not just decorative interludes of comic relief. Like the humor surrounding the Cheju-do laments, they have an integral role in the healing force of the rite; and they are integral to the vision of life embodied in *kut* ritual in general—a vision that invites us to taste life's bitterness to the full while braving the worst with laughter and play.

This vision takes full comic form in the *Kōri-kut*, a lengthy series of one-man vaudeville skits performed by a hereditary male *mudang* on the last morning of an East Coast village *Pyōlshin-kut*. These skits have

the religious ritual aim of entertaining and appeasing lesser Spirits. At the same time, they entertain all present, regardless of religious belief, with a naive, yet richly comic dramatization of the risks and challenges of village life that I treat more fully elsewhere (1986: 62–101, 1987: 4–23, 1993: 40–46, 1997: 116–134).

The medley begins by making fun of a Confucian schoolmaster trying to educate unruly village youngsters, who trip him up at every chance. It then moves on to a parody of the traditional Confucian Civil Service Exam. The shaman has us imagine the Schoolmaster abandoning his charges and heading for Seoul in hopes of passing this difficult exam for a more solid position in Confucian officialdom. Taking over the trickster's role from his former students, he makes chaotic nonsense of the established Confucian order. He passes the exam with a bit of verse that is perfect nonsense (C. Ch'oe 1982: 294–295); but he refuses the position of *Ch'ambong*, saying it is the job of a blind man (in Kyongsang-do dialect, "*Ch'ambong*"); and he rejects the position of *Chwasu* because it amounts to just sitting sleepily ("*chwasu*") on a chamber pot (1982: 295–296). The officials toss him out, exclaiming, "the likes of you won't be able to take charge of a heap of dog dung" (1982: 296).

Our hapless hero then turns to suicide. He takes poison, but, as chance has it, not enough to kill himself. Instead, in a trance induced by the poison, he meets the Ten Kings of the World of Darkness, who give him a chance to take the Civil Service Exam in their realm. He passes and accepts the position they offer him, that of feeding and chasing away unsettled Spirits in the *Kōri-kut*. The Spirits whom he now tries to control, however, are just as playful and unruly as the students of the first episode. The Spirits control him, grabbing him by the ear and dragging him this way and that in pure farcical turmoil (1982: 303–305). The skit thus ends as a parody of man's quest to control his destiny and a travesty of the shaman's ritual attempts to control the Spirits. The burlesque of the shaman's ritual activity in no way lessens the awe of more serious moments of the village *Pyōlshin-kut* itself. It merely gives evidence that the attached skits of the *Kōri-kut* embody an ironic vision that encompasses both naive religious wonder and shrewd skepticism.

As episode moves into episode, the comic focus shifts from the absurdities of the Confucian upper class to the plight of the common man. The mirth achieves its climax in the miniature comic mas-



terpiece of the sixth episode, “The Blind Man.” The plucky central figure of this skit is much more a master of his fate than the hapless Schoolmaster. On his way to “watch the moon rise” (1982: 331–332), he makes a joke of his blindness; and he puts down a group of women milling grain who mock him. He chants a ribald catalogue of ways in which, he claims, the women have served the sexual needs of all passers-by; and he boasts that he will make them “the mortar of the mill for his pestle to pound” (1982: 335). Continuing on his way, he happens upon the place where the present *kut* is being performed. With faith in the power of the Spirits, he washes his eyes in medicinal spring water and miraculously regains his sight (1982: 336). The antics of unruly Spirits ended the “Civil Service Exam” in ironic comic chaos; but the intervention of the Spirits here brings about a climax of pure comic joy. The episode ends with praise for the Spirits, who transform woe into wonder.

The final six skits of the *Kōri-kut* turn to the life of the fishing villagers in contest with the sea. A Fisherman finds himself at sea singing for want of something better to do, since there aren’t any fish. As he churns a bamboo pole in a manner suggesting the single rear oar of a Korean boat, he wonders why other fishermen have motor boats while he has to keep on rowing. He mimes the tossing of a net, and—lo and behold!—it’s an enormous catch. A storm then arises as he imaginatively heads for land. In one version, he and his comrades are rescued; and all ends well. In a darker version, however, that reflects what is still a common occurrence with coastal fishermen, all drown (1982: 339). The shaman notes that there are many such “wretched and miserable Spirits” of persons who have drowned at sea; and he tosses into the sea a food offering to such Spirits to “keep down their anger and earnestly beg them for prosperous good fortune” (1982: 340).

In the final episode, a woman about to give birth calls in her pain to the Grandmother Spirit of Childbirth. Played likewise by the male shaman, the woman raises a laugh when she insinuates that she is pregnant by one of the illustrious elders of the village. The baby itself, in the form of an orange plastic water-dipper, turns out to be a cute baby boy. The episode reaches its comic high point in a poetic lullaby expressing a mother’s love and the wonder of birth:

Lulla, lulla, lullaby, my love,  
Where have you come from, where have you been?

Did you fall from heaven, sprout up from the earth?  
 Have you come wrapped in the summer clouds that hide steep peaks?  
 (1982: 350)

In one version, the skits end here; but in the darker version, as was often the case in the days before modern medicine, the help of the Spirits is of little avail. The child abruptly takes sick and dies (1982: 352).

As is said of all comedy, the *Kōri-kut* has its comic wellsprings in fertility ritual; but the death of the child at the end distances the final skit from traditional comedy's celebration of life. Closer, rather, to the Theater of the Absurd, the skit expresses simply and brutally what the Absurdist Harold Pinter does in more introverted fashion in *The Birthday Party*, where the celebration of birth becomes a ritual of disintegration dominated ironically by death. In accord with what we expect of both traditional comic drama and fertility ritual, the *Kōri-kut* should find its climax in a harmonious, joyful celebration of life. But beginning with the episode of the Fisherman, a cloud has been cast over the action by the danger of being brought to an early death through the malevolent influence of restless ghosts who themselves suffered such a fate. Comic wit and fancy are not strong enough to dissipate death's shadow, and the power of the Spirits seems more and more likely to turn destructive than providential. With both comic and religious expectancies turned topsy-turvy, we leave the *kut* site cruelly plunged in a bleak, ironic world.

The *Kōri-kut* takes us back to the evolution of theatrical entertainment out of religious ritual. Far from primitive, however, its mimetic skits constitute a sophisticated example of the theater as serious play. Like the Cheju-do laments, they reveal a subtle mastery of comedy, irony, and alienation effects. In fact, the dark version of the skits distances participants from the very trust in the Spirits that the *Pyōlshin-kut* as a whole aims to nurture.

*Kut* do not preach abstract doctrine; but their dramatic play implies, nonetheless, serious attitudes and judgements regarding human life. Kim In-whoee sees traditional *kut* activity as embodying the ancient Korean ideal of the actualization in this world of an orderly harmony between the Gods, human beings, and nature (1982: 11; 1987: 87, 103, 113, 132). On the whole, a village *Pyōlshin-kut* clearly nurtures such harmony. No general theory, however, can account for the full import of any particular *kut* performance, just as no theory of tragedy can

exhaust the meaning or effect of a particular drama of Sophocles, Shakespeare, or Ibsen. A *Pyölsšin-kut* nurtures harmonious union, but in a manner more playfully chaotic than orderly; and in this dark version of the *Köri-kut*, its final skits jar the atmosphere of harmonious play with a disruptive note of stark skepticism.

The shaman sends us away from the *Pyölsšin-kut* with a typically Korean vision of life that is seemingly naive, but richly ambivalent. He has created comic situations that allow the villagers to play with social and ritual structures which they take, nonetheless, quite seriously. He has manipulated the emotions of the spectators to make them feel the challenges of life, now with witty self-confidence, now with anxious helplessness. He has shown life's fortunes as surprising us with both unexpected joy and sudden fear. Throughout much of the medley, he has shown his skill in using laughter's power to transmute life's woe into joy. And now, at the end, far from resolving the tensions and ambivalence of the world he has fashioned, he disrupts our expectancies by taking the medley's comic-religious movement toward a future enlivened by hope and turning it into a movement toward death.

In *From Ritual to Theater*, the anthropologist Victor Turner discusses continuities and differences between traditional ritual performances and those of the modern theater. He points out that both provide arenas of communal anarchic play that serve as "seedbeds of cultural creativity" (1982: 28). But he stresses that the creative play of a modern theatrical performance is more radically disruptive than that of traditional shamanist or tribal rituals. Traditional rituals "invert but do not usually subvert the *status quo*," whereas modern theatrical entertainment is often *subversive*, satirizing, lampooning, burlesquing, or subtly putting down the central values of society (1982: 41). Historical records suggest that Korean religious ritual fused prayer with play as far back as two-thousand years ago, when new year's rites honoring Heaven inverted the normal order with days on end of song, dance, eating, and drinking (I. Kim 1987: 72–73; Cho 1990: 71–73). The *Pyölsšin-kut* on the whole continues this tradition, but the present concluding skits go much further. Quite modern by Turner's scale, they actually subvert the *status quo*. They provide a put-down for the Confucian values of scholarly order that govern Korean society; and in the darker version, they subvert the shamanist values of trust in the Spirits that the *Pyölsšin-kut* otherwise seeks to maintain. Like the Cheju-do laments, these East Coast skits use alienation effects reminiscent of Bert Brecht; and they

mix laughter and woe in a way that we expect of Charlie Chaplin or the Theater of the Absurd.

Mircea Eliade has stressed that shaman séances recapture a paradisaical world of freedom and harmony (1964: 99, 117, 551); and he maintains that primitive seasonal rites recapture an archetypal state of paradisaic wholeness, harmony, and freedom “uncontaminated by time and becoming” (1954: 89). We have seen that displays of the Spirits’ power in *kut* around Seoul manifest a freedom that can be termed paradisaic; and we shall shortly see that the beginning of a *Pyölshin-kut* evokes an experience of wholeness and harmony that likewise can be said to be paradisaic. *Kut* laughter, however, free and liberating though it be, has its roots, rather, in the disharmony, cruelty, woe, and bondage of the world identified by Eliade as that in which paradise has been lost, a world that shows that man’s “wholeness is only apparent, that in reality the very constitution of his being is a consequence of its dividedness” (1960: 98).

However well *kut* drama may fit Eliade’s notions of primitive, archetypal ritual, its comedy aptly exemplifies the “archetypal, primitive theater” that the French drama critic Antonin Artaud, writing in the 1930’s, urged playwrights to return to in order to revitalize western drama (1958: 50; Kister 1994: 133–145). In the comic chaos that they arouse, the mimetic vaudeville skits of the *Köri-kut* draw their power from what Artaud has identified as the wellsprings of all primal theatrical activity: “laughter’s power of physical and anarchic dissociation” (1958: 42). In the fear of unpredictable Spirits that the grim version of the final skits evokes, they tap into the “great metaphysical fear” that he finds “at the roots of all ancient theater” (1958: 44). In the sudden disruption of our expectancies, they evoke what all theater should evoke: the “terrible and necessary cruelty which things can exercise against us,” “the underlying menace of a chaos as decisive as it is dangerous” (1958: 79, 51).

In his investigations into the origin of Greek drama, Nietzsche has stated that the Greeks, keenly aware as they were of life’s cruelty, were “in danger of craving a Buddhistic denial of the will” (1956: 51). He says that, far from shunning life, however, their tragedies present life’s horrors while at the same time drawing the audience into a Dionysian sense of oneness with life in “the metaphysical solace . . . that, despite every phenomenal change, life is at bottom indestructibly joyful and powerful” (1956: 50). In its keen awareness of the worst that life has to give, the Korean character bears comparison with that of the ancient Greeks; and in its ability to transform this awareness into a creative,

cathartic experience, Korean *kut* drama, naive though it be, bears comparison with Greek drama. The farcical skits at the end of the *Pyölshin-kut* imply a stark awareness of the precarious risks of life in a traditional Korean fishing village; but even in the darker version, these skits provide solace. They celebrate a typically Korean irrepressible zest for life in all its chaotic risks and fears; and they bless these risks and fears with contact with the Godhead.

## The Dramatization of Symbols

Nietzsche classifies the healing power of Greek drama into “the comic spirit, which releases us, through art, from the tedium of absurdity” and “the spirit of the sublime, which subjugates terror by means of art” (1956: 52). The mimetic skits that end a *Pyölshin-kut* heal through the comic spirit. A symbolic rite greeting the Village Spirit at the very beginning provides healing through the spirit of the sublime. In this opening rite, villagers gather at the Village Shrine by the sea or in a grove of trees to summon the Spirit to show his or her presence by causing a tall bamboo “Spirit pole” to shake. While a strong villager holds the pole firm, the *mudang* asks the advice of the Spirit regarding the village’s present state and interprets responses manifested in the shaking pole. Believers are spell-bound; but a non-believer, too, cannot but be moved by the scenic panorama that forms as a clear April sky, towering mountains, and the picturesque Village Shrine on a knoll above the sea crystallize around the Spirit pole, its white flag fluttering toward the sky. As participants join in a buoyant round dance accentuated by the graceful arm movements of traditional Korean dance and animated by the shrill notes of pipe and resounding gong, the ritual scene captures a sublime moment of primal union of earth and sky, sea and land, and human beings with nature, other human beings, and the Gods. It gives spatial expression to a traditional Korean longing for harmony that at the same time is an archetypal religious longing of the human heart. In this case, surely, as Eliade says of all such rites, the performance momentarily recaptures an archetypal state of paradisaic harmony “uncontaminated by time and becoming” (1954: 89).

The band of hereditary *mudang* who perhaps centuries ago began performing this symbolic ritual had a keen sense of theatrical gesture

and space. They fashioned a spectacle that bears the mark of artistic genius on at least two counts: It uses simple means to evoke an experience charged with deep feeling and import; and it employs the particularities of indigenous music, dance, religious belief, and setting to evoke an universal experience.

The beginning of an East Coast *Ogwi-kut* for one who has drowned at sea provides another example of an utterly simple, yet dramatically powerful symbolic rite that offers healing through the power of the sublime. The rite begins by the sea shore. To the rhythm of the waves and beat of a gong, the *mudang* asks the Spirits to send the dead person's soul to land. As a family member holds a bamboo pole topped by a white flag fluttering in the breeze, an assistant entices the soul to shore by tossing a live chicken and a covered bowl of rice into the sea and drawing them back by cords. The *mudang* meanwhile calls to the soul in a slow, mournful chant in which longing for the lost loved one blends with the breaking waves: "Come to shore! Come to shore!"

What the philosopher Ernst Cassirer says of mythic activity applies to the kind of intuitive creative activity we have here. Myth, he says, signifies "an *intuitive* unity preceding and underlying all the explanations contributed by *discursive* thought" (1955. II: 69). Intuitive though it is, myth-making is by no means a passive process. "Nowhere," Cassirer continues, "do we find a passive contemplation of things; here all contemplation starts from an attitude, an act of the feeling and will." The shaman neither consciously plots out the lines of this initial scene by the sea nor offers an explanation of the mystery of suffering and death. But neither does she simply stand dumb before life's mysteries. She fuses simple gestures, chant, and the natural setting of the sea in an act of creative intuition that endows human sorrow with theatrical form, beauty, and religious significance. She stirs up anew the sorrow of loss to enrich it with an appreciation of both the mystery of the Spirits' care and the wonder of nature, whose destructive power surges beneath the soothing movement of the waves.

Another genial manipulation of symbolic gesture to enrich sorrow with cathartic wonder occurs in the rite described earlier at the end of the *Ogwi-kut*. Telling the deceased, "Now we must load the boat and you must go," the *mudang* slowly passes paper lanterns and a colorful paper boat over the length of a long white cloth held by an assistant. In some instances, she then takes up a small staff, topped with paper flowers, that represents the deceased. With calm, dignified grace, she

uses the staff slowly, but firmly, to split the cloth. Fusing the searing pain of absolute separation in death with an image of the flowering of existence, this technically simple, but richly ambivalent yin/yang theatrical image teases the heart with the mystery of life's fulfillment in the painful separation of death. Composed equally of blossoming and splitting, it evokes both a soothing hope that death brings fulfillment and a cruel fear that life ultimately is separation.

Folk theater though it be, this rite endows the perhaps poor village family who offer the *kut* with a sophisticated spiritual and aesthetic experience. It has been said that Cheju-do shamanism has traditionally achieved "an endless parley, a friendly relationship between life and death," in which "death could involve both a personal turn for the better and a cause of calamity and thus, while setting off dread and anxiety, become an object of wonder" (Y. Kim 1993: 193). The gestural image that ends the *Ogwi-kut* does the same. It sends participants away with a wonder in the face of death that is far removed from the naive theatrical bedazzlement of many a Seoul-area *kut*. It sends them away with the fertile amazement described by Cassirer: "an astonishment moving in a twofold direction, composed of opposite emotions—fear and hope," the amazement with which "myth as well as scientific cognition and 'philosophy' begins" (1955. II: 78).

Whatever effect an *Ogwi-kut* may be believed to have with regard to the ontological status of the deceased, its impact on those still alive depends more on theatrical artistry than on faith in the world of the Spirits. The final gesture has an intrinsic dramatic power that depends very little on belief that the deceased is visibly present in the flower-tipped staff. It is enough if the soul is present simply in the way that one regards the soul of a loved one to be present when a Confucian rite or Christian funeral is held.

It has been said that a *kut* for the dead aims to insure that the deceased achieves ancestral status, with the right to receive reverence in ancestral rituals (K. Ch'oe 1978: 270; 1989: 102). A bereaved family may hold a *kut* with this intent for the soul of an unmarried offspring or other person who does not automatically qualify for ancestral status; but the *kut* itself, in the symbolic gestures that constitute its climax, points to the mystery of life's pain and fulfillment rather than to any specific goal such as ancestral status. In the splitting of the cloth with the flower-covered staff, the *Ogwi-kut* points toward a hope that the painful rupture of death will bring flowering fulfillment and seeks magically to insure this fulfill-

ment. The Seoul *Chinogwi-kut* points in the same direction when the Abandoned Princess escorts the deceased to the other world in solemn dance before the flower-covered “gate of thorns.”

The Southwest *kut* for the dead, the *Ssitkim-kut*, fuses pain, hope, and peace in the symbolic gesture of the *Kop'uri*, a rite in which a white-clad *mudang* uses graceful, dance-like movements to release large loops knotted in a long white cloth. The word *ko* (loop knot) forms a pun with *ko* (苦, bitterness), and the knotted loops symbolize the bitter tangles of frustration and regret that a life of cruelty can leave bound in a person's heart. For the dead, this gesture evokes hope that death will bring release from life's knots of bitter pain and frustration; and it aims magically to effect such release. It allows death to become what the Korean cultural view expects it ideally to be, fulfillment in freedom and peace: “Through dying one achieves life's fullness. . . . That is what the *Kop'uri* is” (Y. Kim 1981: 121). For the living, this ritual gesture constitutes an unforgettable spatial image charged with both the sorrow of a lifetime and the peace of wondrous release (pl. 3 b).

These images from *kut* for the dead have dramatic power both because of where they appear in the overall movement of the whole rite and because of their intrinsic visual and aural appeal. Fashioned though they are from the simplest of materials, they speak an eloquent spatial language. If *kut* laughter exemplifies Antonin Artaud's ideal of “archetypal, primitive theater” in its power of “anarchic dissociation” (1958: 42), these gestural images do so because of their primal theatrical power as “poetry in space” (1958: 38). Words of the Spirits form the core of *kut* ritual, but theatrical gestures empower these words. *Kut* culture is thus not so much a “culture of words” as the “culture of gestures” that Artaud holds us as an ideal for playwrights (1958: 108). At its best, as in these climactic images of *kut* for the dead, *kut* drama achieves a genial “mental alchemy which makes a gesture of a state of mind” (1958: 66). It attains a fertile “metaphysics of gesture” that gives ever-renewed life to the richly imaginative spiritual culture of Korean shamanism while exemplifying Artaud's dictum that there are “attitudes in the realm of thought and intelligence that words are incapable of grasping and that gestures and everything partaking of a spatial language attain with more precision than they” (1958: 56, 71).

Not all *kut* use the language of theatrical space to such moving effect. Sometimes, as in the case of a *mudang*'s dance on rice-chopper blades, *kut* gestures induce what seems to a non-believer to be no more than



mind-benumbing awe. Many *kut*, too, consist of rambling, repetitious episodes that, dramatically speaking, are vapid and tedious. The never-ending appearances of Spirits in a Seoul *kut* for good fortune and the elaborate processions of the celebrated *Pyŏlshin-kut* from Unsan have little in the way of universally appealing dramatic significance. Even such a dramatic rite as a *mudang*'s initiation *kut* can include hours of litany-like chants that have no inherent dramatic interest.

Nonetheless, all *kut*, like shamanist séances in other parts of the world, speak the spatial language of the theater. Scholars study shaman rites in the light of the theoretical language of folklore, anthropology, sociology, and the history of religions; but any study of a shaman rite bears its best fruit when it is rooted in the rite's own language of theatrical gesture and spatial imagery. The theatrical language of a shaman rite has an intrinsic symbolic significance regardless of the intent or interpretation of any particular *mudang*, participant, or scholar. As a language of symbols, moreover, it has its richest meaning and power to heal when it is multileveled, ambiguous, and even self-contradictory. We saw this in the dark version of the skits that end the village *Pyŏlshin-kut* and in the splitting of the cloth with the flower-covered staff at the end of the East Coast *Ogwi-kut*. At its best, Korean shaman drama sends participants away with unforgettable images of thought-provoking, spiritually enriching power.

We have seen that Korean shaman rituals provide ample evidence for E. T. Kirby's argument that shamanist rituals constitute a kind of "Urdrama." But if "Urdrama" means merely an embryonic form of primitive folk drama, Korean shaman rituals are not "Urdrama." Naïve though they often are, they constitute a sophisticated body of dramatic religious ritual that deserves to be recognized as much more than a curiosity of Korean folk culture. *Kut* drama merits an honored place in the dramatic heritage of all mankind.

I give fuller examples of the heritage of *kut* drama in book form in Kister 1997. The illustrations appended to the present article are of staged performances. They differ from living rites in spirit, but not to a great degree visually.

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## The Origins of Order. A Set of Nepalese Shaman Recitals

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*Continuing a series of Nepalese shaman oral texts and translations, this article presents a set of three short texts recited in public over critically ill patients. The first is used to treat adult males, detailing the creation of the first human being and narrating both the origins of the planets and of healing rituals. The text used to treat women introduces their (separate) origin and outlines their proper behavior, while the recital over seriously ill children introduces the eldest ritual specialists. Together the three texts constitute a concise introduction to the most important features of the world of Nepalese shamans.*

### Introduction

An article in a recent issue of this journal (Maskarinec 1994) introduced the reader to the oral texts of Nepalese shamans, to the social context of Western Nepal, and to the specific issue of “star obstructions,” difficult moments in a patient’s life-course that require serious shamanic intervention. This set of problems is so significant that many shamans have sets of different recitals to use when treating such cases. The choice of text depends on the severity of the case, the status of the patient, and, for some shamans, on whether the patient is an adult male, an adult female, or a child. The three texts that I provide here belong to such a set. The first, the “Event of Planet Offering,” begins the treatment of critically ill men. It describes the creation of the original man and the origin of the present solar system, and details the first ritual ceremony, performed by Mahādev on behalf of the entire race of man, a model for shamanic intervention. If the patient is an important person or a close relation, the treatment continues with the “Event of Tilīgramā,” the crucial initiation text (too long to be included here).

The second text, the “Event of Sacrificing to the Time of Death and the Messenger of Death,” besides being recited at shaman funerals, is used when treating women who are in crisis. It explains the divine origin of women while outlining with concrete examples and counter-examples proper female behavior. The third text, the “Event of Distancing Star Obstructions,” treats children, those suffering, as the text says, the children’s crises of birth, death, of short duration (“a month”) or of long duration (“a year”). This text introduces the world’s specialists, the first (“eldest”) shaman, oracle, astrologer, priest, fortune teller, counselor, and seer, with short summaries of their characteristic activities.

As with all publicly recited texts, these three would conclude with spells (*mantar*) whispered over the patient, but the possibilities here are so extensive as to warrant a separate article.

## Source of the Texts

The three texts that I have transcribed and translated here were provided by Karṇa Vīr Kāmī, a seventy-one year old shaman of Ciuri Village, Jājarkoṭ District, who has been a shaman for the past fifty-five years. Although his health and subsequently his shamanic activity has recently declined, he remains probably the best known and most respected shaman in Jājarkoṭ, and has trained many of the shamans who now practice in the area. I first recorded these texts from him in 1981, and have done so at periodic intervals since then (most recently in October 1994), without finding any significant variations, other than substitute endings chosen to fit individual circumstances. Karṇa Vīr’s “brother” Abi Lal Kāmī (actually a paternal first cousin) is also a practicing shaman and learned his texts at the same time as did Karṇa Vīr, from the same teacher. I have included as notes extra lines and other differences found in his versions.

१) ग्रहदानका मेलो  
 जुग जेठा सत्वजुग,  
 खाल जेठा नेपाल खाल,  
 मान्दमी जेठा तिलीग्रमा,  
 दिशा जेठा पूर्व दिशा.

- 5 महिना जेठा चैत महिना,  
 बार जेठा आइतबारको दिन  
 जोग जेठा मङ्गलबारको जोग,  
 तिथि जेठा एकादशी,  
 देव जेठा ब्रह्मा महादेव ।
- 10 ब्रह्मा महादेवले जलफल मान्दमी रचेमो ।  
 जलघण्टर मान्दमी भया ।  
 अन्हाऊ भन्या मञ्जुत्वा भएन, बोलाऊ भन्या मञ्जुत्वा भएन,  
 कसो राखुँ दिन, कसो राखुँ मान्दम,  
 मञ्जुत्वाको जात बनाउँला, भन्या, मुनचौंटी मथन गन्या,
- 15 अङ्ग रगत दिमा, बाह्रौँ बल, तिघ्रा मासी, नजर ज्योती दिमा,  
 पुनपुरुष दिमा, बोल मञ्जुत्वा, बोल्ने भएन, चलने भएन ।  
 कसो राखुँ मान्दम, कसो राखुँ दिन, भन्न लाम्या ।  
 काँसोभरत मथन गन्या, आङ रगत दिमा,  
 बाह्रौँ बल, तिघ्रा मासी, नजर ज्योति, पुनपुरुष दिमा,
- 20 अमर चण्डी ठोक्सा, बेत डण्डी ठोक्सा,  
 बोल मञ्जुत्वा, बोल्ने भएन, चलने भएन ।  
 कसो राखुँ दिन, कसो राखुँ मान्दम, भन्या ।  
 चुवाचन्दन श्रीखण्ड मलामागिरी चिन्या, फुल साजी बनामा,  
 मुनभाल्याको कृष्टि लियामा, मथन गरी मञ्जुत्वा बनामा,
- 25 अङ्ग रगत दिमा, बाह्रौँ बल, तिघ्रा मासी,  
 नजर ज्योति दिमा, पुनपुरुष हाल्या,  
 अमरचण्डी ठोक्सा, बेतडण्डी ठोक्सा,  
 काली चबैर भान्या, सेती चबैर जगामा,  
 बोल मञ्जुत्वा, बोल्ने भयो, चलने भयो ।
- 30 अब रहेमो दिन, अब रहेमो मान्दम ।  
 मञ्जुत्वाको जातलाई अजम्मरी दिमा,  
 अति बरिगो अटाउने भएन, खटाउने भएन,  
 जलघन्तर मृत्युमण्डल मान्दमी भैगो,  
 हातै नपुग्ने, पातै नपुग्ने,
- 35 भारी काटी, धामी नपुग्ने भैगो ।  
 मञ्जुत्वाको जात छलवादी गरीला । जाँऊ न पार्वती,  
 जेठ मासको खरी धूप काँक्री टिपी लेऊ ।  
 काँक्री टिप्न गहन् ।  
 सानो टिपिन्, ठूलो टिपिन्, छीमाँ,
- 40 पिमाल पूर, खस्यो फूल भन्यो,

- बूढो मर्ने भया, बालक मर्ने भया, सानू मर्ने भया, ठूलो मर्ने भया,  
सात काल भया, चौध बिकाल भया ।<sup>1</sup>  
नास्मी पार्वती, गुरू माता,  
बूढोबाट मर्ने, बालकबाट जिउँदो गराउला, भन्ना ।
- 45 बूढो मर्ने भया, बालक मर्ने भया,  
सानू मर्ने भया, ठूलो मर्ने भया, गर्भ सुहने भयो,  
मध्नुत्वालाई नौ ग्रह उत्पन्न हुन लाग्ना, भन्न लाग्ना ।  
महादेव नुहाउन गयो, नुहाउनबाट महादेव गुफा बसिगयो ।  
छै महिना गुफा बसी, पार्वता भान्सा बसिन् ।
- 50 महादेवको भात पकिसक्यो ।  
महादेवको खाने भात कता फाल, भन्न लागिन् ।  
हिउँ शङ्कर फालु, हिउँ शङ्करमा पुगी बनिगयो ।  
महादेव छ मास बर्ष दिन गुफाबाट निस्कीयो,  
पार्वता कुकाए कस्तुरी बेरिन् ।
- 55 कुकाए कस्तुरीले गाभ खोल्न लागिन् ।  
महादेवको बाइसे गेडा मइल निकल्न्यो ।  
महादेवको मइल कता फाल, भन्न लागिन् ।  
रख्यानपात फाली, सगुर चल्तो खाला,  
महादेवको अगत पर्नन्, भनिन् ।
- 60 बमडुवा फाली,  
कोरीकाउन्ना, हिच्युभिच्यु, योगीजलाती टेक्ला,  
महादेव अगत पर्नन्, कता फाली, भन्न लागिन् ।  
जाऊ न पार्वती, रक्त पोखरीमा फाल्नु पन्थो, भन्ना ।।  
रक्त पोखरीमा फालिन् ।
- 65 नौ ग्रह उक्क्या, नौ गीडा उक्क्या,  
रक्त पोखरीलाई खाइसकी उद्न लाग्ना ।  
महादेवले जाने पाया, हातमा खड्ग लिमा,  
आठै ग्रह काट्या, आठै गीडा काट्या ।  
ग्रह जेठा जेतु रह्यो, गीडा जेठा कालचक्र रह्यो ।
- 70 एकलाई काट्या दुवै पुम्पो, दुइलाई काट्या तीनै पुम्पो,  
तीनलाई काट्या चारै पुम्पो, चारलाई काट्या पाँचै पुम्पो,  
पाँचै काट्या छै पुम्पो, छलाई काट्या सातै पुम्पो,

<sup>1</sup> Additional lines at this point in Abi Lal's version:

सिन्धी मर्ने भयो, बागी मर्ने भयो,  
गाा बन्ने भयो, पीर छोड्ने भयो, खल छोड्ने भयो ।



- सातलाई कादमा आठै पुम्पो, आठलाई कादमा नौवै पुम्पो,  
महादेवले नौ ग्रह नौ गौडा कादन खोजमा ।
- 75 उडी राम्रो, घटी राजा हान्मा,  
घरी छिर्ने लाम्पा, घरी मर्ने लाम्पा ।  
घटी राजा दिनका उर्दै भया, मासका उर्दै भया ।  
महादेवले जानी पामा, मूर लामा बागम्बरको खासा,  
बाँदी लामा रानी भाउत, चण्डी भाउत, गोला भाउत,
- 80 कान लामा दर्शन जोली, गली लामा रुद्राक्षको माला,  
काँध बेन्मा भोलीतुम्बा, मुख लामा खप्पट,  
हात समात्मा बज्रठिठ्ठा, कम्मर बेन्मा छुरीकाटारी,  
गोली लामा कल्की खराउ पैसै धारी,  
जोगी स्वरूप गन्मा ।
- 85 घटी राजा टपाउन गमा, अलख गन्मा ।  
लैजाऊ बाबुजी, हात्ती हलग लैजाऊ,  
घोडी खलमा लैजाऊ, हीरामोती लैजाऊ ।  
लिन्नी बाबु, मेरो घै छ ।  
क्या लिन्डी तिमि ।
- 90 नौ बृक्षका पात गर, नौ बृक्षका फल गर,  
नौ अन्न गर, नौ तीला गर, नौ काला बाछा गर, कालै कपडा गर,<sup>2</sup>  
मुरै मन्त्रि दिनु, त्यही लिन्दु, भन्न लाम्पा ।  
नौ अन्न गन्मा, नौ तीला गन्मा,  
नौ फूल गन्मा, नौ कपडा गन्मा, बाछा गन्मा, कालै कपडा गन्मा,
- 95 अन्नदान गन्मा, धनदान गन्मा,  
मुनबाँदी तामादान गर्न लाम्पा ।  
नौ हान्मा ठाहा गन्मा, नौ बृक्ष गन्मा, नौ बृक्षका फल,  
नौ बृक्षका पात, नौ जोकी नौ षोकी,  
जुमकाल जुमदूतको भोग दिन लाम्पा ।
- 100 महादेवले भोलीतुम्बा बाटो लिया,  
भोलीतुम्बा हाल्मा, मुरै मन्त्री दिमा ।  
महादेवले कालै बाछा लिया, दोबाटामा लिया,

<sup>2</sup> Abi Lal adds the following lines at this point:

एकै कोल्दमा रोटी गर, खतनीका सिप्लो गर,  
एकै जुध्मा भात गर, मोह विउना गर,  
कट भोजन गर, लालभोग, पत्रपरिहार,  
विच कल्मान गर, काँचो तेल गर, पाल्मा पानी गर ।

- बर्मादुवा लिमा, नी भाग दिमा,  
नी ओकी, नी पोकी दिमा, बर्मादुवा दिमा,  
105 काला बाछा काट्मा, रक्त भोग दिमा ।  
नी ग्रह टान्मा, नी गौडा टान्मा,  
सातै काल एकै काल,  
चीध बिकाल एकै बिकाल गन्मा,  
ग्रह टार्न लाग्मा, नी गौडा टार्न लाग्मा,  
110 राहु, केतु, उल्का, सङ्कष्ट, बृहस्पति, शनिश्चर, मङ्गल, सूर्ज, चन्द्र,  
नी ग्रह टान्मा, नी गौडा टान्मा ।  
आफ्ना ईश्वर महादेवको बाचा राख्मो,  
त्यहाँबाट घटी राजाको दिन उभै, मासको उभै, जाम्ने भयो ।  
खाने आरा जीट गन्मा, मेरो बालो पीठ गन्मा ।  
115 भूमिबसुन्धरा साप्छी, बरपिपल साप्छी,  
सत्मवतीगङ्गा साप्छी, नी लाल तारा साप्छी,  
धर्तीमाता साप्छी, ज्वालादेवी साप्छी,  
सिखापतिराजा र जुम्रातम भ्वाङ्गरी साप्छी,  
आफ्ना ईश्वर महादेवको बाचा ॥

Alternate version to the concluding 28 lines:

- सिला उट्मा सिला धाम्मा, चक्र छोड्मा चक्र धाम्मा,  
अनसेरा धाम्मा, धनसेरा धाम्मा, जगसेरा धाम्मा,  
ग्रहदान गर्न लाग्मा, गौडादान गर्न लाग्मा,  
सात काल  
5 चीध बिकाल भोग दिन लाग्मा,  
राहु, केतु, शनिश्चर, मङ्गल, उल्का, सङ्कष्टको भोग दिन लाग्मा ।  
ग्रहदान, चाँदीदान,  
मुनदान दिला, तामादान दिला,  
सुवादान दिला, फलामदान दिला, कपूरदान दिला,  
10 रक्तधनदान दिला, रातो पाखा दिला,  
अन्नदान धनदान दिला,  
ग्रहदान दिला, गौडादान दिला, भन्मा ।  
महादेऊले भोलीतुम्बा धाम्मा,  
महादेऊलाई दानै गन्मा, महादेऊले लिमा,  
15 हरि गीत लिमा, बर्मादुवा लिमा ।  
नरै खोची गन्मा, नरै पोकी गन्मा,  
नरै अन्न गन्मा, नरै टिला गन्मा,  
नरै पल्ला गन्मा, बर्मादुवा लिमा,

- कालै बाछा काटमा, रक्तभोग दिमा,  
20 ग्रह शान्त राख्या, गौडा शान्त राख्या,  
राहु, केतु, शनिश्चर, मङ्गल, उल्का, मङ्गुष्टा, बृहस्पतिको भोग दिमा ।  
ग्रह शान्त राख्या, गौडा शान्त राख्या ॥  
खाने आरा डीट गन्मा, मेरो बालो पीठ गन्मा ।  
आफ्ना ईश्वर महादेवको बाचा ॥
- २) जुमकाल जुमदूतको भोग दिनु मेलो  
ग्रह काल्म दिमा, गौडा काल्म दिमा, मुनि लिमा ।  
जरम गौडा, मरम गौडा,  
खड्का गौडा, पड्डा गौडा,  
हिमा गौडा, खेल्मा गौडा,  
5 सिरान काल, गोन्मान निऊ,  
जुमकाल, जुमदूत,  
राहु, केतु, शनिश्चर, मङ्गल, बृहस्पति, उल्का, मङ्गुष्टा,  
मुनी लैजाऊ पुरानु मेलो ।  
उही दिनको साफा उही दिनको भाका ।  
10 देव जेठा बर्सा महादेव,  
जुग जेठा सत्यजुग,  
खाल जेठा नेपाल खाल,  
मान्दमी जेठा तिलीग्रमा,  
दिशा जेठा पूर्व दिशा,  
15 महिना जेठा चैत महिना,  
बार जेठा आइतबारको दिन,  
जोग जेठा मङ्गलबारको जोग,  
तिथि जेठा एकादशी ।  
देव जेठा बर्सा महादेवले जलमल मान्दम खेमो ।  
20 जलघण्टर मान्दमी भया ।  
अन्हाऊ भन्मा, मञ्जुत्मा भएन, खोलाऊ भन्मा, मञ्जुत्मा भएन,  
कसो राखुँ दिन, कसो राखुँ मान्दम, भन्मा ।  
अन्धासेरा बुढो रहेछ, छाती कोर्न लाग्मा, धर्ती कोर्न लाग्मा,  
अलाप बिलाप गरी, हुन लाग्मा ।  
25 रातको राती भया, दिनको राती भया ।  
इन्द्र घरमा जाने भया । जाऊ न जोल्मा, जाऊ,  
मृत्यु मण्डलमा को हो, क्या हो, किन रुन्छ ।  
जोल्मा आमा मृत्यु मण्डलमा ।  
को हो, क्या हो, किन रुन्छ ।  
30 आखा अन्धालो भया, कान बहिरो भया,

- रातको रातै भया, दिनको रातै भया, साध छैन, सङ्गली छैन,  
दिदी छैन, बेनी छैन, कैगो मुख हेर्ने ।  
अलाप बिलाप गरी, छाती कोरी, धर्ती कोरी ।  
इन्द्र घरमा जोल्मा गमा, किन रुन्छ अन्धासेरा ।
- 35 साध छैन, सङ्गली छैन, रातको रातै छ, दिनको रातै छ,  
कैगो मुख हेर्ने, भन्न लाग्मा ।  
छाती कोरी, धर्ती कोरी, अलाप बिलाप गर्छ ।  
मैताचेली दिमा ।  
जाऊ न मैताचेली, मृत्यु मण्डलमा, तिम्रा राज्य भया, भन्मा ।
- 40 मैताचेली मृत्यु मण्डल भरिन्, अन्धासेरा दिमा ।  
छै मास बर्ष दिन भया, एक छोरा जन्मा ।  
साध छैन, सङ्गली छैन, दिदी छैन, बेनी छैन,  
रातको रातै रहेछ, दिनको रातै रहेछ, कैगो मुख हेर्ने,  
अलाप बिलाप गरी रुन लागिन् ।
- 45 दे बुहारी, जाऊ न मैताचेली,  
तिम्रा माइतबाट बोलाया, भन्मा ।  
मैताचेली रुन मर्न लागिन्, कसो गरी माइती जाऊ, भन्न लागिन् ।  
इन्द्र घरमा जाने पामाँ, किन रुन्छ मैताचेली ।  
जाऊ न जोल्मा, मृत्यु मण्डलमा ।
- 50 जोल्मा भन्मा, मृत्यु मण्डलमा ।  
किन रुन्छ मैताचेली ।  
साध छैन, सङ्गली छैन, दिदी छैन, बेनी छैन,  
रातको रातै रहेछ, दिनको रातै रहेछ,  
कसो राखुँ मान्दाम, कसो राखुँ दिन, रुन लागिन् ।
- 55 जोल्मा गमा, इन्द्र घरमा । किन रुन्छ मैताचेली ।  
साध छैन, सङ्गली छैन, दिदी छैन, बेनी छैन,  
क्या अकाल पन्मा, क्या बिपत्ति पन्मा,  
छाती कोरी, धर्ती कोरी, अलाप बिलाप गन्मा रुन्छ ।  
चन्द्रबती दिमा ।
- 60 अन्नकेली छोरी चन्द्र, जाऊ न चन्द्र तल मृत्यु मण्डलमा,  
तिम्रा राज्य भया भन्मा, मृत्यु मण्डल दिमा ।  
चन्द्रबती सातै तला मान्नाम भरिन्,  
अन्धासेरा समुरा भया, मैताचेली सामु भया ।  
छै मास बर्ष दिन भया,
- 65 दे बुहारीमी दे, तिम्रो माइतबाट  
नी जून दाइजो ल्माऊ, नी बेल दाइजो ल्माऊ,  
रातको रातै भया, दिनको रातै भया,  
कसो राखुँ दिन, कसो राखुँ मान्दाम, भन्न लाग्मा ।

- अन्नकेली छोरी चन्द्र एकै तला उक्कसिन्,  
 70 दुबै तला, तीनै तला, चारै तला, पाँचै तला,  
 छै तला, सातै तला मान्दम उक्कसिन्,  
 इन्द्र घरमा गइन्, सय ढोका छोपिन्।<sup>3</sup>  
 भित्रबाट कौन पाउन आमा, कौन प्रचामी आमा,  
 ओटी धुमकीय दिमा, लीरी खुम्कीय दिमा।  
 75 जाऊ न जोल्मा, ओटी धुमकीय हेर।  
 जोल्मा गमा, ओटी धुमकीय।  
 को हो, कमा हो।  
 चन्द्रबती, अन्नकेली छोरी चन्द्र।  
 भित्र आइजी छोरी चन्द्र।  
 80 भित्र गइजी चन्द्र दिदी।  
 जिमइ मेरी बेली।  
 जदी बाबु भगवान।  
 जिमइ मेरी छोरी।  
 जदी दाजे नाराण।  
 85 जिमइ मेरी बैनी।  
 जदी भाउज्म।  
 जिमइ चन्द्र।  
 पाट पटेम्बर सिष्टरामा बस्न गइन्।  
 गुद्गुडीको समेरुको नेचा, अलग बेरा नली,  
 90 छिमलाको चिलीय, पर्वताको पातो, मुनको भारी पानी,

<sup>3</sup> Abi Lal's beginning is much more concise:

तल्लो मान्दमीमा अन्धसेरा बयो, बन्धसेरा बयो, कुटोलेत्तुसेरा बयो,  
 तल्लो मान्दमीमा तल्लो तली बयो, दिवको तली बयो,  
 कसै काहुँ तल, कसै काहुँ दिन।  
 तल्लो मान्दमीमा अलगपचित्तय गर्न लाग्यो।  
 छोरी चन्द्रबती दिनुपन्को, भनी, पातामलजीले छोरी चन्द्रबती दिमा।  
 तल्लो मान्दमीमा छोरी चन्द्रबती गइन्।  
 तल्लो तली देखिन्, दिवको तली देखिन्,  
 अन्धसेरा मनुवा, बेरो तल्लो तली बयो, दिवको तली बयो,  
 कसै काहुँ दिन, कसै काहुँ तल,  
 अलगपचित्तय गरी, सब लागिन्।  
 जाऊ न, कुहागिऊ, सिद्धा पाइतबाट  
 यी कुन दाइजी यी बेरा दाइको इपाऊ, भन्न लाग्यो।  
 मेरा सिद्धी लाग चित्तु लहु बतल्लो गयो,  
 अरुनियारि बसोतुको गरिन्, कुपलेनाथको पारिन्,  
 पाचित्तले मान्दमी गइगिन्, ओटी चम्कयो, लीरी खुम्कीय।

- कलामोन्वा आगो, मम्मगल्मा तपुल, गुद्गुडी हुक्का खान लागिन् ।  
 मूत्म् मण्डलबाट, क्मा काजमा आमी बेली,  
 क्मा काममा आमी ।  
 नी जून दाइजो लिन आरें, बुवा,  
 95 नी बेल दाइजो लिन आरें,  
 मूत्म् मण्डलमा रातको रातै छ, दिनको रातै छ,  
 कसो राखुं दिन, कसो राखुं मान्दम, भन्न लागिन् ।  
 नवै जून दाइजो छैन, छोरी, नवै बेल दाइजो छैन ।  
 हाती हलमा घोडी खलमा, कनकन जुहार,  
 100 हीरामोती हजारी रुपिया, जो चाहिन्छ लैजाऊ, बेली,  
 नवै जून नवै बेल दाइजो छैन, भन्मा ।  
 लिनी बाबु, मेरो घै छ ।  
 खुट्टी बाँसको धनु, लेङ्गे बाँसको ताँदो,  
 जर्जुटाको सर, कालकोठ रैमा बिच, चिमलाको भोल्टा,  
 105 छुनुमुनु घाँरो लोती भिन्नी मार्को, मैको टिको भर्माँकी,  
 लेख कुलिं गार चार,  
 गार कुलिं लेख बभान,  
 बन सिकार खेल्न बाबु छोरा गया ।  
 दाज्म् नाराण, बाबु भगवान रैम्मा ।  
 110 नाराणकी बैनी हुलां, बाबु अन्नकेली छोरी हुलां त,  
 छोरी हल्मा लागोई, बैनी पातक लागोई, मरी जान्छु, भनिन् ।  
 गाँउ घरका नरनाम मलाम्मामा होई देऊ, भनिन् ।  
 सोह सभ मलाम्मामा गया, रुइनिसागर, बैनीसागर,  
 मोन्वा घाट भन्मा, चिहान बगर भन्मा ।  
 115 बुवा चन्दन चिन्वा, श्रीखण्ड मलामागिरी चिन्वा,  
 एकी तल्मा सला चिन्वा, एकी सगर भमा,  
 दुवै तल्मा सला चिन्वा, दुवै सगर भमा,  
 तीनै तल्मा सला चिन्वा, तीनै सगर भमा,  
 चारै तल्मा सला चिन्वा, चारै सगर भमा,  
 120 पाँचै तल्मा सला चिन्वा, पाँचै सगर भमा,  
 छै तल्मा सला चिन्वा, छै सगर भमा,  
 सातै तल्मा सला चिन्वा, सातै सगर भमा,  
 आठै तल्मा सला चिन्वा, आठै सगर भमा,  
 नवै तल्मा सला चिन्वा, नवै सगर भमा,  
 125 गाँउ घरका नरनाम फिर्ता रैजाऊ भनिन्, गाँउ घरका नरनाम फिर्ता गया ।  
 सत्यनाराणकी बैनी हुलां, बाबु भगवानकी बेली हुलां,  
 छोरी हल्मा लागोस्, बैनी पातक लागोस्,  
 छोरी बैनीको अनुहार नदेखु,

- मेरा आसु लागु, मेरा अस्मार लागु, भनि  
 130 नबै तल्मा जाला सला, सतकल गरी सला परिन् ।  
 बन मौजा घाट दाज्नु नाराण बाबु भगवानले देखी पामा ।  
 हाथो रुइनी सागर कौन मोरो पन्था, कौन मलामे हुन्,  
 धुवाल उडाउन लाम्मा, सला बल्लन लाम्मा,  
 अन्नकेली खोरी चन्द्र हो कि खोरा हो कि ।
- 135 हो कि बुबा, भन्न लाम्मा ।  
 मौजी खोरीएउ, हत्या लाउन लागिन्, पातक लाउन लागिन्,  
 सत्यनाराणकी बैनी खुँला, बाबु भगवानकी बेली खुँला,  
 सला लिपी जीबै भमा ।  
 सत दोली सतकलले सला निबै गमा ।
- 140 आई पुम्मा रुइनी सागर मोरा घाट आमा,  
 सिधिनीले सेष्मा, भेपेनीले फुक्मा, पैते औठी भेट्मा ।  
 माजी खोरीऊ, हत्या लाउन लागिन्, पातक लाउन लागिन् ।  
 जाऊ न जोल्मा, काली खीर ल्याए देऊ, सेती खीर ल्याए देऊ ।  
 काली खीर ल्याए, सेती खीर ल्याए ।
- 145 अङ्ग रगत दिमा, बाहाँ बल तिघ्रा मासी,  
 नजर ज्योती, पून पुरुष हाल्मा,  
 अमर चण्डी ठोक्मा, सेतै दण्डी ठोक्मा,  
 काला चर्बेर भान्मा, सेती चर्बेर जगामा,  
 गौजा बैनी अन्नकेली खोरी चन्द्र ।
- 150 जुजुउ माराजी लामा, ब्याह लगन डालिन्,  
 इन्द्र घर गइन् ।  
 लैजाऊ बेली, रोज्यो दाइजो तिघ्रो ।  
 नौ जून दाइजो दिमा, नौ बेल दाइजो दिमा ।  
 गादी हाल्मा, गादी जल्मा,
- 155 कुम्ली हाल्मा, कुम्ली जल्मा,  
 खोक्माली हाल्मा, खोक्माली जल्मा,  
 डोगी हाल्मा, डोगी जल्मा, रुन मर्न लागिन् ।  
 कमो बरी गरें, भन्न लागिन् ।  
 कम्मी दादा जाम्मा ।
- 160 मुन हमाउली गन्मा, रुपा बिकी गन्मा,  
 हिवैखरी हाल्मा, कुइरीको दल्को, आदीबाधिटी,  
 बिजुली चम्को, अभ्यारीको मन्को हाल्मा ।  
 लैजाऊ बेली, तिघ्रो घरमा, उचा उँडा जाऊ, तिघ्रा मण्डलमा,  
 उचा उँडाघाट नबै बेल नबै जून पूर्व दिशा छाडिन्,
- 165 हिवैखरी उत्तर दालमा खोइन्,  
 कुइरीको दल्को, आदीबाधिटी दक्षिण दालमा खोइन्,

- बियुली चम्को, अम्भारीको मन्को पदिचम दालमा छोड्नु,  
 नवै जून नवै बेल पूर्व दिशा छोड्नु ।  
 एकै तला भरिन्, दुवै तला, तीनै तला, चारै तला,  
 170 पाँचै तला, छै तला, सातै तला, मान्दम भरिन् ।  
 उचा डाँडा बाट नवै जून नवै बेल  
 पूर्व दिशा छोड्नु दिइन् ।  
 हिवैछरी उत्तर दालमा छोडिन् ।  
 आदीबाबिटो, कुइरीको मन्को दक्षिण दालमा छोडिन् ।  
 175 बियुली चम्को, अम्भारीको मन्को पदिचम दालमा छोडिन् ।  
 नवै जून नवै बेलको रातको दिनै भमा, दिनको दिनै भमा ।  
 हरै हरै भमा, धरै धरै भमा,  
 मुका वृक्ष बल्न लाग्मा, काँचा वृक्ष बल्न लाग्मा,  
 साउने मूल सुकी गमा, बादा मूल भङ्ग भमा,  
 180 ससिप्रती गङ्गा मुपा नाथी छिर्ने,<sup>4</sup>  
 मुवा नदी मुक्न लाग्मा ।  
 मञ्जुत्याको माजो जात मसुराको छाइल बस्न लाग्मा ।  
 जिमी बल्न लाग्मा, भूमि ओसल्न लाग्मा, बादा पहर खल्न लाग्मा ।  
 दे बुहारीमी, अलक्षण गरी, भन्मा ।  
 185 कमा अलक्षण गरी, मसुरा, भनिन् ।  
 तिघ्रा पुरखालाई तुकारी बोल, भन्मा ।  
 आफ्ना पुरखालाई कसो गरी तुकारी ।  
 बोल, भन्मा, एकै जून एकै बेल उड्मा ।  
 सन्ज्या आउने प्रवासीलाई बास छैन भन, भन्मा ।  
 190 एकै जून एकै बेल उड्मा ।  
 धेला बस्न्मा कुसुर लातीले हान, बुहारी ।  
 एकै जून एकै बेल उड्मा ।  
 कपाल छारी बाहिर भित्र गर, भन्मा,  
 एकै जून एकै बेल उड्मा ।  
 195 मुवा काटले उल्टा केश फटकार, बुहारी ।  
 एकै जून एकै बेल उड्मा ।  
 भाउले भाडा बजाऊ, भन्मा ।  
 एकै जून एकै बेल उड्मा ।

<sup>4</sup> Abi Lal's version adds here the line:

बाबन्नी कल बरै छाड्मा, गाईगोक कल बरै छाड्मा ।



- दाने गोडाले दानै गोडा कन्माऊ, बुहारी ।  
 200 एकै जून एकै खेल उद्मा ।  
 बार माभि युक्त, बुहारी ।  
 एकै जून एकै खेल उद्मा ।  
 आठै जून उद्मा, आठै खेल उद्मा ।<sup>5</sup>  
 एकै जून रहमो, एकै खेल रहमो ।
- 205 पूर्व उदाउन्मा भमा, पदिचम अस्ताउन्मा भमा,  
 रातै पन्मा भमा, भोरि भमाउने भमा,  
 जिमी ओसाई गमा, भूमि ओसाई गमा ।  
 साउने मूल पयी गमा, बादा मूल हर्न लाम्मा,  
 सत्तिवती गद्दा छाल हान्न लाम्मा ।
- 210 त्यही खेल, खरी वेठो भुवा नरमले टेक्मो,  
 बाधिमो वेठो लाटो बाधिमोले टेक्मो,  
 पत्थर वेठो शालिग्रामले टेक्मो,  
 बृक्ष वेठो काली तेलपारिले टेक्मो, बर पिषलले टेक्मो,  
 मञ्जुत्वाको जात अङ्ग रगत दिमा,
- 215 बाह्रौं बल, तिच्चा मासी, पून पुरुष हाल्मा,  
 अमर चण्डी ठोक्मा, सेतै उण्डी ठोक्मा,  
 काला चर्बर भान्मा, सेती चर्बर जगामा,  
 मञ्जुत्वाको जात दिनको उभै भमा, मासको उभै भमा ।  
 गुवाउरीका कालगौडा गोन्मानैमा सान्मा ।
- 220 गोन्मानैमा कालगौडा देलठानीमा सान्मा ।  
 देलठानीमा कालगौडा  
 आगन छेउती सान्मा ।  
 आगन छेउती कालगौडा,  
 हरिगौडा, चर्मा हुँबा सार्न लाम्मा ।
- 225 हामी क्या लार् जाउँ, क्या लार् जाउँ,  
 भन्न लाम्मा कालगौडा, जुमकाल, जुमदूतले ।  
 तिमीलाई भोग दिन्छु मञ्जुत्वाको सहा ।  
 पारी गाई, गाल्मा बल्ल, राँगा भैसीले भोग दिन्छु, भन्न लाम्मा ।

<sup>5</sup> Additional lines at this point in Abi Lal's version:

दे बुहारिएउ, मुले पिनाई गर ।  
 क्या मुले पिनाई गर, मयुलति ।  
 मन्त्रमा आएको प्रवाकिललाई बाके देऊ, गाके देऊ ।  
 मान दिहू,

- भैंसीआमै गौडा जानु पन्था,  
 230 जुमकालको भोग जानु पन्था, भन्था ।  
 मेरो आटै छैन, मेरो भोग छैन,  
 मेरो राहो देबी मीला दिउँला, म जाने छैन, भनिन् ।  
 गाई आमै गौडा जानु पन्था,  
 जुमकालको भोग जानु पन्था, भन्था ।  
 235 मेरो आटै छैन मेरो भोग छैन,  
 मेरो दूधदार नाराणलाई शुद्ध,  
 गौत गोबर मञ्जुत्पाले लोटाइ पराई, शुद्ध गर्नेछौ,  
 मेरो बल्ल मञ्जुत्पालाई जोत्ने भने पाल्मा दिनेछु ।  
 भेडीआमै गौडा जाऊ, भन्था ।  
 240 भेडीआमाले, मेरो आटै छैन, मेरो भोग छैन,  
 मेरो साँड बराह मीला दिउँला, मञ्जुत्पाको सट्टा जाने छैन, भनिन् ।  
 छेकरीआमै गौडा जानु पन्था, भन्था ।  
 मेरो भोग देबीधान दिउँला,  
 हूलो काममा जाउला, सानो काममा जाने छैन, भनिन् ।  
 245 हूलो काममा पन्था, जानु पन्था, छेकरीआमै ।  
 मेरो मांस मञ्जुत्पाले भोग्ने भया जाउला, नत्र जाने छैन, भनिन् ।  
 एकु भाग पूर्व काललाई दिउँला,  
 एकु भाग उत्तर काललाई दिउँला,  
 एकु भाग पश्चिम काललाई दिउँला,  
 250 एकु भाग दक्षिण काललाई दिउँला,  
 रक्त पोल जमराजलाई दिउँला,  
 कान खुर हरिगौडा दिउँला,  
 ठाउकी खुट्टी ताराताली भाङ्गरी बुझातम लिउला,  
 आधी अङ्ग घर गोसाँले खाला,  
 255 आधी अङ्ग, उठने बस्ने खाला,  
 तेरो हाप पाप मलाई छैन, मेरो मदीरोलाई पनि छैन,  
 गौडा जाऊ, भन्न लाम्मा ।<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Abi Lal's ending from this point:

मेरो बदीरोको पादसामल हासेई, कान बल्लो हासेई,  
 खगाजोरी र्पाई, बहनाजोरी र्पाई,  
 माल बर हासेई, चौध बगान पन्थाई,  
 गिठे र्पाई, भउरी र्पाई,  
 मासे काल टासेई,  
 चौध बिकाल टासेई,  
 मने टासीदिबाई, गौडा टासीदिबाई,

- खेकरीआमा हातै गर्जे टार्ने लाग्मा,  
गौडा टार्ने लाग्मा ।  
260 गुवाउरीका कालगौडा गोन्वानैमा सान्वा ।  
गोन्वानैमा कालगौडा  
धेलठानीमा सान्वा ।  
धेलठानीमा कालगौडा,  
जुमकाल, जुमदूत,  
265 आगन खेउती सान्वा ।  
आगन खेउती कालगौडा,  
जुमकाल, जुमदूत,  
रुइनी सागर, मोरा घाट,  
बिहान बगर, बर्मादुवा सान्वा ।  
270 खाने आरा उँट गन्वा, मेरो बालो पीठ गन्वा ।  
जुमकाल जुमदूत भोग दिनु ॥  
भूमिबसुन्धरा साच्छी, बरपिपल साच्छी,  
सत्यवतीगङ्गा साच्छी, नी लाख तारा साच्छी,  
धर्मीमाता साच्छी, ज्वालादेवी साच्छी,  
275 सिवापतिराजा र जुम्रातन भक्तारी साच्छी,  
आफना ईश्वर महादेवको बाचा ॥

- ३। गौडा टाढा गराउनेका मेलो  
देव जेठा बर्मा महादेव,  
जुग जेठा सत्यजुग,  
खाल जेठा नेपाल खाल,  
मान्दमी जेठा तिलीग्रमा भवा,  
5 दिशा जेठा पूर्व दिशा,  
महिना जेठा चैत महिना,  
बार जेठा आइतबारको दिन,  
जोग जेठा मङ्गलबारको जोग,  
रोग जेठा बाइ जम्मी,

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जल सारो त्पाई, मूल सारो त्पाई,  
घास सारो होला, धारा सारो त्पाई,  
मसान सारो होला, बसान सारो त्पाई,  
भूत सारो होला, भूत सारो त्पाई ।

- 10 ग्रह जेठा केतु ग्रह,  
 गौडा जेठा कालचक्र,  
 खड्का जेठा जरम खड्का, मरण खड्का,  
 मास खड्का, बर्ष खड्का ।  
 देव जेठा बर्षा महादेव जलपल मान्दमी रचेमो ।
- 15 अन्हाऊ भन्मा मञ्जुत्मा भएन, सोलाऊ भन्मा मञ्जुत्मा भएन,  
 कसो राखुं दिन, कसो राखुं मान्दम, भन्न लाम्मा ।  
 बर्षा महादेवले छलवादी गन्मा ।  
 जाऊ न पार्वती,  
 जेठ मासको खरी धूप काँकी टिपी ल्याऊ ।
- 20 पार्वता काँकी टिपी गइन् ।  
 सानो टिपिन्, ठूलो टिपिन्, छीमाँ,  
 पिमाल पूर, खस्मो फूल भन्मो ।  
 बूढो मर्ने भया, बालक मर्ने भया,  
 सात काल भया, चौध बिकाल भया ।
- 25 धक्र, पार्वती नास्मी, गुरु माता,  
 बूढोबाट मर्ने, बालकबाट भिउँदो गरीला, भन्मा ।  
 बूढो मर्ने भया, बालक मर्ने भया, गर्भ तुहने भयो ।  
 सात काल भया, चौध बिकाल भया ।  
 मञ्जुत्माको जात कसो राखुं दिन, कसो राखुं मान्दम,
- 30 अब छलवादी गरीला, भन्न लाम्मा ।  
 मञ्जुत्माको जातलाई सात काल,  
 चौध बिकाल टाढा गराऊ भन्मा ।  
 मैतु धामी गराऊ, सतो ज्ञानी, भर्शा पण्डित गराऊ, भन्मा ।  
 छाकर्भोटमा भर्शा पण्डित, सतो ज्ञानी, प्रजा प्रकिल गराया,
- 35 तागासेरा रतन पार्की गराया, बाडीगाँउमा कालु जैशी गराया,  
 ताराभोटमा मैतु धामी गराया, तारातालीमा रम्मा जुम्रालम गराया ।  
 इन्द्रघरमा शिवजीका द्वाउन, खीरी कृष्ण आमा पद्मा  
 मर्ने छिर्न लागिन्, कर्ण सेपा लागिन् ।<sup>7</sup>  
 जाऊ न जोल्मा, भर्शा पण्डित ल्याऊ, भन्मा ।
- 40 छाकर्भोटमा गया, भर्शा पण्डित ल्याया ।

<sup>7</sup> Abi Lal's version adds the following lines here:

हार क्वाली भयो, बङ्गलेउ भयो,  
 धरी छिर्दा, खरी मर्दा पैपिन् ।

- भर्सा पण्डित ज्ञान गन्मा, ध्यान गन्मा,  
कथा लगाउन्मा, सप्ताह लगाउन्मा, सत्यनाराण पूजा दिन्मा भया,  
रोग दोष चिन्मा भएन, भन्मा ।  
जाऊ न जोल्मा, छार्काभोटमा सतो ज्ञानी छ,  
45 सतो ज्ञानी ल्याऊ, भन्मा ।  
छार्काभोटमा गमा, सतो ज्ञानी ल्यामा ।  
ज्ञान गर्न लाग्मा, ध्यान गर्न लाग्मा,  
रोग दोष चिन्मा भएन, भन्मा ।  
जाऊ न जोल्मा, छार्काभोटमा प्रजा प्रकिल छ,  
50 प्रजा प्रकिल ल्याऊ । प्रजा प्रकिल ल्यामा ।  
अकिल्लाई पकिल्लाई गन्मा,  
रोग दोष चिन्मा भएन ।  
जाऊ न जोल्मा, तागासेरा जाऊ, स्तन पार्की ल्याऊ ।  
तागासेरा गमा, स्तन पार्की ल्यामा ।  
55 स्तन पार्कीले आरख गन्मा, पारख गन्मा,  
रोग दोष चिन्मा भएन, भन्मा ।  
जाऊ न जोल्मा, कालु वैशी बाखीगाँउमा छ,  
कालु वैशी ल्याऊ । कालु वैशी ल्यामा ।  
मुन्मा पात्रो हेन्मा, बरि लगन हेन्मा,  
60 धुल धुल्मीटा हेन्मा, हाट भोट जाने,  
लडाईभडाई, व्याह लगन, घरलगन दिन्मा भया,  
रोग दोष चिन्मा भएन ।  
जाऊ न जोल्मा, मैतु धामी ल्याऊ त ।  
ताराभोट गमा, मैतु धामी ल्यामा ।  
65 पाती लज्जा हात लिमा,  
एके मुठी आगत इन्द्रदेवलाई दिमा,  
एके मुठी आगत बामुदेवलाई दिमा,  
सोर टिला आगत बरि फाल्मा,  
खड्का टार्ने हुँ, पड्का टार्ने हुँ,  
70 रोग चिन्मा भएन, दोष चिन्मा भएन ।  
खड्का टार्ने पड्का टार्ने  
कथा चाहिन्छ, भन्न लाग्मा ।  
जाऊ न जोल्मा, ताराताली जाऊ,  
बर्सा रम्मा जुम्रातम ल्याऊ त ।  
75 जोल्मा रैम्मा तारातालीमा ।  
जसिलो रम्मा, पूर्व सिरान, पश्चिम गोन्मान,  
एकली गादा, मुकाली बिस्तारा, एके कान सिउतो, एके कान बिउतो,  
ओटी धमकीय, लीरी खुरुकीय,

- कहाँको जोल्था आमी, कहाँको पाउना आमी ।
- 80 इन्द्र घरमा शिवजीका जोल्था, छोरी कृष्ण आमा पघा,  
मर्ने छिर्न लागिन्, कर्न सेपा लागिन्,  
उठी जाऊ न जसिलो रम्मा ।  
लादनबादन पान्था, तामा ढपाङ्गी ठोक्था,  
दामो गौरी पाइत सान्था, मुदिन पन्थाई,
- 85 बामो गौरी पाइत सान्था, मुबार पन्थाई, भन्था,  
छिर्नेनाथ, थिप्लैगौरी, थामानेटी काट्था, इन्द्र घरमा गया ।<sup>8</sup>  
आलड बरी खेल्था, मालड बरी खेल्था,  
लडलड मुहा खेल्था ।  
मुनी नर नाम, सातै कालको एकै काल गरुँ,  
90 बीध बिकालको एकै बिकाल गरुँ,  
ग्रह टारुँ, गौडा टारुँ,  
खड्का टारुँ, पड्का टारुँ,  
पारी गाई, गल्थ्या बल्ल, रकमसकम गरुँ, भन्न लाग्था ।  
गुवाउरीका खड्कापड्का
- 95 सिरानैमा सान्था ।  
सिरानैका खड्कापड्का  
गोन्थानैमा सान्था ।  
गोन्थानैमा खड्कापड्का  
देलठानीमा सान्था ।
- 100 देलठानीमा खड्कापड्का  
आगन छेउती सान्था ।  
आगन छेउती खड्कापड्का  
काचा रुख, बाधा पहर सान्था ।  
हामी क्या खाएर जाऊ, क्या लाएर जाऊ, भन्न लाग्था ।
- 105 पैसी आमे, गौडा जानु पन्था ।  
मेरो आँटे भोग छैन,  
मेरो राङ्गो देखी मौला दिउँसा, भनिन् ।  
गाई आमे, गौडा जानु पन्था ।  
मेरो आँटे भोग छैन, मेरो बल्ल मञ्जुत्थालाई जोत्ने भमा, पाली दिउँसा,

<sup>8</sup> Abi Lal's path to Indra Lok:

रुद्रकोश भवनकोश तथा, धारा स्वयंभुव पालन गया,  
चिह्नन बगर तथा, नी लका पतथा, नी विर पतथा,  
मालङ्ग बलि खेल्था ।

- 110 मेरो दूधदार नाराणलाई सुद्ध,  
 गहुँत गोबर लोटाई पराई, मञ्जुत्माले सुद्ध गर्नेछु ।  
 भेडी आमै, गौडा जानु पन्था ।  
 भेडी आमाले, मेरो अँटि भोग छैन,  
 मेरो साँड बराह मौला दिउँला, भनिन् ।
- 115 छेकरी आमै, गौडा जानु पन्था भन्था ।  
 मेरो अँटि भोग छैन,  
 मेरो भोग देबी घाना दिउँला,  
 ठूलो काममा जाउला, सानो काममा जाने छैन, भनिन् ।  
 बर्जमुखा आमै गौडा जाऊ, भन्था ।
- 120 बर्जमुखा आमाले, मेरो अँटि छैन, मेरो भोगै छैन,  
 मेरो रोडो भाल्गरी मार्न दिउँला, भनिन् ।  
 जाऊ न जोल्सा, मारङ्का देश, राबन्नेको घर,  
 मुन्था भाल्सा, मुन्था पोधीमा छ, त्यही ल्याऊ न, भन्था ।  
 मारङ्का देश राबन्नेको घर गमा ।
- 125 राबन्नेमा आमै, तिप्रो मुन्था भाल्सा, मुन्था पोधीमा दिऊ न,  
 हामीलाई चाहियो, भन्था ।  
 मेरो पोधी किन्न्था सक्ने छैन, हीरामोती,  
 कनकन जुवार, लाख रुपियाँ मोल छ, भन्न लाग्मा ।  
 पिँजडाबाट मुन्था भाल्माले भन्था,
- 130 मेरो पिँजडा खोलिदिउँला, मेरो मोल आफैँ बदला,  
 त्यति मोल भया, सुकी बच्ला, दुःखी मारी जाउला,  
 म नभया मान्दम रहने छैन ।  
 पिँजडा खोलिदिमा, फारफार गर्न लाग्मा, फीरफीर गर्न लाग्मा, ।  
 भालमा बाम्मो सारङ्का सोर,
- 135 पोधी बाम्मो थिक्कुलीका सोर,  
 मेरो मोल त्यति भया,  
 सुकी बच्ला, दुःखी मारी जाउला ।  
 आउनु टार्ला, पाउनु टार्ला,  
 गर्जा टार्ला, गौडा टार्ला,
- 140 बेला जाउँला, कुबेला जाउँला,  
 मञ्जुत्माको सट्टा जाउँला, म नभया मान्दम रहने छैन,  
 मेरो मोल पाँचै पैसा भया, मेरो पोधीको मोल चारै पैसा भया, मुन्था भाल्माले  
 भन्था ।  
 मुन्था भाल्माले खड्का टार्ने लाग्मा,  
 पड्का टार्ने लाग्मा ।
- 145 गुवाउरीका खड्कापड्का  
 सिरानैमा सान्मा ।

- सिरानैका खड्कापड्का  
गोन्वानैमा सान्वा ।  
गोन्वानैमा खड्कापड्का  
150 देलठानीमा सान्वा ।  
देलठानीमा खड्कापड्का  
आंगन छेउती सान्वा ।  
आंगन छेउती खड्कापड्का  
बर्मादुवा सान्वा ।
- 155 भाँजर बाजा, तुतुर बाजा, तेरो अटमा, तेरे बोक्मा,  
तेरे हापपाप मलाई छैन, मेरो मदीरोलाई पनि छैन,  
तेरो जन्म सामाहामा भया ।  
बासै बस्ने धेलाकुनमा भया, तेरो भोजन डलसिङ्ग कुत्तो भया,  
चरन चरने जाँताबोट टिङ्गीबोट भया ।
- 160 फुतफुती खेल्न कुलस्माउरा नाम्ल भया,  
चुल्चा टिपी ल्यामाई, नङ्गा खासी ल्यामाई,  
गाग्रो टिपी ल्यामाई, पोल्मा ठाउँ रङ्गान ।  
भाँजर बाजा, तुतुर बाजा, डलसिङ्ग बाजा, पह्रु बाजा,  
तेरो अटमा, तेरे बोक्मा, सबैलाई दाहने पाक्ले टोक्की ल्यामाई ।
- 165 ग्रह टारी ल्यामाई, गीडा टारी ल्यामाई,  
खड्गा टारी ल्यामाई, पड्का टारी ल्यामाई,  
स्माउरमा गजा बुभाई ल्यामाई, असनमसान टारी ल्यामाई,  
कक्साबोक्सा टारी ल्यामाई,  
गर्जा खोपी ल्यामाई, पिना पात सपारी ल्यामाई,
- 170 धाजा जोरी ल्यामाई, मइना जोरी ल्यामाई,  
गादा साम्ला हाल्माई, कान मतो हाल्माई ।  
सात बार हानेइ, चौध बघान गन्माइ, रिठै भउरे ल्यामाई ।  
भाँजर बाजा, तुतुर बाजा,  
खड्कापड्का सारी ल्यामाई,
- 175 काचा रुख सारी, बादा पहर सारी,  
बर्मादुवा सारी ।  
खाने आरा डीट गन्वा, मेरो बालो पीठ गन्वा ।  
रम्मा जुम्रातम भाङ्गरीका बाचा ॥

Shorter ending replacing the final fifteen lines:

हंस सातो ल्यामै, बंस सातो ल्याई,  
जल सातो ल्यामै, मूल सातो ल्याई, छहर सातो पहर सातो,  
सात घट्ट ल्यामाई, घट्ट पेट ल्याई ।



खामे आरा डीट गन्मा, मेरो बालो पिठ गन्मा ।  
5 रम्मा जुम्रातम भक्तरीका बाचा ॥

## 1. Event of Planetary Offering

- The eldest age the Golden Age,  
the eldest valley the valley of Nepāl,  
the eldest level of the world Tilīgramā,<sup>9</sup>  
the eldest direction East,  
5 the eldest month Cait,<sup>10</sup>  
the eldest weekday Sunday,  
the eldest conjunction Tuesday’s conjunction,<sup>11</sup>  
the eldest lunar day the Eleventh,  
the eldest god Selfcreated Mahādev.<sup>12</sup>  
10 Selfcreated Mahādev designed the solid and liquid world.  
The world was just a disorderly place.  
“Be,” he said, there were no men, “Speak,” he said, there were no men.  
“How will time pass, how will there be a world?  
I shall make the race of man,” he said, churned gold and silver,  
15 gave the body blood, arms strength, legs marrow, gave the eyes brightness,  
gave it life breath, “Speak, man,” it didn’t speak, it didn’t move.  
“How will there be a world, how will time pass?” he began to say.

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<sup>9</sup> *Māndamī* (alternate pronunciations *māndam*, *māndav*). A level (one of seven) of the world. Tilīkarmā (pronounced Tilīgramā) is the lowest level, where the crafts of metalworking were originally learned (by the original shaman). The “solid and liquid world” (*jalthal māndam*) is our world’s surface.

<sup>10</sup> Cait < Caitra (Sanskrit). Atkinson (1882) observes that Cait (overlapping March and April) was the first month in the traditional Kumaon calendar. In Nepal, it is now considered the twelfth month of the year.

<sup>11</sup> *Jog* < *yoga* (Sanskrit). The path of the planets, and of the sun and moon, takes them through twenty-seven fixed stars, called the *nakṣatra*, as well as through the twelve houses of the zodiac, the *rāśi*; the configuration of each planet with a *rāśi* is called a *daśā*, and that with a *nakṣatra* is a *jog*. Locally, a *jog* is thought to last only 4 or 5 hours, but astronomically its length varies for each planet. For example, a lunar *jog* ranges from a maximum of 66 *ghaḍi* (1 *ghaḍi* = 24 minutes) to a minimum of 56 *ghaḍi*.

<sup>12</sup> *Varsyā*. Literally ‘rain-like; falling from the sky’, from *varṣā* (Sanskrit) ‘Rain’. Compare also *varṣīyas* (Sanskrit) ‘Very great, considerable, important, etc.’



Fig. 1. Karṇa Vīr Kāmī in costume with drum.  
Photo: Gregory G. Maskarinec, 1989.

He churned bronze, gave the body blood,  
 arms strength, legs marrow, eyes brightness, gave it life breath,  
 20 tested the side of the forehead, tested with a cane staff,<sup>13</sup>  
 “Speak, man,” it didn’t speak, it didn’t move.  
 “How will time pass, how will there be a world?” he said.

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<sup>13</sup> This is a gesture done to open the ears, explained Karṇa Vīr.

He cut white, red, Malāyāgirī sandalwoods, burned them to ash,  
brought droppings from an aged cock, churning them, made man,  
25 gave the body blood, arms strength, legs marrow,  
gave the eyes brightness, gave it life breath,  
tested the side of the forehead, tested with a cane staff,  
brushed downward a black yak tail, brushed upward a white yak tail,  
“Speak, man,” it spoke, it moved.  
30 “Now time can pass, now there can be a world.”  
He gave the race of man immortality,  
they became so many they didn’t fit, they didn’t quit.  
The world of death was an earth stuffed with living beings,  
goods weren’t enough, foods weren’t enough,  
35 chasing away, locking away, nothing helped.  
“I will trick the race of man. Go now, O Pārvatā,  
to relieve the summer heat, pick cucumbers,<sup>14</sup> bring them here.”  
She went to pick cucumbers.  
Picking small ones, picking big ones, tiny ones,  
40 ripest yellowed ones, gathering fallen flowers,  
old men died, babies died, little ones died, big ones died,  
there were seven times of natural death, fourteen times of unnatural death.<sup>15</sup>  
“O Destructive Pārvatā, Mother Teacher,  
they can die when old, let them live when young,” he said.  
45 Old men died, babies died,  
little ones died, big ones died, there were miscarriages.  
“For man the nine planets have begun to originate,” he said.  
Mahādev went to bathe, from bathing, Mahādev went to stay in a cave.<sup>16</sup>  
Staying in the cave six months, Pārvatā waited in the kitchen,

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<sup>14</sup> Cucumbers are an apt metaphor for mankind, commented Karṇa Vīr, for they grow in profusion on a dung heap, have no fixed season and no intrinsic worth.

<sup>15</sup> Abi Lal’s additional lines here:

They were impaled on poles, they were caught in nets,  
they were swept away in rivers, they fell off cliffs, they fell from trees.

<sup>16</sup> A version of the Nine Planets Event by another shaman, Lakṣamān Kāmī, specifically mentions that Mahādev had leprosy, and nine lumps of decaying flesh were washed off of his body and thrown by Pārvatā into nine springs. For similar shamanic versions of creation, see de Sales (1991: 195 ff.) and Lecomte-Tilouine (1991: 482 ff.)

- 50 Mahādev's rice was cooked.  
 "Where can I throw Mahādev's rice?" she said.  
 Thrown on the snowy mountains, the snowy mountains had a downy fleece.  
 Mahādev, after six months, a full year, emerged from the cave,  
 Pārvatā wrapped him in sweet smelling musk.
- 55 The sweet smelling musk opened up his wounds.  
 Mahādev's twenty-two lumps of filth emerged.  
 "Where can I throw Mahādev's filth?  
 If I throw it on the trash heap, a piglet may eat it,  
 Mahādev would go to hell," she said.
- 60 "If I throw it at Crossroads of Avenging Spirits,<sup>17</sup>  
 lepers, cripples, beggars, mendicants, yogins or holy men may touch it,  
 Mahādev would go to hell. Where can I throw it?" she said.  
 "Go now, O Pārvatā, you must throw it into Blood Lake," he said.  
 She threw it into Blood Lake.
- 65 The nine planets originated, the nine star obstructions originated,  
 having finished off Blood Lake they arose.  
 Mahādev was able to get up, a blade in his hand.<sup>18</sup>  
 He cut eight planets, cut eight star obstructions.  
 The eldest planet is Ketu,<sup>19</sup> the eldest star obstruction is the Wheel of Time.<sup>20</sup>
- 70 He cut the first, there were two, cut the second, there were three,  
 cut the third, there were four, cut the fourth, there were five,  
 cut the fifth, there were six, cut the sixth, there were seven,  
 cut the seventh, there were eight, cut the eighth, there were nine,  
 Mahādev quit cutting the nine planets, the nine star obstructions.
- 75 They went up, struck Ghaṭī Rājā ("Inferior King")<sup>21</sup>  
 One moment he was pierced, one moment he was dying,  
 The days of Ghaṭī Rājā were threatening, the months were threatening.

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<sup>17</sup> *Barmā dhuwā* refers to any major crossroads frequented by Bajyū and Barmā, spirits of high caste suicides who at death vowed to return as avenging spirits.

<sup>18</sup> A complete description of Mahādev dressed as a Kānphaṭa yogin can be inserted here, but most often Karṇa Vīr just mentioned the blade in his hand and postponed this description until after the planets have been cut.

<sup>19</sup> Ketu is a nodal point of the moon (see note 25 below).

<sup>20</sup> *Kālcakra*. 'The Wheel of Time.' In conversation, Karṇa Vīr also used this to refer to a sacrifice to Juma Kāl and Juma Dūt, another parallel with Kānphaṭa yogins.

<sup>21</sup> Karṇa Vīr could not explain anything about this king.

- Mahādev was able to get up. He put on his head a tiger's skin,  
put on his forehead charcoal ashes, sandalwood ashes, lumps of ash,  
80 put on his ear a large pendant,<sup>22</sup> put around his neck a *rudrākṣa* necklace,  
slung over his shoulder a pair of begging bowls, put camphor in his mouth,  
held in his hand a thunderbolt staff,<sup>23</sup> slung in his waist a double-edged knife,  
put on his ankles heavy anklets, wooden sandals on his soles,  
took on the appearance of a yogin.
- 85 He went to Ghaṭī Rājā's palace, cried for alms.  
“Take it, respected father, take a stable of elephants,  
take a stable of horses, take diamonds, pearls.”  
“I won't take them, father, they're at my house.”  
“What will you take?”
- 90 “Get the leaves of nine trees, get the fruit of nine trees,  
get nine: trains, get nine slivers of iron, get nine black goats, get black cloth,<sup>24</sup>  
circle it all around the head, that's what I'll take,” he said.  
He got nine grains, got nine slivers of iron,  
got nine flowers, got nine cloths, got black goats, got black cloth,
- 95 made an offering of grain, made an offering of wealth,  
made an offering of gold, silver, copper offerings,  
made nine dishes of garlands, got nine trees, the fruit of nine trees,  
the leaves of nine trees, nine sacks, nine packs,  
to the Time of Death, the Messenger of Death, he gave sacrifice.
- 100 Mahādev took his pair of begging bowls to the road,  
filled the begging bowls, circled them around the head.  
Mahādev took the black goats, took them to the crossroads,  
took them to Crossroads of Avenging Spirits, gave nine shares,  
gave nine sacks, nine packs, gave them at Crossroads of Avenging Spirits,

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<sup>22</sup> *Darṣan jolī*. ‘A large ear pendant’ (Kṛṣṇa is ordinarily depicted wearing one).

<sup>23</sup> *Vajrathīṅgā*. The meaning ‘thunderbolt staff’ was approved by Karṇa Vīr. However, Briggs (1989: 14–15) notes that a Kānpḥaṭa yogin holds in his hand a rosary, a *japa mālā*, made of nummulities, the smaller ones of which are called *bājra thumrā*. This perhaps suggested *vajrathīṅgā*.

<sup>24</sup> Abi Lal's extra lines are part of Karṇa Vīr's Event of the Nine Little Sisters, used when treating cases of witchcraft:

Get breads cooked on one side, get lumps of ash,  
get rice mixed with blood, get a feast of sixteen courses,  
get a banquet, a hundred thousand sacrifices, the five food types,  
get a surfeit of rich food, get raw oil, get prepared water.

- 105 cut the black goats, made blood sacrifice.  
 He distanced the nine planets, distanced the nine star obstructions,  
 the seven times of natural death, one time,  
 the fourteen times of unnatural death, one time he made,  
 he began to distance the planets, began to distance the star obstructions,  
 110 Rāhu, Ketu, Comet, Saturn, Jupiter, Venus, Mars, Sun, Moon,<sup>25</sup>  
 he distanced the nine planets, distanced the nine star obstructions.  
 He placed his own Lord Mahādev's oath,  
 the Ghaṭī Rājā's days improved, months improved, he survived.  
 This possible feast has been rejected, from my child you've been deflected!
- 115 World Earth a witness, banyan and pipal tree a witness,  
 Sattivatī River a witness, the Nine Hundred Thousand Stars a witness,  
 Earth Mother a witness, Flame Goddess a witness,  
 Sijāpati King and Jumrātam Shaman a witness,  
 my own lord Mahādev's oath!

ALTERNATE VERSION TO THE CONCLUDING 28 LINES:

- Overtured foundation stones he controlled, cast pentagrams he  
 controlled,  
 crop land he controlled, donated land he controlled, field land he  
 controlled,  
 he began to make planet offerings, began to make star obstruction offerings,  
 began to give sacrifice to the seven times of natural death,  
 5 the fourteen times of unnatural death.  
 began to give sacrifice to Rāhu, Ketu, Venus, Mars, Comet, Saturn.  
 "Planet offerings, silver offerings,

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<sup>25</sup> In shamanic discourse, astrological problems are treated as specific collectivities (viz. the Nine Planets, the Star Obstructions, the Children's Crises), not singly, so individual identities are subordinated within a collectivity, allowing for a casual attitude toward details such as planets' names. (See Höfer 1994: 284–306 for some of the issues possibly involved in this strategy.) The first two entries here, Rāhu and Ketu, are popularly considered two of the nine planets, although in Hindu astronomy, they are the nodal points of the moon. As the only points at which an eclipse is possible, and since due to parallax an eclipse sometimes occurs when both the sun and moon are still above the horizon, these points have been conceived as physical but invisible bodies responsible for the eclipse. Cf. notes to *Rāhu* and *Ketu* in Monier-Williams (1981: 879, 309).



Fig. 2. Abi Lal Kāmī, drum feeding.  
Photo: Gregory G. Maskarinec, 1989.

I'll give gold offerings, I'll give copper offerings,  
I'll give iron offerings, I'll give iron offerings, I'll give camphor offerings,  
10 I'll give blood offerings, I'll give red blankets,  
I'll give crop offerings, money offerings,  
I'll give planet offerings, I'll give star obstruction offerings," he said.  
Mahādev pressed full the pair of begging bowls,  
the offerings were assembled for Mahādev, Mahādev took them,  
15 took them to Extreme Impasse, took them to Crossroads of Avenging Spirits.  
He assembled nine packs, he assembled nine sacks.  
He assembled nine grains, assembled nine slivers of iron,  
assembled nine cloth bags, took them to Crossroads of Avenging Spirits,  
he cut a black goat, gave blood sacrifice.  
20 He made the planets peaceful, made the star obstructions peaceful,  
to Rāhu, Ketu, Venus, Mars, Comet, Saturn, Jupiter he gave blood sacrifice.  
He made the planets peaceful, made the star obstructions peaceful.  
This possible feast has been rejected, from my child you've been deflected!  
my own lord Mahādev's oath!

## 2. Event of Sacrificing to the Time of Death and the Messenger of Death

Casting off the planets, casting off the star obstructions, listen!  
Star Obstruction of Birth, Star Obstruction of Death,  
Star Obstruction of Children's Crises, Star Obstruction of Planetary Threats,  
Star Obstruction of Lost Wits, Star Obstruction of Hidden Desires,

5 Death at the Head, its Reason at the Foot,  
the Time of Death, the Messenger of Death,  
Rāhu, Ketu, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Comet, and Saturn,  
listen to this old recital!

The truth of that day, the cure of that day.

10 The eldest god Selfcreated Mahādev,  
The eldest age the Golden Age,  
the eldest valley the valley of Nepāl,  
the eldest level of the world Tilīgramā,  
the eldest direction East,

15 the eldest month Cait,  
the eldest weekday Sunday,  
the eldest conjunction Tuesday's Conjunction,  
the eldest lunar day the Eleventh.

The eldest god, Selfcreated Mahādev designed the solid and liquid world.

20 The world was just a disorderly place.  
"Be," he said, there were no men. "Speak," he said, there were no men.  
"How will time pass, how will there be a world?"  
Andhāserā was old, he tore at his chest, he tore at the earth,  
he wailed and wept, was in tears.

25 It was night at night, it was night at day.  
He was heard at Indra's house. "Go now, attendants, go,  
in the world of death, who is there, what's this, why this weeping?"  
The attendants came to the world of death.  
"Who's there, what's this, why this weeping?"

30 My eyes have gone blind, my ears have gone deaf,  
it's night at night, it's night at day, there's no one with me, no companion,  
no elder sister, no younger sister, at whose face can I look?"  
He wailed and wept, he tore at his chest, he tore at the earth.  
The attendants went to Indra's house. "Why does Andhāserā cry?"



- 35 “There’s no one else, no companion, it’s night at night, it’s night at day,  
at whose face can I look?” he says,  
“he tears at his chest, he tears at the earth, he wails and weeps.”  
He gave him Maitāceli.<sup>26</sup>  
“Go now, Maitāceli, to the world of death, that is your kingdom,” he said.
- 40 Maitāceli descended to the world of death, was given to Andhāserā.  
Six months, a full year passed, a son was born.  
“There’s no one with me, no companion, no elder sister, no younger sister,  
it’s night at night, it’s night at day, at whose face can I look?”  
she tears at her chest, she wails.
- 45 “Get a daughter-in-law, go now, Maitāceli,  
call one from your parents’ home,” he said.  
Maitāceli wailed and wept. “How can I go to my parents’ house?” she said.  
She was heard at Indra’s house. “Why does Maitāceli cry?  
Go now, attendants, to the world of death.”
- 50 The attendants descended, to the world of death.  
“Why does Maitāceli cry?”  
“There’s no one with me, no companion, no elder sister, no younger sister,  
it stays night at night, it stays night at day,  
how will there be a world, how will time pass?” she wept.
- 55 The attendants went, to Indra’s house. “Why does Maitācelī cry?”  
“There’s no one with me, no companion, no elder sister, no younger sister,  
what misfortune is this, what disaster is this?”  
she tears at her chest, she tears at the earth, she wails and weeps.”  
He gave them Candravatī.
- 60 “Wonderful<sup>27</sup> daughter Candra, go now, Candra, below to the world of death,  
that is your kingdom,” he said, gave her to the world of death.  
Candravatī descended seven levels of the world.  
Andhāserā was the father-in-law, Maitācelī was the mother-in-law.  
Six months, a full year passed,
- 65 “Get it, daughter-in-law, get it, from your parents’ house,  
bring back a dowry of nine moons, bring back a dowry of nine suns,  
it’s night at night, it’s night at day,  
how will time pass, how will there be a world?” he said.  
Wonderful daughter Candra ascended a first level,

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<sup>26</sup> Maitācelī. Literally, ‘girl from the parent’s home’. For a relevant discussion, see Oppitz (1991: 36).

<sup>27</sup> Annakelī, also Ānnapamkī. Literally, ‘not easily satisfied, unique, incredible’.

- 70 a second level, a third level, a fourth level, a fifth level,  
 a sixth level, she ascended a seventh level of the world,  
 she went to Indra's house, pounded on the hundred doors.<sup>28</sup>  
 From inside, "What guest has come, what traveler has come?  
 The porch is shaken faintly, a walking stick is tapped faintly,
- 75 go now, attendants, look at the shaking porch."  
 The attendants went, to the shaking porch.  
 "Who's there, what's this?"  
 "Candravatī. Wonderful daughter Candra."  
 "Come inside, daughter Candra."
- 80 "Go inside, elder sister Candra."  
 "My dear descendant."  
 "Honor to you, Father Bhagavān."  
 "My dear daughter."  
 "Honor to you, elder brother Nārāṇ."  
 85 "My dear little sister."  
 "Honor to you, sister-in-law."  
 "My dear husband's younger sister."  
 She sat down on silken cloth.  
 The bubbling tip of a hukkā stick, a separate mouth tube,
- 90 a notched firepot, a Himalayan firestone, water in which gold was dipped,  
 glowing coals of fire, intoxicating tobacco, she began to smoke a gurgling hukkā.

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<sup>28</sup> Only at this point does this version by Karṇa Vīr and that by his brother, Abi Lal, coincide. Abi Lal's recital begins:

In the lower world was Andhaserā, Bandhaserā, Old Khaluserā.  
 In the lower world it was night at night, it was night at day.  
 "How can we spend the nights, how can we spend the days?"  
 In the lower world they cried and wept.  
 Saying, "I must give my daughter Candravatī, Nārāyaṇ gave his daughter Candravatī."  
 To the lower world went his daughter Candravatī.  
 She saw it was night at night, saw it was night at day,  
 "Father-in-law Andhāserā, my nights are night, my days are night,  
 how can I spend the nights, how can I spend the days?"  
 she wept and wailed, she was in tears.  
 "Go now, daughter-in-law, from your parent's home,  
 bring a dowry of nine moons, bring a dowry of nine suns," he said.  
 Papayas, sugar candy, cakes, beaten rice, cakes, sweetbreads were prepared,  
 snack food, presentations she readied, put them in her carrying wrap,  
 she went to the upper world, the porch shook, her stick tapped.

“From the world of death, on what errand have you come, descendant,  
on what task have you come?”

“I’ve come to take a dowry of nine moons, father,

95 I’ve come to take dowry of nine suns.

In the world of death, it’s night at night, it’s night at day,  
how will time pass, how will there be a world?” she said.

“There is no dowry of nine moons, daughter, there is no dowry of nine suns.  
A stable of elephants, a stable of horses, jeweled bracelets,

100 diamonds, pearls, thousands of rupees, take whatever you need, descendant,  
there is no dowry of nine moons, of nine suns,” he said.

“I won’t take them, father, my house has them.”

They made bows of *khungī* bamboo, bowstrings of *lebre* bamboo,  
arrows of cane, stunning poison from Kalākoṭ, wristguards of *cimalā* wood,<sup>29</sup>

105 jingling bells on their hunting dogs, Skinny Wasp and Forehead Spot,  
beating on the ridges, flushing game in the valleys,  
beating in the valleys, blinds on the ridges,  
father and son went to hunt in the forest.

Elder Brother Nārāṇ, Father Bhagavān went off.

110 “If I am Nārāṇ’s little sister, if I am a special daughter,  
a daughter so abused, a sister so disgraced, I go to die,” she said.

“Come, all villagers, attend the funeral,” she said.

Sixteen hundred funeral goers went, to Ocean of Tears,<sup>30</sup> to Little Sister Ocean,  
descended to Cremation Ground of the Dead, descended to Riverside  
Graveyard.

115 They split the best red, white, Malāyāgirī sandalwoods,  
heaped up one level of pyre, it was one sky,

heaped up a second level of pyre, it was a second sky,

heaped up third level of pyre, it was a third sky,

heaped up fourth level of pyre, it was a fourth sky,

120 heaped up fifth level of pyre, it was a fifth sky,

heaped up sixth level of pyre, it was a sixth sky,

heaped up seventh level of pyre, it was a seventh sky,

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<sup>29</sup> *Khukurī bās* and *lebre bās* are both particular kinds of bamboo, while *jakurā* is particular kind of cane, and *cimalā* a type of very strong wood resembling cinnamon.

<sup>30</sup> *Rāinī sāgar*. Other shamans call it *rānī sāgar*, ‘The Queen’s Ocean’, which may have been corrupted here to rhyme better with *bainī sāgar*, ‘Little Sister Ocean’. Locally, any wide expanse of flat land may be referred to as an ‘ocean’. In this context, a large flood plain used as a graveyard is meant.

- heaped up eighth level of pyre, it was a eighth sky,  
 heaped up ninth level of pyre, it was a ninth sky.
- 125 “Return, all villagers,” she said, all the villagers returned.  
 “If I am Satyā Nārāṇ’s little sister, if I am the descendant of Father Bhagavān,  
 may they suffer as daughter murderers, may they suffer as sister offenders,  
 may they not see their daughter, their little sister,  
 may my tears have affect, may my sorrows have affect,” so saying,
- 130 she lit the nine level pyre, doing a truth act she went onto the pyre.  
 From the middle of the forest, Brother Nārāṇ, Father Bhagavān saw it.  
 “At our Ocean of Tears, whose corpse is that, whose funeral is that?  
 The smoke begins to rise, the pyre begins to burn,  
 is it Wonderful daughter Candra, or some son, or not?”
- 135 “Is it, father?” he said.  
 “That damn daughter may curse us as daughter murderers, as sister offenders,  
 it may be Satya Nārāṇ’s little sister, may be Father Bhagavān’s descendant,  
 let’s smear out the fire, she’ll live.”  
 Truthfully doing a truth act they went to extinguish the pyre.
- 140 They reached Ocean of Tears, came to Cremation Ground of the Dead.  
 They scattered water on the ashes, blew through a tube, found the ring toe.  
 “That damn daughter has cursed us as daughter murderers, as sister offenders.  
 Go, attendants, bring back a black yak tail, bring back a white yak tail.”  
 They brought back a black yak tail, brought back a white yak tail.
- 145 They gave the body blood, arms strength, legs marrow,  
 eyes light, put in life-breath,  
 tested the side of the forehead, tested with a cane staff,  
 brushed a black yak tail downward, brushed a white yak tail upward,  
 “Go, Little Sister, Wonderful Daughter Candra.”
- 150 Her honored father took her,<sup>31</sup> making wedding preparations,  
 she went to Indra’s house.  
 “Take it, descendant, your desired dowry.”  
 He gave her a dowry of nine moons, gave her a dowry of nine suns.  
 She put them in her skirt, the skirt caught fire,
- 155 put them in her wrap, the wrap caught fire,  
 put them in her blouse,<sup>32</sup> the blouse caught fire,  
 put them in a basket, the basket caught fire, she cried and wept.

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<sup>31</sup> Meaning suggested by Karṇa Vīr, but uncertain. Abi Lal places this phrase (*jujāu māṛāji garīn*) earlier, as the pyre was being prepared.

<sup>32</sup> *Khokyālī*. Literally ‘the folds of clothing doubled over at the chest’.

“How can I carry them?” she said.  
They summoned a skillful craftsman.  
160 He made a bowl of gold, made a lid of silver,  
put in snow storms, foggy patches, cyclonic dashes,  
put in lightning flashes, total darkness splashes.<sup>33</sup>  
“Take it, descendant, to your house. Go to a high ridge in your world,  
from a high ridge, cast off the nine suns, the nine moons to the east,  
165 release the snowstorms to the northern slopes,  
release the cyclonic dashes, the foggy patches to the southern slopes,  
release the lightning flashes, total darkness splashes to the western slopes,  
release the nine moons, the nine suns in the eastern direction.”  
She descended a first level, a second level, a third level, a fourth level,  
170 a fifth level, a sixth level, she descended a seventh level of the world.  
From a high ridge the nine moons, the nine suns  
she released in the eastern direction.  
She released the snow storms to the northern slopes.  
She released the cyclonic dashes, the foggy patches to the southern slopes.  
175 She released the lightning flashes, total darkness splashes to the  
western slopes,  
With nine moons, nine suns, the night was day, the day was day.  
There was hissing, there was trembling,  
dry trees were torched, green trees were scorched,  
wet season springs dried, dry season springs fried,  
180 the Sattivatī River<sup>34</sup> could pierce the eye of a needle,  
smaller rivers were drying up.  
The stupid race of man sat in the shade of a lentil bush.  
The land began to burn, the soil began to crack, rocky cliffs began to melt.  
“Do something, daughter-in-law, do something inauspicious!” he said.  
185 “What inauspicious thing, father-in-law?” she said.  
“Address your elders abusively!” he said.  
“How can I address my elders abusively?” she said.

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<sup>33</sup> In Abi Lal’s version, Nārāyaṇ calls these additions ‘snacks and presentations’ (*aranī paranī, nāso tuso*), and instructs Candravatī to take them out on the trail, not to take them home.

<sup>34</sup> The Bhāgīrathi River in Abi Lal’s version, which includes here the line:

Birds quit eating, cattle quit eating.



Fig. 3. Karṇa Vīr Kāmī with lip to drum.  
Photo: Gregory G. Maskarinec, 1989.

“Say it!” he said, one moon, one sun departed.

“To a guest arriving at dusk, say that there’s no place to stay!” he said,  
190 one moon, one sun departed.

“Hit a dog sitting in a doorway with a stick, daughter-in-law!”  
one moon, one sun departed.

“With uncombed hair go in and out of the house!” he said,  
one moon, one sun departed.

195 “Comb your hair backwards with a wooden comb, daughter-in-law!”  
one moon, one sun departed.

“Beat together two pots!” he said,  
one moon, one sun departed.

“Rub your right foot with your left foot, daughter-in-law!”  
200 one moon, one sun departed.

“Spit atop the drying shelf,<sup>35</sup> daughter-in-law!”  
one moon, one sun departed.

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<sup>35</sup> ‘Doorstep’ (*āgani*) in Abi Lal’s version, an equally inauspicious place to spit.

- Eight moons departed, eight suns departed,  
one moon remained, one sun remained,<sup>36</sup>
- 205 they rose in the east, they set in the west.  
There was nightfall, dawn was born,  
the land was chilled, the soil was chilled,  
wet season springs bubbled, dry season springs trickled,  
the Sattivatī River began to flow with force.
- 210 At that time, the eldest grass, Soft Trail Grass survived.<sup>37</sup>  
The eldest thatch, Dumb Thatch survived.  
The eldest stone, Black Ammonite Fossil survived.  
The eldest tree, Black Oil wood survived, Banyan and Pipal survived.  
To the race of man he gave the body blood,
- 215 arms strength, legs marrow, put in a life breath,  
struck the side of the forehead, struck with a cane staff,  
brushed a black yak tail downward, brushed a white yak tail upward,  
the race of man improved for a day, improved for a month.  
The deadly star obstruction of the house pinnacle, was transferred to its foot.
- 220 The deadly star obstruction at the foot, was transferred to the doorstep.  
The deadly star obstruction of the doorstep,  
was transferred to the edge of the porch.  
The deadly star obstruction of the edge of the porch,  
was transferred to Extreme Impasse,<sup>38</sup> to Crossroads of Avenging Spirits,

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<sup>36</sup> At this point in Abi Lal's version:

“Do something auspicious, daughter-in-law!”  
“What auspicious thing, father-in-law?”  
“Give a stranger arriving at dusk a place to stay, a place to rest!”  
She gave shelter, [etc.]

<sup>37</sup> *Dhuwā naram* is a grass that grows in small clumps on trails, *lāto bābeyo* the longest variety of thatching grass, *sālligrām* are coiled, chambered fossil shells of a cephalopod mollusk, representations of Lord Viṣṇu, and *kāli telpāri* is a small hardwood that grows along river banks. Other eldest items included in this list by Abi Lal, but put by Karṇa Vīr only in his Alcohol Event, include the eldest fish, *magalunyā* fish, the eldest bird, Black King Crow Slippery Beak, the eldest metals, iron and zinc, the eldest grain, black pulse, and the eldest cow, Black Brown One.

<sup>38</sup> *Hari gauḍā* (‘Extreme Impasse’) is the crossroads where the first shaman, Jumrātam, encountered the first witches, the Nine Little All-skillful Sisters.

- 225 “What shall we eat as we go, what shall we take as we go?”  
 said the deadly star obstructions, said the Time of Death, the  
 Messenger of Death.  
 “I will give you sacrifice in place of man.  
 barren cows, lame oxen, buffalo flesh, I will give you in sacrifice,” he said.  
 “Mother Buffalo, you must go to the star obstructions,  
 230 you must go to satisfy the Time of Death,” he said.  
 “This is not my share, this is not my sacrifice,  
 my male buffalos I will give at the goddess’ post, I will not go,” she said.  
 “Mother Cow, you must go to the star obstructions,  
 you must go to satisfy the Time of Death,” he said.
- 235 “This is not my share, this is not my sacrifice,  
 my milk is a pure offering to Nārāṇ,  
 my urine and dung are cleansing, are used to purify,  
 my oxen plow for men, I give them to be raised.”  
 “Mother Sheep, you must go to the star obstructions,” he said.
- 240 Mother Sheep said, “This is not my share, this is not my sacrifice,  
 my rams I will give at Barāh’s post, in place of man I will not go,” she said.  
 “Mother Goat, you must go to the star obstructions,” he said.  
 “My sacrifices I will give at the goddess’ shrine,  
 I will go for important things, I will not go for unimportant things,” she said.
- 245 “This is important, you must go, Mother Goat.”  
 “If man will eat my flesh, I will go, otherwise I won’t go,” she said.  
 “One share we’ll give to the Eastern Parts,  
 one share we’ll give to the Northern Parts,  
 one share we’ll give to the Western Parts,  
 250 one share we’ll give to the Southern Parts,  
 the collected blood will give to the King of Death,  
 ears and hooves, we’ll give to the Extreme Obstruction,  
 the head and feet Tārātālī’s Shaman Jumrātam will take,  
 half the body will be eaten by the master of the house,  
 255 half the body will be eaten by those who come and go,  
 the sin of your killing will not be on me, it also won’t be on my patient,



go to the star obstructions,” he said.<sup>39</sup>  
Mother Goat began to postpone the severe problems,  
began to postpone the star obstructions.  
260 The deadly star obstruction atop the house was transferred to its foot.  
The deadly star obstruction at the foot of the house  
was transferred to the doorstep.  
The deadly star obstruction of the doorstep,  
the Time of Death, the Messenger of Death,  
265 were transferred to the edge of the porch.  
The deadly star obstruction of the edge of the porch,  
the Time of Death, the Messenger of Death,  
were transferred to the Ocean of Tears, to the Cremation Ground of the Dead,  
to the Riverside Graveyard, to the Crossroads of Avenging Spirits.  
270 This possible feast has been rejected, from my child you’ve been deflected!  
To the Time of Death, to the Messenger of Death I give sacrifice!  
World Earth a witness, banyan and pipal tree a witness,  
Sattivatī River a witness, the Nine Hundred Thousand Stars a witness,  
Earth Mother a witness, Flame Goddess a witness,  
275 Sijāpati King and Jumrātam Shaman a witness,  
My own lord Mahādev’s oath!

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<sup>39</sup> From here, Abi Lal used a different ending, which resembles one of Karṇa Vīr’s alternate ways to end the Star Obstruction Distancing Event:

Provide my patient with needed supplies, fill the ear with advice,  
providing a cotton string, providing a waxed string,  
setting up seven bars, setting up fourteen fences,  
providing a return, providing a solution,  
distancing the seven times of natural death,  
distancing the fourteen times of unnatural death,  
distancing the complications, distancing the star obstructions.  
Bring the water wits, bring the water wits,  
The lost wits may be in a spring, bring the spring wits,  
The lost wits may be in a water tap, bring the water tap wits,  
The lost wits may be with a dead soul, bring the dead soul wits,  
The lost wits may be with a ghost, bring the ghost wits.

### 3. Event of Distancing the Star Obstructions

- The eldest god Selfcreated Mahādev,  
 the eldest age the Golden Age,  
 the eldest valley the valley of Nepāl,  
 the eldest level of the world is Tilīgramā,  
 5 the eldest direction East,  
 the eldest month Cait,  
 the eldest weekday Sunday,  
 the eldest conjunction Tuesday's Conjunction,  
 the eldest disease Malevolent Injury,<sup>40</sup>  
 10 the eldest planet Ketu Planet,  
 the eldest star obstruction the Wheel of Time,  
 the eldest children's crises the Crisis of Birth,  
 the Crisis of Death, the Crisis of a Month, the Crisis of a Year.  
 The eldest god, Selfcreated Mahādev designed the solid and liquid world.  
 15 "Be," he said, there were no men, "Speak," he said, there were no men.  
 "How will time pass, how will there be a world?" he said.<sup>41</sup>  
 Selfcreated Mahādev played a trick.  
 "Go now, O Pārvatā,  
 to relieve the heat of summer, pick cucumbers, bring them here."  
 20 Pārvatā went to pick cucumbers.  
 Picking small ones, picking big ones, tiny ones,  
 ripest yellowed ones, gathering fallen flowers.  
 old men died, babies died,  
 there were seven times of natural death, fourteen times of unnatural death.  
 25 "Damn, O Pārvatā, Destructive One, Mother Teacher,  
 they can die when old, let them live when young," he said.  
 Old men died, babies died, there were miscarriages.  
 There were seven times of natural death, fourteen times of unnatural death.  
 "For the race of man, how will time pass, how will there be a world?"

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<sup>40</sup> *Jāgmī*. Also pronounced *jākhmi*. 'Injury, wound' and *vāi* are malevolent entities that resulted when the first shaman subdued the first witches (See Maskarinec 1995, chapter 2).

<sup>41</sup> These three lines are a short way to begin this story. Karṇa Vīr would also sometimes use the entire episode of the creation of man (as in the preceding text) as an alternate beginning.

- 30 Now I will play a trick” he said.  
For the race of man, the seven times of natural death,  
the fourteen times of unnatural death, I will postpone,” he said.  
“I will make Maitu Dhāmī, will make Sato Gyānī, Bharśā Paṇḍit,” he said.  
At Chārkābhoṭ, Bharśā Paṇḍit, Sato Gyānī, Prajā Prakil<sup>42</sup> he made.
- 35 At Tāgāserā he made Ratan Pārkī,<sup>43</sup> at Bāchigāū he made Kālu Jaiśī,  
at Tārābhoṭ he made Maitu Dhāmī, at Tārātālī he made Shaman Jumrātam.<sup>44</sup>  
At Indra’s house, Śivaji’s palace, Daughter Kṛṣṇa Mother Padmā,  
was pierced by death, bowed her forehead to the ground.<sup>45</sup>  
“Go now, attendants, bring back Bharśā Paṇḍit,” he said.
- 40 They went to Chārkābhoṭ, brought back Bharśā Paṇḍit.  
Bharśā Paṇḍit did knowledge, did meditations,  
read the stories, read the seven day ritual, worshipped Satya Nārāṇ,  
“I don’t know this illness, it’s cause,” he said.  
“Go now, attendants, in Chārkābhoṭ is Sato Gyānī,
- 45 bring back Sato Gyānī,” he said.  
They went to Chārkābhoṭ, brought back Sato Gyānī.  
He did knowledge, did meditations,  
“I don’t know this illness, it’s cause,” he said.  
“Go now, attendants, in Chārkābhoṭ is Prajā Prakil,

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<sup>42</sup> *Prakil*. ‘To make a diagnosis based on the nine pulses of the body’, *prakaṭ* < *prakaṭā* (Sanskrit) *gamu*. ‘To make known’ (Turner 1980).

<sup>43</sup> *Pārkī*. Shamans explained this as someone who knows the hearts of others. It seems to combine both *parakh garnu* ‘To discriminate; to examine’ (Turner 1980), and *parkirti* < *prakṛti* (Sanskrit). ‘Human nature; one’s own nature’ (Turner 1980).

<sup>44</sup> *Tārātālī*. Possibly, Tārakoṭ or Tānātālī in Southern Ḍolpā, but Karṇa Vīr regarded it as a mythical place; perhaps related to *talātala* (Sanskrit), the name of a particular hell. Abi Lal lists Bharśā Paṇḍit’s place of origin as Tārābhoṭ, and Maitu Dhāmī’s as Timurkoṭ. This section can be expanded by having Mahādev explain what each specialist will do once he is created. These actions are then reported in each summons.

<sup>45</sup> Double meaning: tilting her head in respect, and bowing it to the ground in pain. The text sounds like two individuals are meant, Daughter Kṛṣṇa and Mother Padmā, but Karṇa Vīr heard this as one entity. Abi Lal’s version adds the following lines at this point:

Her throat had gone dry, it was sealed with a block,  
she was one moment pierced, one moment dying.

He also adds the phrase “Nārāyaṇ’s city” in the previous line.



Fig. 4. Shaman Gumane Kāmī.  
Photo: Gregory G. Maskarinec, 1983.

50 bring back Prajā Prakil.” They brought back Prajā Prakil.  
 He made arbitrations, made mediations,  
 “I don’t know this illness, it’s cause.”  
 “Go now, attendants, go to Tāgāserā, bring back Ratan Pārki.”  
 They went to Tāgāserā, brought back Ratan Pārki.  
 55 Ratan Parkī examined, he discriminated,  
 “I don’t know this illness, it’s cause,” he said.  
 “Go now, attendants, Kālu Jaiśī is in Bāchigāū,

bring back Kālu Jaiśī.” They brought back Kālu Jaiśī.  
He checked the horoscopes, checked the auspicious days,  
60 checked figures on a chalkboard, calculated times to travel to bazaars,  
to Tibet,  
to fight and dispute, the time to marry, gave the time to begin a house,  
“I don’t know this illness, it’s cause.”  
“Go now, attendants, bring back Maitu Dhāmī.”  
They went to Tārābhoṭ, brought back Maitu Dhāmī.  
65 He took a leafy branch in his hand,  
tossed a handful of sacred rice to Indrajyū,  
tossed a handful of sacred rice to Vāsudeu,  
threw down sixteen grains of sacred rice on his throne,  
“I can postpone child crises, I can postpone planetary threats,  
70 I don’t know this illness, I don’t know its cause.”  
“To postpone child crises, to postpone planetary threats,  
what is needed?” he said.<sup>46</sup>  
“Go now, attendants, go to Tārātālī,  
bring back Selfcreated Shaman Jumrātam.”  
75 The attendants went, to Tārātālī.  
The famous shaman, his head to the east, feet to the west,  
a single thin blanket, a mattress of straw, one ear closed, one ear open,  
the porch faintly trembles, a walking stick taps faintly.  
“What attendants have come, what supplicants have come,” he said.  
80 “At Indra’s house, Śivajī’s palace, Daughter Kṛṣṇa, Mother Padmā,  
has been pierced by death, has bowed her forehead to the ground,  
get up, let’s go, famous shaman.”  
He assembled his equipment, beat a copper plate,<sup>47</sup>  
“Begin a transfer with the right foot, a period of good daylight will result,  
85 “Begin a transfer with the left foot, a period of a good day will result,”  
he said.

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<sup>46</sup> This remark can be expanded by listing the whole section of explicit transfers (below) in the future tense, asking what is needed to transfer away the problems.

<sup>47</sup> *Tāmā dyāṅgrī*. Literally ‘a little copper shaman’s drum’. However, an ordinary copper plate is often beaten to accompany the recital of a mantrar, both by shamans and by non-specialists, particularly when no blood sacrifice is intended to accompany the recital *pail sarnu*. To begin any major endeavor; to set out on a long journey; to transfer one’s residence.

Eye of Needle, Slippery Slope, Shadow Pass<sup>48</sup> he crossed, went to  
Indra's house.

He danced and drummed to the crossroads and back,<sup>49</sup>  
searched from the top of a ceremonial pole,

“Listen, everyone! The seven times of natural death, I will make into  
one time,

90 the fourteen times of unnatural death, I will make into one time,  
I will postpone planets, will postpone star obstructions,  
will postpone children's crises, will postpone planetary threats,  
barren cows, lame oxen, I will make into valuable property” he said.<sup>50</sup>

He transferred the children's crises, the planetary threats

95 from atop the house to the head.

He transferred the children's crises, the planetary threats  
from the head to the foot.

He transferred the children's crises, the planetary threats  
from the foot to the doorstep.

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<sup>48</sup> Chirenāth, Ciplai Gaurī, and Cāyānetī are all places on the path eastward that dead souls travel as they leave this world. The names may contain a confused reference to Cāyānāth, a pass between Sallyan and Daṅg, the place where, the *Śrīswasthānī Bratakathā* relates, the final parts of Satīdevī's body fell to earth as Mahādev carried it throughout the world (Purājūli V. S. 2026, Chapter 7). On the pass there is a large crystal, now cloudy, in which it is said that lost persons and objects could formerly be seen. Abi Lal's version takes a different path, also found in Karṇa Vīr's Tilīgramā Event:

He traveled forest miles, traveled field miles, set out a cotton line,  
went to Riverside Graveyard, gathered nine assisting spirits gathered nine fierce spirits,  
played with Mālaṅg forces.

<sup>49</sup> This line has the simultaneous meaning: “he was possessed by Ālaṅg, was possessed by Mālaṅg.” Ālaṅg and Mālaṅg are female spirits of the high ridges who drive people crazy. The line thus refers both to the frantic dancing and drumming out to the crossroads to confront the malicious spirits gathered there, a crucial part of every shaman session, and to the spirits who possess the shaman at that time.

<sup>50</sup> At this point, the entire Event of Sacrifice to the Time and Death and the Messenger of Death can be inserted as Jumrātam recites over his patient:

In this world, it was night at night, it was night at day.  
On that day, at that time, he gave Maitācelī.  
Andhāserā was old, . . .

continuing through to the end.

- 100 He transferred the children's crises, the planetary threats  
from the doorstep to edge of the porch.  
He transferred the children's crises, the planetary threats  
from the edge of the porch to growing trees, to rocky landslides.  
"What shall we eat as we go, what shall we take as we go?"
- 105 "Mother Buffalo, you must go to the star obstructions."  
"This is not my share of sacrifice,  
my male buffalos I will give at the goddess' post," she said.  
"Mother Cow, you must go to the star obstructions."  
"This is not my share of sacrifice, my oxen plow for men, I let them be raised,  
110 my milk is a pure offering to Nārāyaṇ,  
my urine and dung are pure, I let men use them to purify."  
"Mother Sheep, you must go to the star obstructions," he said.  
Mother Sheep said, "This is not my share of sacrifice,  
my rams I will give at Barāh's post."
- 115 "Mother Goat, you must go to the star obstructions," he said.  
"This is not my share of sacrifice,  
my sacrifices I will give at the goddess' shrine,  
I will go for important things, I will not go for unimportant things," she said.<sup>51</sup>  
"Mother Pig, you must go to the star obstructions," he said.
- 120 Mother Pig said, "This is not my share, this is not my sacrifice,  
my piglets I will give to be killed by shamans."  
"Go now attendants, In Marañ's Country, Rāvan's house,  
there's an aged cock, an aged hen, bring them here," he said.  
They went to Marañ's Country, Rāvan's house.
- 125 "O Rāvan Mother, give us your aged cock, your aged hen,  
we need them," they said.  
"You cannot buy my hen, diamond, pearls,  
jeweled bracelets, a hundred thousand rupees is the price," she said.  
From the cage spoke the aged cock,
- 130 "Open up my cage, I will change my price myself,  
if my price is that much, the wealthy will survive, the poor will die,  
without me, the world will not survive."

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<sup>51</sup> If a goat rather than a chicken is to be sacrificed, then one uses the ending of the Nine Planets Event from this point.

They opened the cage, they fluttered lightly, fluttered more heavily,<sup>52</sup>  
settling down, the cock crowed like a fiddle,  
135 settling down, the hen crowed like a bugle,  
“If my price is that much, the wealthy will survive, the poor will die,  
without me, the world will not survive.  
I will postpone what is around, will postpone what is to be found,  
I will postpone the complications,<sup>53</sup> will postpone the star obstructions,  
140 I will go at the right time, will go at the wrong time,  
will go in place of man, without me the world will not survive.”  
“My price is five cents, the price of my hen is four cents,” the aged cock said.  
The aged cock began to postpone the children’s crises,  
began to postpone the planetary threats.  
145 He transferred the children’s crises, the planetary threats  
from atop the house to the head.  
He transferred the children’s crises, the planetary threats  
from the head to the foot.  
He transferred the children’s crises, the planetary threats  
150 from the foot to the doorstep.  
He transferred the children’s crises, the planetary threats  
from the doorstep to edge of the porch.  
He transferred the children’s crises, the planetary threats  
from the edge of the porch to the Crossroads of Avenging Spirits.  
155 “Clucking ‘falcon’,<sup>54</sup> clicking ‘falcon,’ your share, your burden,  
the sin of your killing is not on me, it’s also not on my patient,  
this is your share from birth.  
Your place to stay is on the doorstep, your nourishment is flint stones,  
pecking, pecking, at the grinding place, at the threshing place,  
160 scraping and scratching in the house corners, the drainage gutter,  
provide your beak pecking, provide your claw scratching,  
provide your pot upsetting, dirtying cleaned places.  
Clucking ‘falcon’, clicking ‘falcon’, flinty ‘falcon’, stony ‘falcon’,  
your promise, your burden, bow your right wing in obeisance to all this,

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<sup>52</sup> This trembling by a chicken was described as resembling a blustering sound from the lips, and as with deep, choking breaths.

<sup>53</sup> Literally, ‘thunder’, but more generally any heavenly threat or complication.

<sup>54</sup> To flatter it, the chicken is addressed as ‘falcon’.



- 165 provide planet distancing, provide star obstruction distancing,  
provide children's crisis distancing, provide planetary threats distancing,  
provide the auxiliary problems distancing, provide the graveyard ghosts  
distancing,  
provide the major male witches, minor male witches distancing,  
provide the concealed impasses distancing, provide a balanced horoscope,
- 170 provide a cotton string, provide a waxed string,  
fill a wrap with necessities, fill the ear with advice,  
set up seven bars, set up fourteen fences, provide a return, a solution.  
Clucking 'falcon', clicking 'falcon',  
provide children's crises, planetary threats distancing,
- 175 transfer them to a living tree, transfer them to steep cliffs,  
transfer them to the Crossroads of Avenging Spirits!  
This possible feast has been rejected, from my child you've been  
deflected!  
The oath of Shaman Jumrātam Jhāṅgarī!

## Shorter Ending Replacing the Final Fifteen Lines:

- Bringing inner hearts wits, bringing ancestral wits,  
bringing water wits, bringing water source wits, waterfall wits, landslide wits,  
bringing clear thoughts, bringing thought-filled hearts.  
This possible feast has been rejected, from my child you've been deflected!
- 5 The oath of Shaman Jumrātam Jhāṅgarī!

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## Intellectual Coherence and Constraining Function of Shamanism

MICHEL PERRIN

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*The author engages in a “systematic” approach to shamanism, which is a set of ideas justifying a set of acts. It entails a specific representation of the person and the world and requires a particular type of alliance between men and “gods.” Lastly, it is constrained by a function, which is to prevent imbalance and to avert or remedy misfortune. This brief “description” implies several logical consequences, which give rise to as many ethnographical issues. It can also help to make a distinction between shamanism and the other great magico-religious systems (possession, mediumism, sorcery, etc.), and to resolve the problem of the limits of and the relationships between these systems in time and space.*

Shamanism is one of the great systems that the human mind has constructed to explain and relieve misfortune or to prevent disequilibrium of any kind, be these biological, climatic, economic or political in origin, such as illness, bad weather, famine, or problems in hunting or war.

Shamanism implies a specific conception of the world and of man that is associated with or, rather, constrained by a function, the shaman's function—which is to respond to any adversity by foreseeing it, providing an explanation for it and, if possible, by forestalling it or finding a remedy for it. Shamanism is a set of ideas that justifies a set of actions. It cannot be understood if one ignores the uses to which it is put and the resulting constraints.

The great principles associated with the shamanic system can be classified in three groups, as set out in the sections that follow.

## A Dualist Conception of the Person and of the World

A human being consists of a body and of one element (or more) that can separate from it and which survives death. The latter is what is usually called a soul (or souls), giving this word its more general significance. The fleeting departure of the soul during the night explains dreaming. Its prolonged absence accounts, in part, for illness, and its definitive separation from the body means death. The possession of a soul is not limited to human beings: anything in the natural realm may have one, living beings as well as objects.

The world, too, has a double nature. There is this world, quotidian, profane, visible. And there is the “other world,” invisible in normal times to ordinary people, the world of the “supernatural,” of the “sacred.” It is the world of the gods and their emissaries to this world, of spirits of all kinds—animal, vegetal, benevolent or pathogenic—the world of the masters of the animals, of ancestors and ghosts.

All societies have two terms to distinguish what concerns this world and what concerns the other, to separate the profane from the sacred, the banal from the supernatural.

But if this bipartition is essential, it is neither absolute nor immutable. The boundary between the two is, in fact, fluctuating. The meaning of this world is given to it by the other world, which is always present within it. The other world and its denizens are hidden within it, dwell on it and penetrate its entire extent, governing it and animating it. Beings in this world can turn out to be emissaries sent by the beings of the other world. Humans experience this fact almost every day because any extraordinary event, misfortune or disequilibrium is supposed to originate from the other world. Moreover, the other world is anthropomorphized: it is a projection of this world. The beings that populate it are driven by the same thoughts and passions as those of the human beings who imagine them.

The reasons that more commonly justify this persecutive interpretation are summarized in a metaphor borrowed from hunting–gathering societies: the beings from the other world behave like hunters towards humans since the latter destroy their animals to feed themselves. More generally, men behave like predators towards the environment, which is, in fact, controlled by the other world. Hunger, drought, illness and death are some of the ways in which humans pay their debt to this other

world which, to subsist, they plunder incessantly. In fact, the beings of each world are game for the other.

To this direct cycle of exchange many societies add a longer cycle which, at the same time, gives a deeper meaning to death and to the idea of exchange itself. This cycle assumes that the souls of humans are finally released in death and that these souls contribute in different ways to the regeneration of society and the environment through reincarnation or a return to earth as, for example, rain (Perrin 1976).

## A Type of Communication

The cultures that subscribe to these logics assume that communication is possible between this world and the other. The latter communicates indirectly with the former by means of special languages, such as those of dreams or visions, which are supposed to be a vehicle of diagnosis and oracles.<sup>1</sup> But the communication can be still more indirect, known only by its effects: some illnesses or a prolonged drought can be interpreted as the aggressive acts of beings from the other world or of their disguised emissaries. These communications are, however, aleatory.

Shamanism supposes that certain people can, at will, establish communication with the other world. They can see it and know it—unlike ordinary people, who only sense it or suffer from it. These are the shamans. They are designated and elected by the other world, as if, while persecuting humanity, the other world considered it a partner. It offers some of its power to the shamans so that they can relieve misfortune, delaying the payment of a debt that is inextinguishable and constantly being renewed.

This power of the shaman, which is the power to open oneself to the other world and communicate with it, can be exercised in two ways. First, the shaman can convoke one or more “auxiliary spirits,” which originate from the other world and have a special link to it. These spirits may be animal or vegetable spirits, the souls of former shamans or of dead persons, a “double” of the shaman himself or emanations of Dream.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the case with the Guajiro, who consider that dreaming comes from Dream, a kind of deity, and that the preferred language of the other world expresses itself through dreams (Perrin 1992).

Their nature varies according to social or ideological circumstances. One society will favor the inheritance of the shamanic function, while another will place more emphasis on the unpredictability of the election of a new shaman. Second, the shaman too can send his soul at will towards the other world. Very often the two forms of power coexist.

## A Social Function

The shaman is a socially recognized person who puts him- or herself into a state of receptivity to the other world in response to a social demand. The shaman intervenes in a concrete way to avoid or to resolve misfortune of one kind or another. It may be at the request of a person or of their family in the case of illness. It may be at the demand of the whole community when suffering, for example, drought or a scarcity of game. In principle, the shaman does not act for himself; from this perspective, shamanism is a social institution. The role of the shaman is to alleviate or divert the aggressions and abuses of the other world and, as far as possible, to delay death.

But, for the system to be credible, the shaman has to be designated by the other world and, so to speak, belong to it. This belonging is always signified by a rupture that takes different forms in different societies—in one a fainting fit, an abnormal state of agitation or that of atony, in another a decisive conventional dream or vision—the precise form depending on the society, its language and the preconceptions of its members.

Once this event has taken place, the intentional takes over from the aleatory. In place of unpredictable signs of communication with the other world (such as good dreams, visions, illnesses, phobias), which up to this point have been accumulating haphazardly on the future shaman or which he or she was seeking intently, there comes the ability to communicate at will when there is a social demand for it.

After becoming a shaman and acquiring one or more auxiliary spirits the practitioner, to fulfill his or her role whenever the occasion requires, must be able to enter a state of receptivity to the other world. To do so, special aids may be used: here it will be hallucinogens, there secret songs or voluntary dreams, since, theoretically, when not required to perform the shaman is almost an ordinary person.

One observation must be added concerning the therapeutic dimension of shamanism. Corresponding to the dualism of body and soul there are two conceptions of illness. In one, illness reflects the absence, departure or abduction of the soul (or one of them if there are several); in the other, it arises from an excess of some factor due to the introduction into the body of a pathogenic element.

The second explanation may itself take one of two contrasting forms. If the somatic signs are favored, the pathogenic agents are considered to be inanimate. If, on the other hand, the illness is viewed mainly in terms of its psychic effects or the behavioral changes it induces, the pathogenic agents are seen as animate, with animal, anthropomorphic or monstrous form.

This dual interpretation of pathogenic effects also reflects two empirical ways of experiencing sickness, which may be felt either as a loss of strength or vitality or as the intrusion of a foreign presence, causing pain, an impression of weight or a change in mood or personality.

To this duality in the conception of illness correspond two types of therapy: endorcism and exorcism. Either what has been lost has to be returned, or what has been added has to be removed. Endorcism is the return of the missing part, the reintroduction of the soul. Exorcism is the expulsion or transfer of the disruptive principle.

Both endorcism and exorcism are found in shamanism, even if endorcism is often dominant in the ideology. These two logical and complementary modes are rarely exclusive. While bringing back the soul, the shaman may suck on the afflicted part of the body, extract the harmful agent, materialize it and display it.

It is interesting here to surmise the parallelism between this two-sided concept of illness and notions of the shaman's powers. In many shamanic societies the communication of the shaman with the other world is explicitly or implicitly conceived as having dual modes. The shaman not only receives messages from and converses with his (or her) auxiliary spirits, but he is also able to send one of his souls towards the other world. It is on this second form of communication that Eliade, and subsequently all "Eliadist" literature, has placed the greater emphasis.

These, then, are the broad lines that permit a preliminary distinction of shamanism and avoid the pitfalls of so many “classical” but heterogeneous, misleading and unwarrantably constraining definitions. The best known of these is Eliade’s own, from which many others derive with few modifications a definition that has become a veritable shackle for anthropology:

Shamanism is an archaic technique of ecstasy. The shaman is a guide of the souls, a specialist of the mastery of fire, of magic flight and of a trance during which his (or her) soul is supposed to leave her or his body to undertake celestial ascents or infernal descents. He (she) has relations with spirits which he (she) dominates . . . He (she) communicates with the dead, the “demons” and the spirits of nature without being yet their instruments.<sup>2</sup>

Shamanism is here reduced to a set of heterogeneous features. For Eliade, the relations that combine the “shamanistic elements” and organize them into a system are secondary. He isolates these elements and attempts to identify them everywhere despite the fact that his definition reflects specific Siberian shamanisms.

Devereux also inspired some definitions. Without doubt one of the most questionable and peremptory of these definitions, which displays a mixture of his and Eliade’s influences (and here it is observed that, although constantly speaking of structure, they never really define any such thing), is the following:

Shamanism is a medico-magical activity founded on the capture of power and of symbolical efficiency. The shaman, who is generally an ancient mentally sick person, does his office as a “therapist” (1) either in fighting and taking away from his patient the pathogenic spirit that attacked him, (2) or on the contrary entering himself in possession and inviting his patient to enter with him in a two-persons madness and in a frenetic trance which is supposed to be purificatory. (*my translation*, Laplantine 1974: 248)

It is now obvious. These phenomenological and partial definitions mix the most imprecise psychological terms (trance, ecstasy, mad-

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<sup>2</sup> Eliade 1951: 22–23, repeated in 1968: 124. For some variants of Eliade’s definition, see for example Reinhard 1972: 16; Lewis 1984: 4; Hultkrantz 1973; etc.



ness) with fortuitous elements from particular societies (magical flight, mastery of fire, infernal descents, etc.). They lend credence to previous ideas that prevent understanding and discourage investigation of the way in which an individual shamanic society responded in a specific manner to certain great, systematically organized principles.

However, if a shamanic system is defined to serve at least as a marker, such an ideal framework could accommodate many specific forms and externals. From behind an indisputable coherence emerge proper aesthetics and dynamisms.

Of course, this will not resolve the question of the spatial and temporal limits of the system. But it certainly helps to confront the problem more effectively if the same position is adopted for other systems dealing with misfortune, such as possession, sorcery, mediumism, etc.: the definition of sorcery, possession, etc., as systems permits at least to situate between them the often much more complex configurations corresponding to observed realities.<sup>3</sup>

This “systematic approach” might also help to avoid the permanent extension around the world of the words “shaman” and “shamanism,” a trend that appears to have established itself with the complicity of anthropologists.

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<sup>3</sup> See Perrin 1995, Chapter V.

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## The Use of Music in the Ritual Practices of the *Itako*, a Japanese Shaman

TAKEFUSA SASAMORI

HIROSAKI, JAPAN

*The itakos are able to go into a trance without taking narcotic drugs or engaging in strenuous physical exercise. They do so simply through chanting sutras. Before going on to describe the musical structure—the tonal system and rhythm—of these sutras, the author clarifies the notion of a trance, and what it would look like in practice. This is to preclude unproductive arguments about whether an itako is a shaman or not. The historical background of the itako's practices will also be described in brief, as will the qualifications required for someone to become an itako. The procedures and ascetic rites engaged in, and the kinds of sutras and sacred ballads sung will also be described. Then, taking a typical sutra, kuchi yose (spirit talk), the text of the chants will be examined. So will the manner of its performance, its function for the itako, as well as its psychological effect on the audience. Finally, the significance of the itako for Japanese society will be addressed.*

### The Historical Background of the *Itako*

Blind female shamans have been known as *azusa miko* in Japan since the olden days. The name is derived from *miko* (shrine maiden) who played the *azusa yumi* (a bow made from the catalpa tree) in order to fall into a trance and become possessed by a spirit. This bow is already mentioned by name and described in the *Kojiki* (712) (Ogiwara 1973: 260). In the *nō* play “Aoi no ue” by Zeami (1363–1443?), the spirit of the lady Rokujō no Miyasudokoro appears when an *azusa miko* plays the *azusa* bow (Itō 1983: 19). The name *azusa miko* appears in various pieces of literature (Sasamori 1989: 51).

Old documents originating in the Tsugaru district of northern Japan also describe the *itako* as *azusa miko*. The first appearance of the

term *itako* in Tsugaru is in “Iwate no Yama” (1788) by Sugae Masumi (1754–1822) (1788. 1: 439).

After the Meiji Restoration, in the 6th year of Meiji (1873), the Japanese government prohibited the practice of shamanism. Yet shamanism continues as a living practice to the present day, in spite of the periodic government injunctions issued against it in the past. Some *itakos* joined Buddhist sects and obtained missionary licenses; others practiced their art in secret. As time wore on, the prohibition lost its relevance: at one point, there were between fifty and one hundred *itakos* practicing in Aomori Prefecture.

Presently there are fewer than ten of them living in the Tsugaru district. The tradition is on the point of extinction. The main reason is that few potential practitioners meet the severe prerequisites: blind, female, and willing to undergo the required training as described more fully below. Another reason is the prejudice shown toward the profession: an *itako* deals with the impure spirits of the dead, something that Japanese people consider to be shameful. It is rare that a blind young woman would want to learn the trade today. This type of shamanism is doomed to disappear entirely in the very near future.

## The *Itako*'s Qualifications

The fundamental qualifications of an *itako* are that she be blind, trained under a senior *itako*, and confirmed through an ascetic initiation rite.

The *itako*'s ritual practices are performed with a view to: (1) calling down or invoking the spirit of a client's deceased ancestor (*hotoke*); communicating the instructions and wishes of the deceased to the living relatives; (2) calling down or invoking the *kami* (spirit), or spirits in general; (3) practicing divination for the benefit of her clients; (4) curing some illness; and (5) entertaining her clients by chanting sacred ballads and singing songs.

When a community or individual needs the services of an *itako*, she is invited to their place; people also visit the *itako*'s home, or go wherever the *itako* practices.

Is an *itako* really a shaman? The Japanese scholar Ichirō Hori has answered this question in the negative, and Carmen Blacker, the author of *The Catalpa Bow*, agrees. One passage in the book reads as follows:

The blind mediums known as *itako* or *ichiko* are not considered by some authorities, notably Hori, to be true shamans . . . Nor are they capable any longer of achieving a truly ecstatic state. What passes for a trance among them is seen on shrewd inspection to be mere imitation. (Blacker 1975: 140)

“Are the words really from the spirits?” When the *itako* are asked this question, almost all of them reply, “Yes, they are.” They stress the fact that they: (1) cannot foretell what words will come to their “spirit possessed tongue”; (2) can’t remember anything the spirit or god said.

A trance is generally considered to be: (1) a temporary “absence” of the soul: stupor, hypnosis and/or ecstasy; (2) possession by a supernatural power.

Defining the term ‘trance’, Reinhard suggests that one should not take the word in a narrow sense:

The shaman is in a non-ordinary psychic state, which in some cases means not a loss of consciousness but rather an altered state of consciousness. . . . The definition arises out of what the shaman says he does and acceptance of this by members of his society rather than what might in reality be taking place. Therefore, perhaps the phrase “non-ordinary psychic state” should be substituted for “trance.” (Reinhard 1976: 20)

Is there any possibility that the *itako* really is in a trance during the ritual? If she is, it must be during the first half of the ritual, which usually takes 10 to 15 minutes. The *itako* might go into a “trance” through autohypnosis achieved with the help of grating her beads, tapping her bow, chanting a sutra, or a combination of the three.

All *itakos*, if they are officially confirmed through *yurushi*, a permit granted as a result of having undergone the ascetic initiation rite, experience a trance state at least once in their lifetime. The initiation rite, which continues for a week, consists of the following: (1) not eating any kind of grain, not taking salt; (2) no fire (during winter); (3) performing ablutions with cold water three times a day, even in the winter season; (4) reciting all the sutras and sacred ballads that have been learnt; (5) examination; (6) concluding celebration.

The Japanese scholar Tokutarō Sakurai has interpreted the initiation rite as a ceremony in which the candidate dedicates herself to the gods, or a symbolic marriage with the gods (Sakurai 1988: 243). But

my own research has shown that none of the present-day *itako* relate the experience to marriage. What they have mentioned is that: (1) when they faint, the god(s) enter into them; (2) when they come to, they blurt out the names of the god(s) that will be their lifetime guardian deity; (3) the rite is a means of acquiring extraordinary power; (4) the rite is only to prove that they have done the required ascetic exercises; (5) the fainting is nothing but the result of exhaustion.

At any rate, they all faint no matter what the interpretation. There are, thus, two possible explanations for the subsequent “trances”: (1) the *itako* can revert at will to her original, post-initiation trance state; (2) once they have experienced trance, they are capable of calling the spirit at any time.

The initiation rite involves exhaustion by hunger, cold, and loss of sleep. The endless repetition of chants can also lead to a state of stupor. A succession of short gasps, panting, and listening to repetitive, monotonous sounds can make a person dazed, just as violent body movement can. Neurological tests conducted by the Japanese researcher Takeichi Tsugawa (1989) indicate a correlation between the *itako*'s trance and epileptic seizures.

Here again I would like to point out the fact that all *itakos* are blind. It seems safe to assume that the *itakos* are not adept at using their bodies to demonstrate movement and spatial structures; they cannot transmit much of the traditional kinetic meaning of the society to which they belong. The shamanic element characteristic of the *itako* is verbal art.

## The Sutras

There are 15 or more sutras and myths. There are no written texts; they are all learnt and handed down orally.

(1) Spirit talk (*kuchi yose*). The components and procedures of spirit talk are:

- (a) Preliminary portion of the ritual
- (b) Summoning the gods (*kami yose*)
- (c) Searching for and calling a spirit (*hotoke yobi*)
- (d) Declaration by a spirit (*kudoki*)
- (e) Sending off the spirit of a dead (*hotoke okuri*)
- (f) Sending off a divine spirit (*kami okuri*)
- (g) Remarks by the *itako* on what the spirits or gods said

- (h) Receiving a fee for having performed the rite
- (i) Driving what is left of the spirits out of her body by rubbing herself with the rosary beads.
- (2) Tutelary gods. Guardian gods of the local community (*ubusuna*)
- (3) Invocation of the gods (*kami sandan*)
- (4) Sutra about humans (*ningen kyō*)
- (5) Heavenly plain (Takamaga hara)
- (6) Thirty-three Kannon (*sanjū san Kannon*)
- (7) Rice-sprinkling sutra (*sango date*)
- (8) Counting of the shrines (*kuni gake*)
- (9) Curing illness
- (10) Celebration of the New Year (*aratama*)
- (11) A ritual text about the god Oshira (*Oshira saimon*)
- (12) An epic record about the god of Mount Iwaki (*Iwaki-san ichidaiki*)
- (13) An epic record about the god Konpira (*Konpira ichidaiki*)
- (14) The god Inari (*Inari-sama*)
- (15) Sutra or magic spell that one narrates when one makes nine symbolic signs (*kuji*) with the fingers (*kuji wo kiru tokino najinai*).

The texts which an *itako* chants or narrates can be: (1) an entirely fixed text; (2) a fixed plot with some fixed phrases and words; (3) improvised.

Hand props, the *hogu* that an *itako* uses, are sacred objects whose usual function is to make noise.

## The Texts

On examining the texts of *kuchi yose* (spirit talk), we find them to bear a close resemblance to Buddhist sutras and to *yamabushi* texts. *Wasan*, the Japanese version of Buddhist hymns, and the popular texts of folklore are similar in content.

The following is the translation of a part of a *hotoke yobi* sutra. If a woman dies unmarried, or without bearing or fostering children, she will be sent to the hell described below.

The hell for unmarried women is a miserable place; if she looks up above, she will see a carriage of fire, if she looks down, she will see a carnage of black iron. The hell for women who have had an abortion is a miserable place; they

will be driven away from a sword mountain and chased after in a field of pointed nails. The hell for barren women is a miserable place; they are forced to dig for bamboo roots; if a woman ever kept a white dog, she could borrow its nail to dig, and might be able to escape the pain.

The blood pond hell is a miserable place; if she tries to cross over the upper shallows, three huge snakes come and bite her; if she tries to cross over the middle shallows, three sharp swords will cut her; if she tries to cross over the lower shallows, there is a deep and huge pond, with a depth of 4 million *yujun*<sup>1</sup> and a width of 4 million *yujun*; the *gozu* demon (demon with the face of a bull) will command her to cross the pond on a thin string. As the string comes loose, she will try to go back to the shallows, but the demon will push her back into the pond. Her hair will become like a floating weed and her body like a sinking weed. She will hope in vain that a boat will pass by and save her. (The original Japanese text in Bunkachō 1968: 87)

The sutras for illness are chants which cure both mental and physical disease. These sutras also follow the fundamental scheme outlined above for spirit talk: i.e, invoking a spirit, spirit talk, and returning the spirit. Other sutras are myths of various gods: Oshira, Mount Iwaki, Konpira and others.

The Oshira myth is a sacred ballad of gods who are related to silk worms. The myth begins with a stallion and a maiden falling in love. The affair incurred the anger of the maiden's father, who killed the horse [. . .] The stallion, nevertheless, spirited the maiden away to Heaven; when they returned to Earth in a new reincarnation, it was as silk worms. Of the two god figures of the Oshira myth, one is a horse, and the other is a girl. The original story can be read in the *Sōshinki*, a Chinese classic written in the fourth century. Here again we see the familiar figure of the horse in a shamanic context.

## The Altar

The altar for *kuchi yose* (spirit talk) is constructed as follows: three straw rice bags are tied together, and bamboo sticks with strips of sacred paper on them are thrust through the bags. This is the tradi-

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<sup>1</sup> One *yujun* is equal to seven miles.



tional altar, but an alternative one can be made from *sake*, a pile of rice grains, dried squid, dried seaweed, rice cakes, salt, whole fish, and short stakes of willow or maple. These stakes, called *yama* (mountain), are the place where the spirits from the other world descend and stay.

The altar for the initiation rite is made of three straw rice bags (as above), and two piles of rice grain on which bamboo poles are placed. Candles, fish, and *sake* are also placed in front of the rice bags (Bunkachō 1986: 36–44). Every *itako* has in her home her own altar, a syncretistic Buddhist–Shinto altar in appearance.

## The Musical Aspects

*Instruments.* The bead rosary (*irataka no juzu*) is made of three hundred or more diamond-shaped wooden beads. When they are rubbed, they make a loud sound. Animal jawbones, skeletons, claws, horns and old coins are attached to the beads. These are the charms that protect their owner from evil spirits.

The beads are used to (1) keep time; (2) mark the phrase ending; (3) imitate the sounds of nature; and (4) fill the pause between words or to cover up the mistaken words.

The bow is made of catalpa, mulberry or maple wood. The string is made of hemp with which, it is said, three strands of the *itako*'s hair must also be entwined. A bamboo stick measuring 3 *shaku*<sup>2</sup> is used to tap the string. A drum or a crosier is sometimes used in place of the bow or of the beads.

*Vocal.* The vocal part of the *itako*'s performance can be one of three types: narration, chant, and a combination of parlando and singing.

(1) Narration is used mostly in *kudoki* (declaration by a spirit). The salient characteristics of the “declaration” are the tone color (timbre), rhythm, tempo and the manner of breathing.

(2) Chant: Fifteen types of chants performed by six different *itakos* have been analyzed for their tonal systems as shown in fig. 1. The tonal systems of the sutras are shown in figs. 2 a and 2 b. The

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<sup>2</sup> One *shaku* is equal to 0.994 ft. *Shaku* is the basic form of this term, *jaku* is the result of certain spelling rules in combinations.

chants consist of several short melodic patterns which are freely varied. There are several styles of chanting, depending upon the person chanting or the sutra.

(3) The combinations of narration and chanting can be heard mostly in the performance of sacred ballads. Here, choking, crying, and falsetto are used. What text is combined with what melody depends on who one's teachers have been.

## Musical Structure

*Tonal System.* The chants fall into one of two tonal systems: either the anhemitonic pentatonic or the hemitonic pentatonic scale. Only two of the chants sung by the *itako* Mrs. Kasai (and shown in fig. 1) were hemitonic.

The smallest tonal system is comprised of 3 notes, the beginning and end note giving a perfect fourth as also shown in fig. 1. The largest is 7 notes, the beginning and end note giving a minor tenth.

*Melodic Patterns.* A monotone psalmodic style is the simplest melody that we find in the chants. The melodic patterns are of a limited number, and of short duration; emphasis is by repetition. Some examples are shown in figs. 3 and 4. Unlike in European art music, we can discover no formal patterns in the *itako* chants; at most, short phrases recur at random intervals.

*Rhythm and Tempo.* The rhythm—a metric rhythm—is given by the beat of one of the traditional instruments. The syllables of the text also fall into a rhythmic pattern.

The tempo is conditioned by the nature of the sutras. *Hanako* (sutra used when calling the infant spirit) is usually slow; *hotoke okuri* (sutra for sending off the spirit) is faster.

	Kasai K.	Kasai S.	Yamamoto	Hasegawa	Takeyama	Hirata
	<i>hanako</i>					
	Konpira <i>hotoke yobi</i>	<i>kami yose</i>				
	<i>hotoke okuri</i>		Oshira			
A	<i>kami sandan</i> <i>sango date</i>					
	<i>kami yose</i> Oshira				<i>hotoke yobi</i> <i>hotoke okuri</i>	
	Iwaki-san		<i>kudoki</i>			<i>sanjū san</i>
		Oshira		<i>kami yose</i> Oshira		
B	<i>kuni gake</i>					<i>shōgatsu</i>
C		<i>hotoke yobi</i> <i>hotoke okuri</i>		<i>shōgatsu</i>		
D		<i>kami yose</i>	<i>hotoke yobi</i>	<i>sanjū san</i>		
E	<i>kami okuri</i> <i>iki kuchi</i>					

Fig. 1. Tonal system by the *itako*.  
Names of the six *itakos* are in first line on top of the table.

*kami yose                      hotoke yobi                      kudoki                      hanako iki                      hotoke okuri                      kami kami sandan okuri                      sangodate*

The musical score consists of five systems labeled A through E, each with a single staff. The lyrics are written above the staves, and the names of the chant types are written below the staves. The lyrics are: *kami yose*, *hotoke yobi*, *kudoki*, *hanako iki*, *hotoke okuri*, *kami kami sandan okuri*, and *sangodate*. The names of the chant types are: Kasai S., Kasai K., Hasegawa, Kasai K., Takeyama, Kasai K., Kasai K., Takeyama, Yamamoto, Yamamoto, Kasai S., Kasai S., Kasai S., and Kasai K.

Fig. 2 a. Tonal system of the sutras.  
 The names of types of chants are in the first line on top of the page.  
 Kasai S. and Kasai K. are names of *itakos*.

*kuni gake*      *shōgatsu*      *sanjū san*      Oshira      Iwaki-san      Konpira

The musical score consists of five systems, labeled A through E, each with five staves. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The systems are organized into columns corresponding to the chant types listed at the top: *kuni gake*, *shōgatsu*, *sanjū san*, Oshira, Iwaki-san, and Konpira. The names of the chanters are placed below the notes in the staves.

System	Staff 1	Staff 2	Staff 3	Staff 4	Staff 5
A		Hirata	Yamamoto	Kasai K.	Hasegawa
B	Kasai K.	Takeyama			
C		Hasegawa			
D			Hasegawa		
E					

Fig. 2 b. Tonal system of the sutras.  
The names of types of chants are in the first line on top of the page.

Portamento	Higher than written	One syllable	Double consonant
			
Ambiguous note	Lower than written	More than one syllables	


A ri ga tai toh zai oh ka - mi I - wa ki - san takgami  
is shin - ni o ne ga i moh - shi ma su  
a ri ga tai - ya mot tai na ku mo I wakisan  
I chi da i ki wo moh shi a ge - ru - shi - dai - de - wa za i ma su  
I wa ki sa n ta ka ga mi na re do - mo ko no Isugaru no -  
ku ni ni - u ma re so da ta ru wa ke de wa na i  
to h i Kaga no - kuni ni u ma re de  
chi chi no na wa Ma sa ak i to - mo - shi ma su  
ha ha no na wa O sa da to yu - on na de - go za i ma su  
ha ha no O sa da wa ju go no to shi ni un da - ko do mo wa

Fig. 3. Example of an *Iwaki-san ichidaiki* type of chant as sung by *itako* Kasai K.

Ha a i ya

na ma shi me te e she o ko dai ji n gu ya

I wa ki no gon gen o ri i no kwan non shoh kwan non ya

jyu i ji me kwan non ku jū te ra Hya ku za wa

to ku wa ku ma no zu ya

o tonā suga waniri zu ma se ba a gumawo na gasu o da ya aka ani

ko ga ne ha na sa ga to ko ro no u ru ga mi sa ma ni

o mi gi o do myo sa shi a ge de o dano mi mo so zo ya

Fig. 4. Example of an *iki kuchi* type of chant as sung by *itako* Kasai K.

## Conclusions

In Japan, one is supposed to believe that the spirit continues to live on after separating from the body. It can live in heaven, in the mountains, underground, or in the ocean. None of these places are considered to be far away. It is believed that communication between this world and the next is not difficult. In shamanic rituals, the impurity and fearsome nature of the spirits of the dead changes to harmless *hotoke*. The term *hotoke* (spirit of a dead person) originally meant the Buddha. In the other world, the *hotoke* is purified and loses its personality. It unites with its ancestor spirits, and watches over its descendants by occasional visits to this world.

The clients sob and cry while listening to the voice of the spirit. Their breathing synchronizes with the rhythm of the spirit's breathing, who has come from the dark world of death. It has been delivered by a mysterious woman, the *itako*, who is blind, and so also lives in a dark world. The utterances of the spirit have neither high ethical nor philosophical quality. The ritual is, rather, an act of faith in human sentiment. It expresses the belief that the ancestor spirit will protect his/her descendants. People are good to the spirits—they call the spirits and give them offerings—hoping that their own descendants will respect and worship them after they die. This is the sentiment and belief behind the *itako* ritual.

As already stated, the *itakos* do not use drugs or other substances to induce a trance. They go into a trance through chanting. Chanting has a psychological effect on the listeners as well. It is the route that the *itako* uses to journey to other worlds; chanting is the passageway through which the spirit descends to the human world and returns to the spirit world; it is the “place” where man and spirit can engage in conversation. Unfortunately, the chanting and the sutras will soon disappear: there are no successors learning the art, and the youngest *itako* is now 65 years old.



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## Shamanism in Yughur Folk Tales

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*Shamanism, an archaic religion, represents a traditional way of thinking that pervades Yughur (Yellow Uyghur) folklore. It has also deeply influenced the history of Yughur culture. Based partly on Yughur folk tales published in Chinese translation and partly on his own fieldwork, the author discusses shamanic elements that occur in Yughur folk beliefs.*

It is a basic tenet of shamanism that all beings have souls (*ling*). Moreover, nature worship occupies an important place in shamanism, with heaven, earth, sun, moon, the stars, hills, rivers and plants as its primary objects. The widely known and recited tale of Asihasi (*Yugu minjian* 1985), which has a central role in Yughur marriage rites, is also a representative piece on the cult of the god of heaven. According to this tale the world was created by the god of heaven, who filled up the sea with loess and supported the sky with four pillars to hold it aloft. This myth, although later connected with Śākyamuni Buddha, is definitely of non-Buddhist origin: the subsequent addition of Buddha's power to the myth does not efface the real nature of the god of heaven's wealth. The absolute superiority of the god of heaven in shamanism is the product of shamanic ideas concerning the origin of mankind. A more important aspect of the myth is, however, the interpretation of the character of the god of heaven. The idea of the earth as having been created by filling up the sea and that heaven rests on four pillars standing in the sea implies that the sea was the origin of everything—the god of heaven included. This contradictory character of the god of heaven in Yughur folklore reflects the survival of an important idea in Yughur thinking: the idea that since heaven and water were once connected, heaven and earth originally formed a chaotic unity. Heaven is called *tengri* (or *khan tengri*) by the national minorities of northern China. The word is rather similar to the Turkic *dengiz*, meaning 'sea'

(in Yughur *dengiz* has been substituted by the Mongolian word *dalai*). It is clear from this connection that the cult of the god of heaven is in fact based on the cult of water—and water is the symbol of the origin of life. Thus, although at first sight the tale of Asihasi appears to tell of the origin of matrimony, its deeper structure reveals the connection of the origin of mankind with water.

In another Yughur tale entitled “The Heavenly Ox of the Eastern Sea”<sup>1</sup> we are told that a long time ago there lived a heavenly ox in the Eastern Sea. Every year its bellowing could be heard from the beginning of summer until wintertime. In the years when the bellowing was rarely heard the winds were good and the rain was favourable; when it was heard frequently drought was sure to follow. The people of those times were not aware of this rule, only discovering it after the heavenly ox had been killed by hunters. Since then, however, it has never been forgotten. Turkic people have a belief of similar content—that “water was originally created by an ox.”

To ensure offspring, it is a widespread custom among Yughurs that barren women steal or in some way procure children’s wear from a Buddhist temple near water. Tales of encounters of aged, childless people with an ox, such as “The Single-Horned Ox,” have their origin in this custom. Here, too, the underlying idea appears to be that water is the source of life.

The rite Khan Tengri, which is practised to the present day, points to a shamanic nature cult.<sup>2</sup> The meaning of the term is ‘heavenly khan’. Since, according to the Yughurs, Khan Tengri is able to avert disasters and ensure wellbeing throughout the year, the rite has always been regarded as very significant. It is performed twice a year, the more important observance invariably being held by the side of a river or lake. From this it may be deduced that the rite, although nominally dedicated to heaven, is in fact a homage to water. With the progress of mankind and the evolution of human thinking, the original, primeval connection between water and heaven receded into the background and was transformed by new experiences (Wu 1984), but it survived

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<sup>1</sup> *Yughur Folk Tales*. 1990. Mimeographed manuscript edition. Cultural Bureau of Sunan District, Gansu Province. 17–18.

<sup>2</sup> According to sociological material collected by the author in 1990 in Yughur territory, the Khan tengri rite and related activities had been revived in Minghai county, Sunan district, and in Huangchengqu, Maying county, although on a small scale.

in magical beliefs and its traces have been more or less preserved in Yughur folklore to the present day.

In the world of shamanism the cults of sun, moon and heavenly bodies always occur together, complementing and supporting each other. In "The Tale of Mola" the hero, fighting against the damage wrought by a snow-demon, follows the advice of an old man and visits the sun-god (*taiyang shen*) by the Eastern Sea. Mola makes obeisance to the sun-god and learns how to get hold of the magic treasure, with which he is able to subdue the snow-demon. Overcoming various perils, Mola borrows from the sun-god a magic fire-gourd, but, because he forgets how to put it out, the magic fire continues to burn even after the demon has died. Mola can extinguish the fire only by stopping the mouth of the magic gourd with his own body and, on doing so, he is transformed by the fire into a hill of red stones.

Sun and fire were originally one and the same god in the thinking of primeval man and became divided into two deities only at a later stage of social development. The sun god is a god that fosters and supports all creatures, whereas the fire-god exists for the benefit of man alone. In the tale of Mola the bifurcation of the notions of fire and sun in primeval man's thinking is readily apparent. At the same time, however, it reflects without embellishment the dreadful fact that man is unable to control the magic fire-gourd obtained from the sun-god. There must, therefore, have been a close tie between the cult of the sun-god and the desire of the Yughurs' ancestors to subdue the forces of nature.

This kind of world concept is expressed even more strikingly in the following two mythical tales of the Yughur. In "The Tale of Sun-Mother (*Ri mu*) and Moon-Father (*yue fu*)" (Wu 1991) we are told that after the separation of heaven and earth there existed only the moon (*yueliang*) and the sun (*taiyang*). They were husband and wife, our ancestors. Their many cattle and sheep are now the stars. After land had been created by the sun-god of heaven (*tianshangde taiyangshen*), they drove their flocks down to earth. Later there was a great inundation and the Sun-Mother and Moon-Father drove their flocks once more back to heaven, the rainbow in the sky being their whip.

In "The Story of the Magic Pearls (*Shen zhu*)" we are told that in the beginning there was darkness on earth and men had to crawl around like animals. They were afraid of everything and did not know what to do. The god of heaven then threw down two magic pearls, one yellow and one white, to give them light. One day a man and his wife went to

the wilderness to dig up roots to eat. Noticing the magic pearls, the man happily grasped the yellow one and his wife picked up the white one. They started to play with them and, nobody knows how, all at once they became united with the pearls and lo, one was transformed into a shining yellow fireball and the other into a dazzling white one. Both flew up into heaven, where they started to shine and rotate. It was only then that people noticed the existence of the many things on earth. Later the white fireball was named the sun and the yellow one the moon.

In these two tales sun and moon occur together and form a family, and there are men among them who become gods and gods who become men. This ensemble of men and gods reflects the cognitive stage at which no distinction is made between ego and object. The notion of sun being mother and moon father is common with Turkic peoples in general; the cult of the sun-god is closely related to motherly love: the sun shines on the earth, giving life to everything like a loving mother caring for her children. This gave rise to the honorific title “Fire-Mother.”

The cult of the fire-god is based on two kinds of experience. Natural fires caused by lightning could be a disaster for primitive man and struck terror into him. On the other hand, there were his impressions of the sun and his first attempts to use fire. These two kinds of experience gave the nature of the fire-god a rather complicated form. The twofold nature of the fire-god is expressed in Yughur folklore in various ways. With the fire-gourd he obtains from the sun-god of the Eastern Sea, Mola is able to destroy the cold-arousing snow-demon, but, at the same time, the fire from the gourd turns the hero into a hill of stones. In the tale “The Three-Headed Demon and the Valiant Youngster” the means for kindling fire are regarded as a treasure and are guarded with care; when these are lost and people go in search of a new fire, the new kind of fire they find in the land of the *mangus* proves to be dangerous. This duality in the character of the fire-god is a concentrated reflection of various contradictory experiences of the great natural phenomena.

Shamanism originated in wooded regions, in the age of primitive hunting and fishing. Beliefs, taboos, the rules of life—all are connected with the object of hunting, the wild animals. In the age of hunting and fishing our forebears lived in caves, caught animals and birds, ate their flesh, drank their blood and slept on their hide, but in their struggle for survival they might be hurt by their prey and were sometimes even devoured by them. In the course of this struggle for existence with the

beasts there arose the cult of animals among our distant forebears, who were aware of their own weakness.

Many Yughur tales deal with this topic. The majority of animals appear as endowed with divine powers, as far wiser than men or as benevolent and upright. In these tales animals play a decisive role and cannot be dispensed with. They have lost their wild nature, their ferocity, and there are no fantastic animals. In most cases the animals come to aid man, helpless against the forces of nature, with their magic powers or divine might. This aspect of the plot is the outcome of shamanic animal cults.

In tales of this kind the animals, whose fates are inseparably linked with those of men, are all, without exception, wild. Although not as closely related to man as domestic animals, these beasts always play a decisive role in man's destiny. They are liable to mete out both good luck and misfortune very readily. The peculiarities of the narrative are especially suggestive in such tales. In "The Pearled Deer" and "Fox-Fur Cap" the protagonists, as the titles suggest, are a deer and a fox, and the stories concern the relation of these animals with man. The first relates that the hunter Saka wishes to shoot a gazelle for his pregnant wife. In his pursuit of the wounded animal he reaches the desert. The weather changes suddenly, darkness falls and a storm breaks out. Saka becomes lost and is unable to find his way home. There follow ten years of difficult wandering during which he cannot find his way. He is on the point of taking his own life when he meets a beautiful spotted deer. The deer leads him to a place where he finds food and drink and, ultimately, to his home. This benevolent creature had earlier been rescued by the son who his wife had borne after his disappearance.

The second tale tells how, after a master archer had shot two fox cubs, darkness set in, a storm broke and the archer was taken into the desert by a great red fox. His bride also finds herself in deadly peril. The pair are punished for having killed the fox's cubs. From this time on the head-gear of Yughur brides is made of the fur of two foxes, the bride starting to wear it three days before the marriage ceremony both in commemoration and as a reminder.

In the tale "The Ape Daughter-in-law" the ape possesses superhuman wisdom and solves the most intricate human problems with ease. This ability testifies not only to her wisdom but also to the fact that she is an envoy of the gods who governs the affairs of the world and achieves tasks unattainable by mortal men. When the skin of the ape is burned

by a heedless youngster, he finds himself before a monster who is neither human nor spirit.

In this world of monsters men change into animals and animals into men, the will of the gods is realized in the changes that befall men and the fate of men depends on the whims of the animals.

The ties between man and his domestic animals are close and are based on their functions in his everyday life. In this relationship man has gained the upper hand, so in tales that feature such animals their divine nature is effaced and traces of their former cult are somewhat vague. At the same time domestic animals were undoubtedly revered and worshipped by our ancestors, for whom they would still have possessed a divine nature. In the fable of Asihasi we are told, along with the story of the earth's creation, that Yughurs possess three treasures: horses, cattle and sheep. The place these animals occupy in the everyday life of the Yughurs is obvious and remains unaffected by the changes the stories that were told of them underwent in the course of the centuries. In ancient times the importance of the relation of an animal to man depended directly on its divine nature. For our nomadic ancestors the horse was very important. The identity of a popular hero and his mount became inseparable, the fate of the champion being one and the same as that of his steed. Among Yughurs it is forbidden to eat the meat of animals "with a pointed muzzle and a round paw," i.e. of the ass, the horse and the dog a taboo that is connected with the cult of these animals. "The Tale of the Bare-Backed Ass" tells how a woman mistreats her young brother-in-law. The benevolent character of the ass reveals its divine nature: not only is it able to speak but it is able to foretell the future, and it commiserates with the younger brother in his need. The gist of the tale is that when the brothers divide the family wealth between them, the younger brother gets only a bare-backed ass, but the ass is able to do anything for its master. In her greed the sister-in-law wants to have even the ass, but while in her possession the animal only eats and does no work. She therefore kills it and presents the hide to the younger brother, who soaks it with his tears. The hide has to be put on the roof to dry, where it shrivels and attracts wild geese. Every day the geese lay an egg on the hide to provide food for the youngster. At this, of course, the sister-in-law wants the hide back—and so on. Finally, the wicked woman dies of anger and the good ones live happily ever after.



It is known from their folklore that in their nomadizing life the Yughur chose a leader from among their animals which they then called “divine horse/ox/sheep.” The chosen animal wore a red scarf on its shoulder and was not allowed to be killed, eaten or even mounted (Wu 1984).

Birds occupy a peculiar place among the gods of shamanism. The peoples living in Northern China consider birds before all as incarnations of shamans or as their sacred animals. In Yughur folk tales birds of prey appear most frequently, followed by wild geese and then swans. Besides these real birds there are sacred birds that change into men, associate with them and have a heavenly mission. They played an intricate role on the stage of our ancestors’ lives that is not easy to explain. In this respect “The Tale of the Eaglet (Sarmila)” can be mentioned as a piece of representative character. A boy is rescued by an eagle after being exposed on a hillside. The child is reared by the eagle, learns the language of the animals and acquires the name Sarmila, or “Eagle-Son.” Sarmila learns many skills among the eagles, which he uses to promote the wellbeing of the nomads. As a result, they come to consider the eagles as their parents.

The common element of the tales about birds is that a character is carried into the skies, where he is brought up to a life in the air and masters various skills. This aspect reflects the divine power, the magic skills of the shamans. It is generally held that shamans are the “envoys” of the divine world among men. The word for shaman in the language of the Western Yughur is *eldzi*—akin to the Old Turkic *elči*, which is, in fact the same word, meaning ‘envoy’. It was held by our ancestors that shamans are mediators of the will of the gods among men. According to the logic of primeval man, if the shaman acts as an envoy of the gods he must always be journeying between heaven and earth. Since it stands to reason that a person who does so is able to fly, in the world concept of shamanism shamans are capable of flying. In addition, it is believed that things that are close to the sky (*tengri*), such as high hills or tall trees, are “heavenly ladders” that help to communicate with heaven. They house gods and spirits and merit special reverence. In the same way, it was believed by our forebears that eagles circling freely in the sky were able to soar up among the clouds and thus approach nearer to heaven and the god of heaven than hills and tall trees. Moreover, the ability of eagles not only to soar high but also to come down to earth conveyed the idea of a mighty power. In their thinking perception and emotion became fused, the objective and the subjective aspects of the

notion 'eagle' formed an inseparable entity and the divine power, the divine nature of the eagle became its essential characteristic. In "The Tale of Gongerjian and Yangkesa" Gongerjian hopes to resurrect her dead brother Yangkesa. The girl's aspiration moves an old, white-haired woman deeply; she takes Gongerjian with her up to the skies, where she teaches her how to overcome the beasts that are mauling the brother's corpse and how to resurrect the dead so that the girl is able to succeed in her endeavour.

In Sarmila the eagle plays the role of a shaman and in the tale just outlined the old woman herself is the shaman. The Russian Turkologist S. E. Malov collected material on the Yughur language on two occasions at the beginning of this century. According to this material, the first Yughur shaman was an old woman who, while churning butter one day, became possessed by Tengri, the God of Heaven. She started to dance with the god and, at the sight of this, those present made obeisance to her by prostrating themselves (Malov 1967: 134). From this it is clear that there is a connection between the power of the shaman and the eagle cult.

The cult of beasts is peculiar to the animal cult among the Yughurs and their forefathers. It is known that Turkic people have considered themselves descended from wolves since old times; their folklore contains material referring to this belief in abundance. There are, however, no such tales in the folklore of the Yughur, who hold that certain birds of prey were their ancestors. Whether this difference is due to the influence of Lamaism is a matter on which the author is unable to offer an opinion.

The *mangus* is a widely known character in Yughur folklore. Young folk and old people alike are familiar with his ugly appearance and wicked nature. This character is very ancient and widespread and is a familiar figure with all the nomadic tribes of North China.

The contents and motifs of the tales concerning the *mangus* show that he belongs among the demons (*jingling*) of the shamanic pantheon. In the spirit world of shamanic beliefs the human soul is regarded as the weakest and most vulnerable entity. The dangers that threaten man originate mostly from demons. These are bodiless souls, occurring in great numbers and possessing great powers, who live alongside gods and men. They can speak, they have emotions and they are active; in certain tales they associate with men and they were believed by our

ancestors to be similar to man. When, under certain conditions, a shaman is abandoned by his demon it means the loss of his power.

The *mangus* is a high-ranking figure of the shamanic spirit world. The power of *manguses* and gods reflects the inability of our ancestors to cope with natural disasters. "The Three-Headed Demon and the Brave Youngster" relates that a long time ago there lived a young Yughur couple. Once, when the man went out hunting, the woman let the fire go out and so had to go in search of some means of rekindling it. After night had fallen she found a yurt where there was a fire. An old woman living in the yurt put ashes in a fold of the wife's robe and placed some embers on them. When the wife returned home with the embers the old woman, who was in fact a three-headed *mangus*, followed the trail of ashes trickling to the ground. Thereafter she visited the couple's home every night and sucked the wife's blood. On discovering this, her husband engaged in a desperate fight with the *mangus* that ended in serious wounds for both parties.

This story tells of the condition of primeval man in which he knew fire but had not mastered its use. In the early shamanic world the fire-god is the most powerful. The fear of fire is striking, the loss of fire forebodes danger, and the link between the *mangus* and the disaster is important proof of the magic power of the demons. In a tale entitled "The Two Horses and Three Brothers of Shumushi" the loss of the dove-attire by the three girls leads to a similar outcome.

"The Story of the Cruel Old Man" is a *mangus* tale that has connections with the cult of hills. When an old man turns his five daughters out of their home, they find shelter in an old woman's cave. Not only is their life saved in this way: after killing the old woman's man-eating son, a *mangus*, with her help, they adopt her as their mother and live happily ever after.

This story of a kinship with cave people is by no means without foundation. In it the contradictory experiences of our ancestors are expressed. Caves afforded shelter, so our ancestors were attracted by them. Yet, at the same time many frightening natural phenomena—mysterious, unexplained and unforeseeable—occurred in the mountains where the caves were found. High mountains were associated with a feeling that they cannot be conquered. On these contradictory emotions are based all religious sentiments and beliefs. They are also the underlying reasons for the cult of hills.

Apart from its various demonic manifestations, the *mangus* figure expresses an important social meaning. When shamanism flourished among the nomadic Yughur, those practising shamanism enjoyed considerable support and power. Because of this, the increasing complexity of social conditions showed its influence in the formation of the spirit world. In this way traditional thinking, from which shamanism emerged and evolved, was able to penetrate to the innermost recesses of the soul, from where it influenced the development of Yughur folklore more strongly than ever. In the *mangus* stories real-life heroes and imaginary gods, the objective world and that of the spirits, coalesced into one to create the peculiar domain of Yughur folklore. Later *mangus* stories approached actual social conditions more closely: the heroes, the khans, show superhuman wisdom, courage and power—but they are no longer gods, only deified mortals from the world of men. These heroic khans are to be noted not only for subduing rebels and pacifying a turbulent world but also for having destroyed *manguses*.

The story of “The Present of the *Khatuns*”<sup>3</sup> has been collected by the author. The content of this hitherto unpublished tale can be summarized as follows.

A khan goes to war. Before departing he asks his three wives to honour him on his return with a present. Two of the wives promise to make coloured robes embroidered with gold and silver; the third says she will bear him a nice son. The first two wives, jealous of the third, pose as midwives and, when the boy is born, they destroy him secretly and put a puppy in his place. On his return the khan becomes very angry and the third wife is driven from the palace. The dead boy is buried behind the door. From the grave grows a shrub with white flowers which rends and tears the queens’ robes whenever they pass. When the shrub is uprooted and thrown into the cattle pound the animals are unwilling to enter. In the end, on the shores of a lake the khan discovers that the two queens are in fact wicked *manguses*.

The tale of “The Gold-and-Silver Sisters and the Wooden Girl” recounts a similar story. Although this fable has been published, a variant collected by the author has certain unique features. In this version the wooden girl (*jiaowashi*) is a *mangus* with a decidedly demonic charac-

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<sup>3</sup> Unpublished, collected by the author in March 1991 on Yughur territory. *Khatun* means ‘queen’ in Yughur.

ter. When the khan becomes aware that she is in fact a wicked *mangus* he asks her whether, when returning to her mother, she would prefer to ride a black yak or a bay horse. The *jiaowashi* responds without hesitation that she will take the horse. Before she departs the next day the khan tells her that, on reaching the summit of the mountain, she must bind her feet tightly to the saddle, open the mouth of the saddle-bag that contains the gifts and offer a sacrifice to the god of heaven. The girl follows the instructions; the bag is full of doves and, when they fly out, the horse bolts. On the horse's return to the khan's court only the two feet of the *jiaowashi* are found attached to the saddle. According to Yughur tradition, however, the *jiaowashi* did not die: when someone emits a shrill cry in a gorge, the echo sounds in honour of her soul.

Shamanism is a magic (*wushu*) religion of special form. Not only is the magic activity of the shaman connected with the cult of spirits, his authority is also strengthened by his power of prophecy. Yughur folk tales include instances in which this power is referred to. In "The Tale of Two Brothers" a spirit appears to an old man in a dream; during the celebration of a sacrifice the hero of the tribe, Suerke, finds a clear spring at the foot of the sacred tree, which saves the tribe from destruction. The running water that flows from beneath the holy stone makes the wilderness flourish and allows the herd to be enlarged. Having found a source of water in the sand, he is elected to be the khan of the tribe.

Shamans and wizards had considerable power in Yughur history. The Yughur word for shaman is *qam*. Malov gives this as the regular term; generally the shaman is called *ilči* (Malov 1957: 52). According to some Yughur informants the meaning of the word is 'a great wizard who is able to dance with gods'. *Qam* is an Old Turkic term. According to the *Xin Tang shu* (1975: 6148) wizards were called *qam* by the Kirghiz. Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī, a Turkic author of the 11th century, defines *qam* in his *Dīwān lūgat at-turk* as 'prophet, shaman'. This must have been the original meaning.

After this elucidation of the Yughur term for shaman it remains to explain the significance of the khan's fight with the *manguses*. In Yughur folk tales heroes, khans and wizards all play the same role.

The fight of the hero or khan with the *mangus* is a relatively late phenomenon in Yughur folk tales, and it reflects the historical development described earlier. The cults of the sphere of popular customs coalesced with the magic notions of shamanic belief. Courageous and wise as the khans in these tales may be, it is more important that they possess the

immortal soul and the divine power of the shaman-wizards. Thereby the power of all the gods and spirits becomes united in the person of the khan and shamanism is brought into the sphere of politics. After the rise of Lamaism the social status of the shamans diminished and folklore was enveloped by a veil of Buddhism.

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## An Archaic Rite in Nanai Shaman Ceremonies

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During the period 1980–1990 I had the opportunity to observe and tape-record different Nanai rites in settlements in the Khabarovsk Territory, Russian Federation. Since to date only isolated texts of shamanic rites have been published,<sup>1</sup> one of my tasks was to collect as much material as possible on a waning tradition. The recorded pieces were translated and commented on in detail by their performers. The most valuable assistance was provided by the shamaness Gara Geïker (1914–1985), who appreciated that Nanai shamanism was devoid of historical prospects and was of the opinion that knowledge of the Nanai shamans could be preserved for the future only in books.

Among the items collected were transcriptions of shaman ceremonies and also of rites performed without a shaman. Comparative study revealed that some rites have an independent existence, falling outside the practice of a shaman, yet are at the same time included in shaman ceremonies as separate parts. Although these rites and their counterparts in shaman ceremonies are referred to by the same popular terms, the way in which they are performed is different. In a non-shamanic rite the words are improvised and intoned like ordinary speech with elements of incantation. The words of the corresponding parts of the shaman ceremony are more fixed and are chanted to the accompaniment of a drum. Another difference is that the actions in a non-shamanic rite are performed by a man, whereas the same actions in a shamanic rite are carried out by a spirit manipulated by a man. If people able to see spirits are present at a shaman ceremony, they may give a precise

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<sup>1</sup> The texts of archaic rites have so far been published only to illustrate certain assumptions in ethnographic works (Gaer 1984; Smoliak 1974). Part of a shaman ceremony (Diószegi 1972) and two short shaman prayers (Bulgakova 1989) have also been published.

account of how the spirits carry out the shaman's orders. Furthermore, a non-shamanic rite deals with real things (with other people or natural phenomena, animated in accordance with Nanai beliefs), whereas a shaman ceremony is concerned with souls and other spirits. Finally, the action of a rite that has become part of a shaman ceremony is transferred into a specific mental space. This requires explanation. The Nanai believe that, like their human counterparts, souls and spirits are capable of moving in real, everyday space. Old people say that in the past, when there were many shamans on the Amur River, luminescence could be discerned floating above the water and surrounding taiga as darkness fell and the shaman ceremonies began, the light being the spirits aroused by the shamans. A shaman himself will also state the exact itinerary in real space (for example, from one real house in a village to another) on which he is sending his spirits. Spirits, however, can penetrate ideal spaces that are inaccessible to ordinary perception. These have real, concrete locations, such as sites of spirit worship, in a sanctuary or inside a rock or hill. During a shaman ceremony or while sleeping a shaman is able to enter these concrete locations and find the unreal space within, whose vastness contrasts with the size of the object that contains it. The rites to which I am referring are performed by a shaman when he or she enters such a space, which is called a *ĵokaso* or *ogĵian*.<sup>2</sup>

A *ĵokaso* may also be located in a cliff or elevation, especially if the elevation is the mound on the site of an ancient settlement, or even inside a fish. One known *ĵokaso* is an invisible town at the foot of a cliff not far from the real village at the confluence of the Amur and Sungari rivers. A shaman, penetrating the *ĵokaso* during a ceremony or in his sleep, sees a big village or a town with stone houses. The houses are inhabited by the souls of living people. Each *ĵokaso* has a river and, even if sited underground, has a sky, a sun (only dimmer than the genuine one), a moon and stars. Alien spirits cannot penetrate it as it is surrounded by a solid fence and gates, which are usually locked fast and will admit only the shaman of the particular *ĵokaso*. A *ĵokaso* is also guarded by spirits—dogs, tigers and other beasts. One shamaness reported that in a dream she saw eight jackal packs and nine wolf

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<sup>2</sup> Researchers mention briefly that the souls of the sick can be sent to an *ogĵian* by a shaman. This is why I allow myself to give detailed data on my field research (Gaer 1978).



packs around her *ĵokaso*. The masters of a *ĵokaso* are the spirit Father Maito and Mother Maiĵa (each has its own Maito and Maiĵa). They are some of the shaman's various *ajami*, whose wooden figures he keeps at home. Father Maito maintains order in the *ĵokaso* and protects the souls dwelling in it. Mother Maiĵa takes care of the souls, treats them, feeds them kidney-beans and gives them tincture of *ledum* to drink (ritual food and drink also used by the Nanai to treat their spirits). She also suckles the souls of any seriously ill persons in the *ĵokaso*. When the masters of a *ĵokaso* have something important to tell their shaman (if, for example, he is guilty of something) they meet him, with crowns on their heads, on the elevation in the eastern part of the *ĵokaso* over which the sun rises.

A shaman inherits a *ĵokaso* from his ancestors and, if his mother's and father's families include several shamans, he may come into possession of a number of *ĵokasos*. He acquires his *ĵokaso* while sleeping. He dreams that he is approaching a *ĵokaso* but that spirits, wolves, tigers and dogs will not let him in. The shaman must calm the animals and put collars on the dogs before he can be admitted. Then he has to settle matters with the stem masters of the *ĵokaso*, Mother Maiĵa and Father Maito, and win their friendship. If his efforts meet with success, he is considered to be *ĵataĵani*, the holder of a *ĵokaso*. This means that he may visit it during his ceremonies and that the spirits of the *ĵokaso* will serve him. Should he fail to master these spirits at the first attempt, the same dream is repeated several times, as if he were being offered further opportunities to acquire the *ĵokaso*. A shaman does not always succeed. Old folks remember the shaman Piloĵa, who, although assisted by strong spirits and passing for a good shaman, nevertheless failed to acquire a single *ĵokaso* belonging to his forebears and was therefore obliged, with their consent, to use his brothers' *ĵokaso* during ceremonies.

*Ĵokasos* are located in real areas where the shaman's forebears dwelt. When, during a ceremony, he sets off for a *ĵokaso* the shaman enumerates the concrete geographical points he passes, and it is possible from these to deduce where this or that Nanai kin lived.

A shaman places the souls of his patients in a *ĵokaso*. If the illness is caused by the fact that the soul (*panĵan*) has abandoned the patient, a shaman performs a ceremony called *taoĉiori*, during which he follows the soul's trail, finds it, exorcises evil spirits, swallows it with water prepared in advance and then goes up to the patient and returns his soul by breathing it out at him. However, during the shaman ceremonies I

had a chance to observe the soul was never returned to a patient but was, instead, taken to a *ĵokaso*. I was told that the patients had been ill for a long time and that if their souls were returned to them, they would fail to stay in their bodies for long; they would leave, meet with dangers and the shaman's efforts would have been futile. It is more difficult for the souls of such patients to leave a *ĵokaso* than their own bodies because a *ĵokaso* is protected by spirits. If, on the other hand, a patient is young and strong, reluctant to stay at home and fond of traveling—and especially if he is a hunter, carrying arms frequently—it is easier to keep his soul in his body than in a *ĵokaso*. A soul placed in a *ĵokaso* is immobile and at rest. While there a person is not ill and has no dreams. However, his soul may fret at the boredom and begin to yearn for freedom. The soul may outwit the spirits on guard and escape. After a while a person whose soul has broken out of a *ĵokaso* begins to have dreams and his illness returns. It is believed that if a shaman makes an error and mistakenly places the soul of a patient in the *ĵokaso* rather than returning it to him, not only this patient but other patients of his whose souls are in the same *ĵokaso* will fall ill. This happens because a soul which should not have been placed in the *ĵokaso* will show others how to escape.

It is in a *ĵokaso* that the healing rites capable of being performed without a shaman are conducted. One such rite is *sōlboačiori* (Lopatin 1913), which is performed in the following way. A hoop is made from purple-willow branches and threads are tied, criss-cross fashion, from one side to the other. The patient stands on a drum case with his face towards the sun. Starting from his head, the hoop is drawn down over the patient's body, tearing the threads.<sup>3</sup> During the rite the patient is wished good health. When the hoop reaches his feet the patient is lifted slightly and the hoop is pulled away from underneath together with the drum case. The Nanai believe that the illness moves down the body with the hoop and that when the hoop is removed the illness leaves the feet and is banished. E. A. Gaer points out that, as well as being freed of the illness, the patient receives the vital force contained in the purple willow from which the hoop is woven (Gaer 1984).

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<sup>3</sup> According to E. A. Gaer, the threads should remain intact; their tearing portends a bad outcome to the illness.

Pregnant women and children were usually treated in the same way. The rite influenced a coming birth and indicated how it would go. If the hoop passed freely, without touching the body, the birth would be easy. The text of such a rite is given below.

*Er be isiočani. Puril er be isiočani. Xaida orkin opoandami. Tuj ulèndi, turgendi opoandini-go. Turgan daliory-mèt tuj silkomsa.*

The time is coming. It is time to give birth to a child. May nothing bad happen. It will pass well and quickly. As quickly as this hoop passes.

The following text is taken from a rite for treating a child with a hoop.

*Porondolani poldo  
muireleni multi,  
unčilani unĝe,  
sol-sol, dal-dal.  
Ulèn ĝudièni bald'iondu!  
Urèkte-mèt urièndu!  
Sol-sol, dal-dal.  
Dai urèĝuèri,  
ulèn balĝigoani,  
sol-sol, dal-dal.  
Xaolia ulèn osiondo!  
Ulèn balĝiondo!*

(The hoop passes), the top of the head tears the threads,  
Sliding over the shoulders,  
Descending to the heels,  
*Sol-sol, dal-dal.*  
Live well!  
Grow as a purple willow does!  
*Sol-sol, dal-dal.*  
May he grow big,  
May he live well,  
*Sol-sol, dal-dal.*  
I pray, may he feel well!  
May he live well!

Such rites can be performed by anyone and not only by shamans. Even when performed by shamans they are still not specifically shamanic rites. The *sōlboačiori* only becomes a shaman rite when incorporated in a shaman ceremony, when a shaman brings the soul of a patient to a *žokaso*. The mistress of the *žokaso*, Mother Maija, heals the soul with a hoop and the shaman tells her what to do:

*Sōlboačio!*  
*Ēniē, tēlbēxēmbēni*  
*puktičiēlēni*  
*pumbēliu!*  
*Siandolani simboliu!*  
*Giandolani gibambo!*  
*Mējrelēni multuliu!*  
*Xēnḡeliēni xēḡēliu!*  
*Sōlboačigoi!*  
*Čumčueni duēleni*  
*čimčuliu!*  
*Čokilani čilomsa,*  
*okilami olbimi!*  
*Palgandolani palimsa!*

Perform the *sōlboačiori* rite!  
 Cut the illness in two and pull  
 it down from the top of the head  
 on either side of it!  
 Pull it off the ears!  
 Stretch it and pull it over the jaws!  
 Slide from the shoulders!  
 Fall down from the chest!  
 Perform the *sōlboačiori* rite!  
 Shake it (the illness) off the  
 finger tips!  
 Pull it off the pelvis,  
 Carrying it  
 away from the hips, pluck it off the feet!

Immediately after this the mistress of the *ĵokaso* performs one more rite over the soul of the patient. This is called *puēhlēdiuri*. E. A. Gaer (1984) was the first to describe the similar non-shamanic rite: “Holy splinters *giasadan*, narrow strips, made of the skin of a Siberian weasel and of different fabrics, were tied to a *niŋmako* stick. All of them were tied together, making a sort of besom. The besom was passed along the body, as if sweeping the illness away. The illness was being asked to go, the non-semantic word *puēh* was repeated.” I was able to record several *puēhlēdiuri* rites that were resorted to not to cure an illness but in response to a flood or bad weather. The common element in these rites is action aimed at driving something away. In a healing rite it is an illness; in other rites it may be clouds threatening bad weather or the rising waters of a flood. It is the essence of a ritual action (in, for example, driving something away, pacifying something or putting somebody off his guard) rather than the immediate practical purpose of a specific performance that is significant in classifying Nanai ritual genres. The word *puēh* (or *puējeh*) is also common to all these rites. This word is pronounced melodiously and is accompanied by certain gestures: the movements of a besom in a healing rite, sweeping gestures with the hand to imitate dispersing clouds or the pushing movements made in the water with his feet by an incantator sitting on a river bank. The following text is taken from a rite aimed at stopping the rain<sup>4</sup>:

*Puēh! Tēvēksē, χuēduruēh! Tēvēksē, χuēdurusuēh! Xēi, soli kaltarami, ēnēmi χuēduruēh! Puēh! Tēvēksē, gudēruēh! Ēusi-taosi gudēruēh! Ĵakaugoje aŋgosilambi. Siumbē garpagoandu! Siumbē agbimbogoro! Puēh! Xaoliah guĵesu! Puēh! Puēh! Puēh! Puēh! Puēh! Puēh! Puēh! Bējumbē vandagoi taja, tēi ĵai aŋgosini, χoĵimu, bējumbē, vandagoi. Ĵepuridē kēĵukē. Ēlē ĵepuridē, ēlē maŋgalaipu. Ĵepuguēri gelēndēguēri, bējumbē vandagoi ta. Bējumbē vaχa osini, goidami-da ĵekpuri-tēni.*

*Puēh!* Cloud, disperse! Clouds, disperse! Disperse to the mouth and to the source of the river! *Puēh!* Cloud, tear yourself into pieces! May the sun shine! May the sun

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<sup>4</sup> The text is not from a healing rite but from one conducted to influence the weather, because the latter is intoned in a more conventional way. The approximate notation of the excerpt is shown in figs. 1 and 2. The text was recorded from Tamta Digor (born 1918) in August 1987 in the village of Belgo, Khabarovsk Territory, Russian Federation.

come out! *Puèh!* I pray, have mercy! *Puèh! Puèh! Puèh! Puèh! Puèh! Puèh! Puèh!* I am making this small canoe to go on an elk hunt. When I have finished making it, I shall go for an elk hunt. We have no food. We are already starving. I want to go on an elk hunt to get food. If I kill an elk, the food will last for a long time.



Fig. 1. An excerpt from the *puèlëjuri* rite performed by Tamta Digor

Further on, the text of the *puèlëjuri* rite performed by the spirit Mother Maija in a *žokaso* is given<sup>5</sup>:

*Xei, soli puèhlëjipsindu! Puèjeh!*  
*Ujin, bëjun siŋaktažian sioližiani. Puèjeh!*  
*Dëgdëči gasa upultëčiën sioližan. Puèyeh!*  
*Ènièh-lè! Ènièh-lè!*  
*Givan gikoričiani, siun baljičiani*  
*pulëžiu, pulëžiu!*

Drive the illness away to the river mouth and to the source of the river!  
*Puèjeh!* May it get entangled in the skin of cattle and the fur of wild beasts!  
*Puèjeh!* May it get entangled in the feathers of flying birds! *Puèjeh!*  
 Mother! Mother! Drive it to where the sun rises!

In addition to the *sōlboačiori* and *puèlëjuri* rites, the rite of washing the soul with water is performed in a *žokaso*<sup>6</sup>:

<sup>5</sup> This is an excerpt from the *taočiori* shaman ceremony recorded by the author from Gara Geiker (1914–85) in July 1981 in the village of Derga in the Khabarovsk Territory, Russian Federation.

<sup>6</sup> An excerpt from the same ceremony.

Xêi so - li puéh lê- jip-sia da! Pu - é- jeh!

U- jin, bê-jun si-ngak-ta- jian sio - li- jian. Pu - é- jeh! Pu - é- jeh!

Dég- dé - Gi ga - sa u - pul - sé- čiem sio - li- jian! Pu - é- jeh!

È- niéh- lét È- niéh- lét!

Gî- van gi - ko - ri - čia- ni, si - un bal - ji - čian

pu - lé- jia, pu - lé- jiu!

Fig. 2. An excerpt from the *puëlëjuri* shamanic ceremony performed by Gara Gejker

*Xali muélé čaborba!*  
*Gęngiën muélé gëlčilui!*  
*Ori muëjieni oboro!*  
*Siru muëjieni silkoro!*

Dip the soul in the purest water with a splash!  
 And pour clear water!  
 Pour down healing water!  
 And wash with cold water!

It may be assumed that there once existed a rite of pouring water over a person in order to cure him, but I have so far failed to come across any information concerning this.

The treatment in a *žokaso* ends with a ceremony in which the spirits place a soul in a special receptacle called an *oni*. Each soul has its own *oni*. When a patient is treated by a shaman for the first time he has to give him some new dish: a pot or a saucepan, for example. The vessel should be without flaw. The best present is a boat. The saucepan, pot or boat will be the *oni* for the patient's soul in the shaman's *žokaso*. When she has finished the healing rites Mother Maija and her spirits place the soul in the *oni* so that the rising sun shines on its face. The soul must keep its balance in the *oni* because, if it fails to do so, the patient is unlikely to recover. After this the shaman, with his train of assisting spirits, leaves the *žokaso* and returns home.

Some recall that in certain cases in the past, especially if the patient was also a shaman, the doctor laid aside the drum after the soul had returned to the body and performed the *sōlboačiori* and *puēlēžiuri* rites, i.e. he passed the hoop over the afflicted person and drove the illness away with his arms. Such treatment was considered more effective than attempting to heal the soul in a *žokaso*. The hypothesis that the rites performed without a shaman came into being in the pre-shamanic epoch is widely held among Russian researchers of the Manchu-Tungus peoples, who traditionally term them "pre-shamanic" rites (Smoliak 1974: 109). If we adopt this hypothesis, the shamanic and non-shamanic versions of one and the same rite, dealt with here, represent different historical stages in the evolution of Nanai rites and their comparative study provides valuable material for investigating the development of Nanai notions concerning the opportunities for contact with the spirits and the evolution of the poetic and musical languages of Nanai folklore.

By comparing such versions we can, for instance, trace the trend from the actions of a man to the actions of a spirit manipulated by a man in a shaman ceremony. This transition alters the structure of the ritual texts. According to N. I. Tolstoï (1980: 157), "the words of a rite represent the unity of verbal, real (object) and action planes," and in later versions of the rite the plane of



action is replaced by the verbal plane, i.e. the action is replaced by the word that renders it. The Nanai materials confirm this assumption and enable us to elaborate it. When an archaic (pre-shamanic) rite is included in the shaman ceremony, the action is not replaced by the word but is retained. It is merely transferred from the man to the spirit and is thus translated from the real world into the ideal one. The retention of the words rendering the action is explained by the necessity to instruct the spirit that is entrusted with its commission. It is not the words but the action to which the shaman attaches the greatest importance. In some cases the words may even be omitted. If a shaman is sure that Mother Maiĵa knows how to perform the rite by herself, he limits himself to brief instructions on how the soul of the patient should be treated. And, in spite of the fact that the rite is in no way reflected in the ceremonial discourse, it is considered as having been performed.

The Nanai tradition has retained its notions of the sense and expediency of melodious intoning. The study of such notions can contribute to an understanding of the way musical intonation evolved. The intoning of an archaic rite is almost speech-like, but it is speech with a strained intonation, the separate syllables being drawn out and sung. The Nanai consider that such intonation helps to attract the attention of spirits, who will not hear if invoked in conventional tones. Melodious vocalizations such as *puéh* or *puĕjeh* are also a means of contacting the spirits. When I asked for a translation of these words into Russian I was told it was impossible. The words are not comprehensible to people but to spirits alone, and they are addressed to them exclusively.

Another and even more effective means of attracting the spirits' attention is the drum. The shamaness Gara Geĵker asserted that spirits are usually inactive, asleep in their dwelling-places. When a shaman starts to beat the drum they awake and gather round him, ready to obey the instructions which he will express by the words chanted. During the ceremony a shaman can afford to make long pauses in his chanting, but the drum must sound continuously. For as long as the drum is beaten the spirit is there, working, but as soon as you stop he will fall and become inactive.

One may assume that in the initial stages of mastering the art of shamanism or of including archaic rites in the shaman ceremony the Nanai intended to combine two means of exerting influence over spirits: chanted speech and the rhythm of the drum. Such a combination could transform the intonation of a ritual incantation. Syllabic rhythms, adapting themselves to that of the drum, would have become regular and, in what is no doubt a single process, a stable scale may have been established. In spite of the fact that, already at

this early stage, a shaman chanted and did not speak, the melodious pattern of each phrase was still very close to that of spoken forms in archaic rites. The notations given in figs. 1 and 2 demonstrate this. It is worth noting that the last syllable of a word or word combination is raised and drawn out. Nanai rites may have retained features characteristic of earlier processes in the evolution of musical intonation and Nanai ritual melodies therefore provide valuable material on the problem of the origin of music.

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## A Shamanic Séance Conducted by a Woman in Nepal

ROMANO MASTROMATTEI

ROMA

This report should be considered as a fragment of research into the ecstatic condition of Eurasian shamanism, a project parsimoniously financed by the Italian National Research Council. My work is carried out almost entirely in Nepal, where I have, in particular, paid special attention to the Tibetan-Burmese Tamang population. The Tamang term for 'shaman' is *bombo*. Most *bombos* are male, but for years I have heard of female *bombos*, spoken of with esteem and respect. At the last moment, however, these women would disappear into thin air, a thing which happened too often to be purely casual. Finally, in 1990, I managed to find in the area around Kathmandu an *Āmā bombo*, or Mother *bombo*, as she was called with great respect and more than a shadow of fear by everyone who knew her. The *Āmā bombo* is a woman of Tamang stock, about forty years old, with an abrupt manner, haughty and authoritarian, not at all like typical Nepalese women, whatever their caste and ethnic origin. Her expression and gestures denote not only arrogance, but also a lively and ready intelligence. She has a husband and three children and lives in a house that indicates a certain affluence.

My first significant contact with the *Āmā bombo* was the observation of a séance, celebrated for a reason which was at the time concealed from us, but which in part became clear during the ceremony and was then revealed some days later.

The behaviour of the *Āmā bombo* during the rite differed from the corresponding male behaviour only in a single, essential respect: the woman did not personally kill the sacrificial victims—two chickens—but delegated the task to some men. At that particular séance, the *Āmā bombo* did not dance, and the ritual dances were performed by an old

*bombo*. If, however, we rightly understood an answer given to us at the time, on other occasions the woman did not abstain from dancing.

The gods were invoked and invited by an old *bombo*, assisted by another *bombo* who, though younger, was also of mature years, and by an apprentice, as well as by one of those singular characters, rather common in Nepal, who want to become shamans, attend every possible shamanic ritual, but are without sufficient natural talents to achieve their desire. The gods and other beings which, as we shall see below, in Western terms would belong to quite another category, were summoned by reciting a *mantra*, by beating the drum and by offerings presented on a plate used as an altar. The arrival of these supernatural beings was announced by the characteristic shaking which took possession of the old *bombo*. Only at this point, about half an hour after the ceremony began, when the gods were considered to be already present, did the *Āmā bombo* enter. Up to that moment, she had been busy with magico-therapeutic practices in the next room, using—as far as I could make out—neither musical instruments, nor any other kind of shamanic attribute. From the moment of her entrance, however, the woman dominated the scene and directed the actions of the men, who placed themselves at her orders without a trace of that competitive spirit, so frequent among shamans, which we have often noted.

At other shamanic séances celebrated by Tamangs, the objects placed on and around the altar are mainly the *gtor-mas*, seeds of *Oroxylum Indicum* mounted on slender slivers of bamboo, *Tagetes erecta* flowers, rice, rock-crystals, incense sticks, an egg, and coins. At this particular séance, on the other hand, apart from the items listed above, a number of packets and containers of various kinds could be observed, in which were placed powders, feathers and other indefinable articles, such as belong to the tools of magicians, healers and sorcerers, rather than those of shamans, or at least of those known to me. About two hours after the start of the séance, the *Āmā bombo* suddenly took over the drum and was immediately struck by a strong and progressive trembling of the legs. At this point, when her facial expression indicated that she was already in trance, the old shaman quickly threw the ritual necklaces around her neck and the bandoleer of bells across and around her torso. Soon after, the *Āmā bombo* began to speak and sing, assuming an expression of great sorrow and torment, as if she were witnessing some extremely painful scene. I was greatly struck by this circumstance, since in the many séances celebrated by men which I had

attended, I had seen the shaman's face take on expressions of respect, benevolence, or else hostility, anger, anguish and also physical suffering, but never intense emotional sorrow. The woman went on rapidly, or rather instantaneously, to impersonate a menacing being, which spoke with a deep, hoarse voice, and immediately began beating the drum with extreme violence, at a certain point going so far as to strike the right side of her skull hard with the stick. Then, with great difficulty, owing to her violent shaking, she seized the egg which had been previously prepared and painted, blew on it several times and, without any sign of getting up, threw it out of the window in front of her. This scene, which I have witnessed on other occasions and also among other ethnic groups, simultaneously expresses an offering and a violent repulsion, the driving-out of a hostile spirit, almost like throwing a bone some distance away to rid oneself of a fierce dog. A few minutes later, the younger shaman offered her some uncooked rice, which the woman chewed avidly, only to spit it out or even vomit it after a second or two, sticking out her whole tongue and expressing repulsion and contempt, rather than disgust. The interpretation of this gesture, given by the woman some days later, was that the *bhut*, the savage and irremediably evil demon, to which the rice had been offered, had rejected it. The female shaman's increasingly violent possession was matched by the bitter and desperate weeping of two women, one young and the other old, the first of which—as we learned later—was mourning for the death of her baby girl, and the second, the death of her thirty-year-old daughter. The souls of these dead ones were, for different reasons, not resigned to their fate, which they felt was unnatural and cruel in any case, and their sorrow in the next world was added to their mothers' affliction on earth. Another circumstance which was new to us was the silent but copious weeping of the *Āmā bombo* herself. While trembling, her face took on an expression of what seemed intense compassion, but which in reality may have revealed not her personal emotion, but her impersonation of the dead baby girl and young woman who, as we found out later, had died a violent death. In this case too, the behaviour of the female shaman was different to that of the male shamans I have observed, who never seemed to be afflicted and influenced beyond a certain point, even when they saw, in their visions, the lives of friends or kin threatened by the most fearsome demons. A further characteristic of the *Āmā bombo* was the ritual use of her hair, which was loosened without her touching it with her hands, merely by the shaking of her

head and body during the trance, and which she put into order again as soon as she took off the ritual necklaces and lay the drum aside or passed it on to others. The laymen present—including her sixteen year-old son, highly intelligent and interested in his mother's profession—did not understand the unknown tongue in which she expressed herself at times. Furthermore, nothing of what was happening in the first part of the séance appeared to disturb or trouble those kin and friends who were not actively involved in celebrating the rite.

The tension and continuity of the rapport with the gods was maintained by an ecstatic condition which, together with the drum and necklaces, was literally passed from one shaman to another. As could be easily foreseen, however, not all of them managed to attain the same level of intensity. (About one o'clock in the morning, a therapeutic interlude took place, without any ecstatic features, of which no description will be provided at present. It should be noted however, that non-ecstatic elements may be of great importance in shamanic rituals, and any research which did not take this fact into account would be partial and tendentious.)

Two chickens were sacrificed during the course of the night. The elder shaman killed one by tearing off its head during a dance with ecstatic features, which took place in an apartment on the second floor where the female shaman lived and on a railless terrace giving onto the courtyard. The throat of the second chicken was slit by a boy in the courtyard, before a small temporary altar on which were arranged those cult related objects found in Nepal in the sanctuaries of Shiva or Bhimāsen. These sacrifices were performed with a complex ceremonial and with great care taken of the ritual details. In all séances, the expressions and gestures of acceptance or of rejection towards the carcass of the victim indicate the celebrant's identification with the supernatural being to which the sacrifice is dedicated, if the celebrant is in an ecstatic condition, i.e. is not representing himself, or at least not his everyday self. If, however, the celebrant is in normal conditions and throws the carcass to the ground with a display of disgust, it means he is sacrificing the victim to some despicable being, such as a bloodthirsty intractable demon. In a shamanic ceremony, the borderline between the various identities is naturally uncertain and unstable, and a shaman may simultaneously impersonate different beings. This multiple identity was evident in the *Āmā bombo*, who could, at the same time, mime to perfection a savage and cruel *bhut*, while brandishing a

burning brand to scare and chase it away. This scene must have been too frightening and dangerous for several persons present, who then went away. During the most significant stage of her ecstatic condition, the female shaman emitted a true diphonic chant, for a sound box using the drum, which she kept close to her mouth. According to a code which has never been fully revealed, the female shaman was at that moment a desperate dead woman, a fierce revenant, and even perhaps one of those infernal powers, a lord of demons and ghosts. These impersonations caused great distress to the two women bereaved of their daughters, but this trial, though hard, was necessary to see and let them live again and to find the way to placate and pacify them.

It was four o'clock in the morning, and the ecstatic condition of the *Āmā bombo* was to last for a further fifteen minutes, after which the woman came to herself, put her hair in order, lighted a cigarette, and seemed to be wholly delivered from the emotions which had shaken her so violently. The rites of dismissing the gods and closing the séance were entrusted to the men.

A few days later, a long conversation took place between the *Āmā bombo* and ourselves, during which we were able to talk about her vocation, her powers, and the séance she had recently celebrated. That occasion—a fact I should like to emphasize—was the only one on which we had been able to observe the woman in a fully ecstatic condition which, for the time being, fixes the limits of our scientific assessment of this case. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that in this context we have deliberately neglected the non-ecstatic aspects of the ritual which, on the other hand—we must repeat—form an integral part of it and necessitate careful study in order to provide a complete analysis and synthesis of the ritual itself. The shamanic destiny of Sommaya, this being the woman's name, was revealed when she was only seven years old and therefore some time before the onset of puberty. It occurred during the monsoon period, while she was seeking a lost sheep, when all of a sudden she fell asleep and felt herself rise in the air. She was taken “toward something that looked like a river and something that looked like a mountain,” an expression that well describes the enigmatic and oblique relationship of shamans with the real world. This happened while the little girl was “in a state of unconsciousness.” “I learned alone without teachers.” After one year, a female spirit-guru ordered her to make a pilgrimage with other *jhākrīs* to Gosaitan, where the child paid homage to Mahadeo-Pokhari, a shamanic divinity—not

immediately identifiable with Shiva—connected with a lake. After this pilgrimage, Sommaya returned to her natal village and did not practice her profession for four years, “because she was ashamed in front of the inhabitants of the village.” From the *Āmā bombo*’s discourse, it appears that, her shyness notwithstanding, she already felt the fullness of her magic powers. She married and moved to her husband’s village, where he became sick and risked becoming blind: the first of a very long series of illnesses. Sommaya had a baby, which died suddenly, without any apparent cause. “Then my guru told me, ‘You mustn’t stay there doing nothing: you must do something.’” The young woman thus sent a message to her natal village requesting “the *jhākrī*’s things which belonged to her.” Evidently, these objects were kept at home and had been used by her father or mother, or perhaps by some ancestor: but this was not made clear. As soon as her professional tools arrived, the woman organized a *pujā*. The villagers were surprised and amazed, because they had not suspected that she “could do those things.” That explained why she was often sick: the cause was something unclean, a kind of sexual miasma, connected with trauma or with an accidental knowledge of “bad things.” Such “bad knowledge” (a recurring motif in shaman’s accounts<sup>1</sup>) must not be understood as a mere notion, but as something which can maliciously be dispatched to harm someone: the *jhākrī*’s task is to send it back, thus liberating the person afflicted.

At this point, referring to what she had just recounted, the *Āmā bombo* said, “I sent the ‘bad knowledge’ back again. I have no flesh-and-blood guru but, you see, when you hear *tek-tek-tek* from the jungle, she—she is the goddess who is called *ban-devī* (the goddess of the forest)—she is my guru.” Now in my opinion, this relationship with a female deity of the woods should not be interpreted as something which merely falls into the female sector of a fully homogeneous shamanic whole, but as a feature which, during future research, could reveal a female magical-initiatory complex with shamanic values.

Indeed, during our conversation (October 14th 1989), on being asked whether there really were *jhākrīnīs* whom I had never met till then, Sete Rumba replied. “Yes, of course there are. There may still be one in the village of Chali, near Bhaktapur. There is one at Chatturipawa, in the Nawakot district: she is now very old, but has taught some young

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<sup>1</sup> See Mastromattei 1988: 90.



women,” and at this point, to my amazement, he pointed to two young European women present. On yet another occasion, Sete Rumba, who is used to weighing his words, said without beating about the bush, “Remember, all women are witches (*bokstī*.)” Such terms used concerning men would be inconceivable: a *jhākrī* does not teach “young men,” but chosen individuals. Still less would he say “All men are wizards.”

In an article based on notes taken in 1958 and 1960 in the Darjeeling region and sub-district of Kalinpong, Alexander Macdonald (1962: 309–341) gives a concise and extraordinarily rich picture of what might be termed the “*jhākrīstic* complex,” which can be set according to what we can deduce from Macdonald’s writings—partly within and partly on the margins of the shamanic complex.

In this article, Macdonald speaks of a group of supernatural females, the *banko burhenī* (old women of the wood). These female beings, whom Macdonald merely calls “women,” evidently reporting faithfully the opinion of his informers, are seven and cause a series of physical and psychological illnesses. The *banko burhenī* kidnap girls—who worship them as deities—and carry them off to the woods. On returning home, the girl is instructed by a male guru, a *jhākrī*.<sup>2</sup>

The *Āmā bombo* made no mention of this kind of instructors who would have integrated the intervention of the “goddess of the forest” and, on the contrary, as we have seen, boasted of not having had any human guru, but I feel this cannot be excluded. The fact that the woman had previously sent someone “to collect the *jhākrī*’s things that belonged to her” leads one to believe that in her childhood she had been familiar with this sphere and that she was thus deemed to be predestined for that profession. When I very cautiously asked the *Āmā bombo* whether she instructed young women, she replied dryly, “Nobody can capture my *mantras* but, when I die, my *mantras* will move on to someone else who wants them.” I may be deceiving myself, but I feel that if the question had been asked by a woman, the answer might have been different.

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<sup>2</sup> The detailed description of the *banko burhenī* is found in Macdonald (1962: 322–323). The exact spelling should be *banko burenī*, from *burī*, the ancient term for *burhī* ‘old woman’ (Turner 1931: 452 column b; hence: T.: 453, column a). The reference to the initiatory activities of these characters and of the real life *jhākrī* is found in Macdonald 1931: 337.

Since, during the séance, the *Āmā bombo* had evidently been possessed by various beings, which induced her to adopt different types of behaviour and speak in various languages we asked her who these beings, these deities, were. As might be expected, the main one was the *ban devī*, the first to induce the trembling, to whom the Shivaitic-type courtyard altar was dedicated. “This guru has tangled hair and long hair on her body, like a yogi. When she came to me, she helped me to undo my hair. If other *deutās* come, I mustn’t loosen it.” From a linguistic point of view the rest of the discourse is not very clear, although the woman identified her guru, on this occasion calling her, not *ban devī*, but *laṭṭadhārī*, a word of uncertain spelling, but which certainly relates to the noun *laṭṭo* ‘tangle’, a ‘tousled lock of hair’, and to the adjective *laṭṭāwāl* ‘with matted hair’. “When *laṭṭadhārī* comes, I undo my hair. I undo them to be like my guru,” and she added, speaking in the plural, “We are not aware, when we undo it.”<sup>3</sup>

For the *Āmā bombo*, the unawareness with which the gesture is performed is manifest proof of the deity’s presence. At outside observers, we can say that her hair, in this case gathered in a bun, was loosened when the woman’s whole body was shaken violently by the trembling. The impersonations, however, and temporary assumption of other personalities, were not really limited to a mimesis of the expression and behaviour of the female initiator of the woods. Indeed, the *Āmā bombo* impersonated, one after the other during the lengthy rite, first the souls of the baby girl killed or the young woman suicide—shedding all their tears and expressing their sorrow, after which dangerous and intractable demons, then the souls of the same dead females, but in their terrible shape as beings returned to earth to take revenge for the wrongs they had suffered. As usual in shamanic ritual, these impersonations could break off, whether at their peak, or during a dying away: the woman

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<sup>3</sup> *Laṭṭadhārī* or *laṭṭadhari*, see Turner (1931: 328 a2, 1931: 546 a-b); *latto* (1931: 546 b); *laṭṭāwāl* (1931: 546a). Macdonald (1962: 322) speaks of a *Laṭṭe burheni*, which makes people dumb, deaf and blind and which belongs, however, to the ranks of the female initiators of young women. There is also an adjective *lāṭo* (Turner 1931: S53 b), which means ‘deaf mute’, ‘stupid’: a temporary state which frequently appears in those who undergo shamanic initiation. For a discussion on this curious convergence of different but homophonous and easily assimilable roots, see Mastromattei 1988: 108 and 109, note 60. What I wish to suggest is that the *Āmā bombo*’s *laṭṭadhārī* appears to be a very similar figure to the *Laṭṭe burheni* to which Macdonald refers.

put her hair in order, smoked a cigarette, drank something, even ate a tiny amount of food which had been prepared aside for ritual purposes. On being asked whether she remembered anything about these experiences of hers, the *Āmā bombo* first replied—like all shamans we talked to—that, no, she remembered nothing: “When a *deutā* speaks of the various things, I remember a little, and then I forget everything. This is why the persons around me must listen carefully.” A short while later, however—like all shamans—the woman spoke of her visions, her victories and defeats in the field: and her tone was not that of someone talking of things they had heard repeated by others.

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## Reviewing a Review

ROY ANDREW MILLER and NELLY NAUMANN

SULZBURG/BADEN

Critical reviews of scholarly publications are a *sine qua non* for any academic journal; and the high hopes and good wishes with which all of us greeted the first issue of *Shaman* were only enhanced by the discovery of a section devoted to “Book Reviews” in its Volume 1, Number 1. Our enthusiasm was further increased to find that our monograph on Old Japanese *FaFuri* (Miller and Naumann 1991) had been selected for the place of honor, the first book to be reviewed in this new journal.

But reading that review by Catherine Uray-Kóhalmi (59–61) has raised several questions that we feel it necessary to share with the editors and readers of *Shaman*, not because the review reflects negatively upon us and our work, but because its irresponsibility and carelessness bode ill for the future of this new journal.

In the following critical remarks upon the review in question, we do not take issue with any of Uray-Kóhalmi’s negative evaluations of our work or of our conclusions. She is fully entitled to her opinions, as we are to ours. That is not the problem. Rather, the problem is that 95% of Uray-Kóhalmi’s review consists of blatant misrepresentations and flatly incorrect allegations concerning what we say in our book, leading us to the regretful conclusion that she either did not, or could not read the book carefully enough to understand it; and this in turn casts serious doubt upon her negative evaluation of the same. It also has obvious implications for future editorial policy concerning reviews in *Shaman*.

Uray-Kóhalmi’s account (in her third paragraph, 59) of our linguistic hypothesis consists entirely of one blatant error and misrepresentation after another. She writes, “Nicholas N. Poppe has claimed that Altaic \**pap* ‘witchcraft, sorcery’ . . . is a borrowing of Chinese *fa* . . .” False! Poppe never made any such statement. “The etymology of the word has already been discussed by such great fig-

ures of Altaistics as Martti Räsänen, John Street, È. V. Sevortian, V. I. Tsintsius and Karl Menges.” False! No one of these “great figures” has previously suggested associating Chinese *fa* with Altaic words at issue. (One also wonders if John Street’s miniscule contribution, a single gloss and a nine-word comment in his *Samizdat* index to Poppe’s *Vergleichende Grammatik* [see our 13], really entitles him to a place in this catena of the “greats.”) “Miller takes it as proven that the Chinese *fa* < \**pap* entered Proto-Altaic before the individuation of the various Altaic languages.” False! Miller (who is also solely responsible for the Chinese *fa* vs. Altaic etymology) suggests and argues for the hypothesis that the word was borrowed into Altaic: but he never claims that this or any other historical-linguistic hypothesis is ever “proven.” “Miller concludes that the Japanese word is a borrowing of Chinese *fa* ‘device, sorcery’.” False! Miller never says or even hints at any such absurd thing, see the monograph at issue, *passim*. “Miller . . . offers eight methodological pointers for a semantic approach to Japanese.” False! If this last statement means anything at all, it can only refer to the eight numbered sections in our §VIII, Zusammenfassung, 91–98, where we summarize all our findings and all our hypotheses advanced in the rest of the monograph—a far cry indeed from “a semantic approach to Japanese,” whatever that might mean.

The religious-historical and ethnographic contributions of our monograph are, if anything, subjected to even more irresponsible and cavalier treatment at the hands of Uray-Kõhalmi than are its linguistic components. The only difference is that, being rather more complex in and of themselves, the extra-linguistic issues have been subjected to even more distortion and misrepresentation than have the linguistic ones. A few specific examples must suffice (to signal all of Uray-Kõhalmi’s errors in this area would mean copying out and reproducing almost her entire review). Such statements as her claim that “[the] *FaFuri* . . . served in the shrine of a certain deity . . .” is simply false. But usually her misrepresentations in this area are more subtle. She makes general allegations concerning the roles of the *FaFuri* in funerals and in animal sacrifices which especially seriously misrepresent the content and argumentation of the monograph; there the careful reader will find not the oversimplified flat statements of “fact” that Uray-Kõhalmi erroneously puts into our mouths (e.g. 59–60), but evidence, texts, discussions and hypotheses. Noth-

ing in our monograph is nearly as simple as Uray-Kóhalmi makes it out to be, and the reader of the same will seek there in vain for the simplistic claims (nearly all of them simply false) that Uray-Kóhalmi attributes to us.

Again, we must stress that we do not here take issue with Uray-Kóhalmi's negative evaluation of our monograph and its hypotheses, only with the evidence in her review showing that she read only fragments of the book, and barely understood those few that she read. If this were the place to evaluate her evaluations, then her paragraph on 60–61, where she sets forth her unique historical–linguistic reservations about the probability of Chinese *fa* (which in this passage she suddenly decides means ‘law’ and only ‘law’) ever having been borrowed “to indicate ‘magic’” (61) would necessarily take pride-of-place. Her argumentation there does not rise above the level of her simplistic one-word English gloss ‘law’ for *fa*. Does she even know, one can only ask, of such words as Chinese *fa-li* ‘magic power’ or *fa-shu* ‘the black arts’? Apparently, not, for she asks, “what need was there to adopt a word with the meaning ‘law’ . . . . to describe something for which there already were plenty of verbs?” What, we must ask in return, were these “plenty of verbs,” or for what matter, what do verbs have to do with it: Chinese *fa* after all is and always was a noun.

But we stray from our subject, which is not to evaluate Uray-Kóhalmi's evaluations, but to document her irresponsible misinterpretations. She is, as we have already stressed, fully entitled to her views. But readers of *Shaman* deserve to be warned about her generally superficial and mostly inaccurate reading of our monograph, to which she is by no means entitled.

The sole thing in our monograph that appears to meet with her approval is “having a fine term, name and subject Index to refer to” (61). She ought to have used it. Still better of course would have been to read our monograph itself with care and attention. But even if she were unwilling, or unable, to do that, the Index alone might have saved her many *gaffes*, and better yet, even have spared us the sad but real necessity of writing this note, in the best interests of *Shaman* and its readers of issues yet to come.

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## Book Reviews

N. A. ALEKSEEV. *Schamanismus der Türken Sibiriens. Versuch einer vergleichenden arealen Untersuchung*. Studia Eurasia Band I. Hamburg: Reinhold Schletzer. 1987. ISBN 3-921-539-307. 348 p.

This is not the first book in which the author, Nikolaï Alekseevich Alekseev, has dealt with the religious beliefs of the Siberian Turks. These are the Turkic peoples who were not influenced by Islam and who were influenced only superficially by Buddhism. In his earlier works the author concentrated on the Yakut, and later he also did research on the religious beliefs of the South Siberian Turkic peoples, especially the Tuvan. His present book can be regarded as a sort of summary in which he collects and compares the beliefs of the Siberian Turks about the world of spirits and the characteristics of their shamanism.

The first chapter of the book is an excellent historical overview of research on the shamanism of the Siberian Turks and will be useful for everyone concerned with the topic. The second chapter has the comprehensive title of "The animistic conceptions of shamanism" and is divided into the following sections: (1) "Gods and spirits of the upper world"; (2) "The nether world and its inhabitants"; (3) "Animistic conceptions in the middle world"; and (4) "The protecting and helping spirits of the shaman." The division of the book follows the general multilayer world concept of the Siberian peoples, whose layers are the following: the celestial layers or the upper world; the layer of mankind, i.e. the middle world; and finally the nether world, the layers of the underground world. In the chapters the material is systematically arranged by peoples, starting in each case with the Yakut, then continuing with the Altai Turks, the Altai-Kizhi, the Teleut, the Telengit, the Kumandin, the Tubalar, the Chelkan, the Khakass, the Kacha, the Sagai, the Koibal, the Kizil, the Beltir, the Shor, the Tuva, the Tuvan-Todsha and the Tofalar. The terminology of the Yakut has already moved far away from their South Siberian relatives.

The third chapter, which has the comprehensive title of “Acquiring the gift of shamanism,” is divided into the following sections: (1) “The disease of the shaman candidate and the idea of being chosen”; (2) “The initiating rites of the shaman”; and (3) “The ritual attributes of the shaman.” The fourth chapter, “The shamans and their religious practice,” contains the following sections: (1) “The séance of the shaman, the *kamlanie*”; and (2) “The role of the shaman in the life of Siberian Turkic-speaking peoples.” As in the previous chapters, these two chapters, illustrated by tables and maps, also present the rich material by nations. The book is completed by a long, comprehensive bibliography and a list of Turkish terms.

As can be seen from the structure of the volume, its main value lies in the systematic exploitation and presentation of the rich material, and it is quite likely that this is what motivated the translator-publisher to translate the book. Although of high importance for researchers on shamanism who do not understand Russian, it is not the author’s most valuable book, as his conclusions and results have already been published in his earlier books. In fact, in his book *Rannie formy religii tiurkoiazыchnikh narodov Sibirii* [The early forms of shamanism of the Siberian Turkic peoples] he gave a more comprehensive presentation of the interrelationship with the neighboring Mongolian, Samoyed and Tungus peoples. That is why it is so remarkable that in the present book his hypotheses are not well founded either historically or philologically. He does not take into consideration the well-known fact that certain peoples of the South Siberian Turks belonged half a century ago to the Southern Samoyeds and that, for example, Ugrian influence is quite significant among the Shor. His method of determining the age of certain features is rather mechanical as it takes into consideration only whether it can be found among the Yakut who separated from the South Siberian Turks in historical times, while several other influences, separate development, substratum effect, etc., may also be important. Mention of the influence of world religions is also rather superficial. Besides Buddhism and Orthodox Christianity, the influence of Manicheism in earlier times should also be taken into regard. The remote China also influenced the religious beliefs of the Tuva. The typically Chinese myth of the dragon playing with gems and causing storms evidently appears through Mongolian intermediation.

Unfortunately, there is a misleading misprint here. The Tuva word *ertine*, with the intermediation of the Mongolian *erdene* 'gem', cannot come from the non-existing Sanskrit word *gatana* but from the Sanskrit *ratna* 'gem' (66). Of course the translator may not alter the text, but perhaps the author would have approved of omitting the quotations from the ephemeral secretary-generals of the Soviet Communist Party and the few out of place Engels citations. Acknowledging the large merit of the translator-publisher in making Russian literature available in German, let us suggest that perhaps this intermediation would have been even better and more useful if the translator had not stuck to the original Russian syntax as doing so has made the text ponderous and sometimes difficult to understand. It also would have been useful if a Turkologist had revised the text and transliterated the recited Turkic words in the transcription that is used in Turkology. On the whole, however, we have gained a useful and valuable source-book through this translation.

BUDAPEST

CATHERINE URAY-KÓHALMI

KURT DERUNGS. *Struktur des Zaubermärchens I. Methodologie und Analyse*. 1994. Bern, Stuttgart and Vienna: Paul Haupt. ISBN 3-258-048-959. 240 p. Illustr.

In his dissertation (submitted to the Faculty of Arts at the University of Berne in 1993) Kurt Derungs attempts the impossible—to reconcile structuralism, research into shamanism and matriarchy, as well as Max Lüthi's phenomenology of fairy tales. His intent seems to be to bow to a trend in current fairy-tale research which aims to rehabilitate magical–mythical ways of seeing, especially shamanism, which with us has chiefly been rediscovered by amateurs of *esoterica*. The concept of shamanism at the present time is so much the victim of popularization, divorced from the roots of its meaning, and of inflation that one can respect Derungs' intention of making cultural–historical research into fairy tales scientifically acceptable again.

In the first chapter, “Cosmology,” the author presents shamanism (or *wuism*—that is, female shamanism) and its connections with myths and fairy tales using Eliade’s and Drury’s definition of shamanism. Next he treats the issue of *wuism* and its links to (Siberian) forms of matriarchy, making passing reference to Frazer’s *Golden Bough* and Robert Graves’ *Griechische Mythologie* and Göttner-Abendroth’s *Göttin und Heros*. Finally, he deals critically with existing studies of matriarchy and presents “images of cosmology” from various cultures and epochs; up to this point very little has been said about fairy tales.

In the second, methodological section Derungs seeks to demonstrate the parallels between myths and (magical) fairy tales, mainly on the basis of Röhrich’s *Märchen, Mythos, Sage* (1984), before examining modes of structuralism *à la* Lévi-Strauss and critics such as Rölleke and Röhrich in order to propose a morphology of the fairy tale (Propp’s maximum formula) and, indeed, one of his own principal interpretative schemes, “transformation of the magic fairy tale”: “Phenomena of transformation in mythologemas do not occur simply in shamanism/*wuism* or in Greek mythology, but are a global phenomenon, as is the fairy tale itself” (97), and the folkloristic alienation of the deep structure of an image (iconotrophy) or of an idea. He means by this, for instance, the mutation of the shaman’s staff into a horned serpent, symbol of St Margaret (105), or of certain rites to narrative forms such as myths and, finally, magical fairy tales. At this point the author makes one of the central statements of the book: “In its magical world-picture the magical fairy tale is influenced by shamanism, but is in its essentials and origins pre-shamanistic. These pre-shamanistic phenomena are, according to various analyses, femininely determined, that is, they testify to the primacy of female shamanism” (111). Is this really the case? By this token the motifs of shamanic initiation (e.g. death or resuscitation) would correspond in structural terms to the function/sequence death and reincarnation (want, and removal of want). Hell, witch, wood-demon are shamanic intentional assistants; bones must on no account—as in shamanic journeys to the world beyond—go missing, otherwise no resuscitation from them is possible; ecstasy corresponds to deep sleep, etc. To locate the world beyond in fairy tales corresponds to the triadic division in shamanism (upper, middle and lower world). There are further parallels: fairy tales reflect matrilineal relations in early shamanism; kings’ daughters are the sacral queens in the context of

ancestor worship; trees are world-trees (*axis mundi*), etc. Even Lüthi's phenomenology of fairy tales, in Derungs' argument, serves only to demonstrate the congruence of both systems (120f.).

Then follows Derungs' attempt to verify his arguments in extended form by taking the example of AT 671 (670,725), KHM 33 "The Three Languages," of which Derungs has collected variants and listed them in an Appendix. In his opinion, this type of fairy tale—probably quite archaic in its individual elements—describes "above all the progress of the hero, his initiation, enthroning, etc. But on the psychological level of deep structures he is entirely beholden to the cosmos of a goddess—his actions relate to a goddess(-triad) and become intelligible thereby." The plot is structured as follows:

Death	through the goddess or predecessor in office
Return	mythical helper-animals, in the successor
Initiation	by goddess, mythical animals; hero receives magic devices and throne
Marriage	holy wedlock of goddess and hero (133).

This example is perhaps not all that well chosen since there are many other universally known fairy tales whose shamanic resonances are more obvious (Machandelboom, Seven Ravens, etc.).<sup>1</sup> Derungs' next step, therefore, is to differentiate once more from type to individual motif, where he recurs upon mythical animals such as "frog and toad" (in a broadly based cultural–historical excursus and with borrowings from other narrative forms), which he is persuaded should be seen as totems and "female ancestors." The animal versions that follow on "Celtic" shamanism and on "death and return in the context of shamanism" serve to underpin further details of his chosen prototype and his main motifs, and are, at the same time, an archaeological excursus on grave-finds and on source-cults (naturally feminine) in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe. The passages on "initiation and enthronement" or, again, "transformation" against the background of what the author calls "religation" (a term not found in the index) and "iconotrophy" should be taken as components of an iconography of the (mother)goddess–hero structure. The interim concluding section, "The bearers of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. examples in Gehrts and Lademann-Priemer 1986. *Passim*.

action and their attributes,” thus attempts to make more concrete statements which vary greatly, appearing in various guises and weightings. As Derungs remarks, “The woman-serpent and the queen-toad are iconographies of the goddess, whose variant appears in a diminished form in the mythical animals. Thereby amplifications and substitutions become all the easier.”

This is admittedly only the first half of a work whose second half came out in 1994, but one must be apprehensive that Derungs has in part succumbed to the very danger of “losing his way in a nebulous area” of which he warns himself in the introduction. He fails to produce either a hermeneutically convincing critical–ideological theory of transformation (despite the pretentious claims of the blurb) or a revealing contribution to our understanding of shamanism. Above all, he makes no reference to tradition, neglecting to mention shamans as repositories of folk poetry.<sup>2</sup> But perhaps that was not his intention. The author’s purpose, in his methodological package, is to reoccupy the high ground of a common analytic discourse, whose loss has handicapped interdisciplinary exchange on various levels of fairy-tale research, and to illuminate the reality of shamanism as folk poetry. Or how should we take his emphasis on the Umberto Eco-quotation “Whoever finds reading history unconvincing can always take refuge in fiction which, as is well known, is much more probable than reality.” These two aims would have been praiseworthy enough, but it strikes me that he heightens, rather than lessens, linguistic confusion and source problems (despite, or indeed because of, his many illustrations). That is a pity, since by the widening in all directions the concept shamanism) is beginning to lose its meaning. (Raudvere 1993: 88). Perhaps it is in the end simply a question of faith whether all European fairy tales can be connected to shamanism (even if so broadly defined as to be quite arbitrary).

Despite these reservations, Derungs’ book is at present the only one which at a high and current level of reflection seeks to link the hypertrophic research literature on fairy tales and shamanism.

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. the review by Beyer (1994).

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FREIBURG IM BREISGAU

SABINE WIENKER-PIEPHO

E. S. NOVIK. *Ritual und Folklore im sibirischen Schamanismus. Eine vergleichende Strukturanalyse*. Studia Eurasia III. 1989. ISBN 3-921-53932-3. Hamburg: Schletzer. 382 p.

The author, Elena Sergeevna Novik, has undertaken a large and interesting task in this book. She wanted to reveal the structures and structural relations in the shamanic rites of the Siberian peoples in the spirit of Claude Lévi-Strauss, in addition to which she wished to explore their relation with the narrative folklore of Siberian peoples. She includes the natives of the whole of Siberia, from the Ob-Ugrians to the Ainu and from the Chukchi to the Buriat. The book consists of three chapters. The first deals with the structure of the shamanic rite, the *kamlanie*, in the following order: (1) “The functions and subject types”; and (2) “The processes of the realization of the syntagmatic structure.” Here she examines a Yakut healing rite, the content transformations of the shamanic rite, the types of the séances and the syntagmatic structure of the rite. The final conclusion of the research is that the essential character of the shamanic rites is their dialogical character. Having

determined the nature of the matter (the violation of law), the shaman comes to an arrangement with the spirits in the exchange of certain values (strength, sacrifice, etc.).

The second chapter typifies the forms of the rites. First it determines and proves magic, mantic and the sacrifices. Here again she points out the communicative exchange character of the rites. Then she examines the rites according to their reason, which can be economic interest, e.g. making a capture, or it can be one of the so-called *rites de passage*—birth, marriage, death, the inauguration of a new shaman, or any annually recurring ceremony. The author's final conclusions are based on the dialogic character of the shamanic rites, or simply of the rites. The whole world concept of the Siberian natives and their relation to spirits, spiritual masters, demons and gods and the existence of the whole spiritual world can be attributed to the fact that the searching, rogating partner (i.e. man) spiritualized and personalized the addressee of his wishes. Through the communicative act he fixed the spirits and his relationship with them.

The third chapter deals with the archaic epic and its relation with the rite. In connection with this, the author examines the poetics of shamanic legends, their genre characteristics, and the illustration of the shamanic rite in legends as it is only here that she can find harmony between the folklore narrative and the rite. Finally, she analyses the place and role of the folklore narrative and here she, among others, analyses the relation between heroic epic poetry and tales. Just like Heissig (1991: 8, 9, 112), and to a certain extent Kerényi (1940: 25), she also sees the tale in the deritualized text, i.e. in a text which is not regarded as sacred by the audience, as opposed to the heroic epic of sacred character. Unfortunately, her folklore analysis does not produce more than that, and these results are also not the results of deduction. Although shamanic rites are comparable in spite of the difference of peoples, the folklore texts are not. The author—due to a lack of detailed knowledge of the folklore of the Siberian (and non-Siberian) peoples—does not compare the shamanic rites with the concrete folklore texts of the given people but with the abstract categories of Propp and Meletinsky. That is also the reason for her getting only to the shamanic narrative. Already on the basis of its objective and of many others, heroic epic cannot be compared directly with the rite. The basis of the comparison of rite and folklore can only be the culture and the afterlife concept of the given people, but this can be analyzed only by peoples



or at most by cultures. The whole of Siberia, at least at the first step, is too large for that, so an analysis based on it cannot be successful. Considering the question raised, the answer is not satisfactory.

Finally, I would like to call attention to some minor but irritating errors: *chanja* is not a Manchu word but an Evenki one, the Manchu word is *fanja*; there is 'Manci' instead of the Manshi Ob-Ugrian ethnic name; swine and the name *enduri* 'god' are mentioned in connection with the Nganasan Samoyed, perhaps instead of the Nanai. As in the book by Alekseev (1987), many problems arise from the fact that the transcription of the quoted terms has not been revised by a linguist of Altaic languages. The mistake of printing Clyde Kluckhohn's name as "Cluchohn" both in the text and in the bibliography (14, 345) is perhaps also due to the Cyrillic transcription. The style of the translation is ponderous and adheres rigidly to the original Russian.

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BUDAPEST

CATHERINE URAY-KÓHALMI

A. V. SMOLIAK. *Shaman: lichnost', funktsii, mirovozzrenie (narody Nizhnego Amura)*. 1991. Moskva: Nauka 1991. ISBN 5-02-009643-1. p. 276, ill.

Anna Vasilevna Smoliak, the well-known researcher of the ethnography and shamanism of the Amur peoples, in this book presents the reader with a rich material consisting of her own observations and their parallels from earlier literature, the findings of fieldwork and other interesting conclusions. After the introduction, in which she acquaints the reader with the present situation and circumstances of the Nanai, the Ulchi and the Negidal and with previous research, the book is divided into seven chapters. The first chapter collects the ideas of the Nanai and the Ulchi about the universe. As is usual among the peoples of Central Asia, they have the conception of a multilayered world which not only consists of the heavens, the earth and the nether world, but the heavens and the nether world themselves can have several layers. The author makes an interesting observation in stating that the world concept of the Upper Amur Nanai is richer in layers of heaven than is that of their relatives at the lower end of the river. However, the land of the dead is not located in the layers of the lower regions but somewhere in the west or in an undetermined place. A typical element of this world concept is the world tree, the shamanic tree which penetrates through each layer of the earth and the heavens. Among the roots of this tree live colorful wild boars, and heavenly rabbits are to be found among the leaves. The reader is acquainted with the inhabitants of the heavenly layers, the myths of the constellations and with the phenomena of the earthly layer, the spiritual masters of earth, water and fire. We come to know that it was the head of the family and not the shaman who offered the annual sacrifice and that other sacrifices could also be made without the participation of the shaman.

The second chapter describes the general characteristics of the shamanism of the Nanai and the Ulchi. The shaman's ability and the most important protective deities are inherited in the family, usually on the father's side. Usually it is already at birth that the physical signs characterizing the shaman appear. Eventually, overcoming the shaman's disease and autotherapy make the candidate a shaman. Brothers could inherit the family's shamanic abilities at the same time. The strength of the shaman was also determined by inheritance. Acquiring the knowledge was independent of education. The shaman also inherited

his most important protective deities, the local spirits and the spirit of his heavenly love partner, his wife. Shamans from different families and clans could support each other, but they could also fight each other, often in animal form. The author mentions that the intensity of ecstasy differs between shamans: there are cases where it is totally superficial, or it may be interrupted and then continued. The author's listing and characterizing of people who have contact with the other world is very interesting, as there were people besides the shaman who could heal certain diseases, and there were also oracles.

The third chapter deals with the world of spirits, the different protective deities of shamans, the family guardian spirits and the spiritual masters of certain geographical locations and with their representations. These representations of the spirits had to be fed as well. The myths about the origin of the malignant spirits are peculiar. According to these myths, evil spirits mostly originate from incestuous relations and the resulting family tragedies and from the bodies of those killed in war.

The fourth chapter deals with the souls of people. According to the author, these souls are invisible yet material substances. This is indicated by the fact that the souls of the dead are fed and are located in different objects. The section describing the three souls of people is extremely interesting as it also presents previous theories. The tree of life also appears in connection with souls; the souls of unborn children stay here in the form of birds. The author presumes a joint Altaic heritage in the name of the goddess guarding children's souls.

The fifth chapter describes the inaugural rites of shamans, and the sixth chapter describes the types of shamanic rites and the duties of shamans. The last, seventh chapter presents the ritual properties, the clothes, the drum, the drumstick and the representations of protective deities. In the conclusion, the author states that shamanism is a form of religion where the shaman is in active connection with spirits. We can observe that during the last hundred years the concept of supreme gods of the world religions has also entered into shamanism. The shamanism of the Amur peoples was also influenced by different external effects, e.g., from Korea and China. The author reminds us of the excavations of Okladnikov in Amur and the archaic features that are preserved even today.

Anna Smoliak has presented her colleagues and the interested public with an extremely valuable work. She presents her rich material in an excellent manner, and she does not lose her way in the mass of facts,

which she systematizes and explains. The list of shaman terminology is a valuable addendum to the volume.

We hope that the book will be translated into English, German or French in the near future.

BUDAPEST

CATHERINE URAY-KÓHALMI

## News and Notes

SHAMANS AND CAMERAS: A REVIEW OF THE SYMPOSIUM AND SCREENINGS HELD AT THE MARGARET MEAD FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, OCTOBER 12–18, 1994.\*

Antique engravings of entranced shamans and clips from old Russian films, a rapid succession of images in Mihály Hoppál's "Shamanism: Past and Present," proclaim centuries of Western fascination with shamans and their work, a visual record of a religious experience that teases our certain knowledge of theatrics as necessarily lies (Schechner 1982). The shaman and the camera enjoy a metaphoric affinity as two mediums that conjure from beyond the viewer's immediate capacity to perceive. Filmmakers who work with shamans are challenged by a phenomenon that while innately, often startlingly visual and thus, at some level, immediately accessible, is embedded in the local knowledge of a people and a history (Atkinson 1992; Vitebsky 1995). If the fundamental power claim of both shaman and camera is in transmitting "something out there," shamans' clients level judgments regarding the efficacy of individual shamans even as international consumers of ethnographic film critique the efficacy of cinematic portrayals of shamans and their work.

The screenings and symposium on shamans and cameras held at the 1994 Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival was one forum of argument where filmmakers, scholars, new age practitioners, and members of the general public discussed styles of filmic presentation, what it means to enter the shaman's world as an outsider with a camera, and how "shamans" have come to signify in the West.

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\* A modified version of this review also appeared in *Visual Anthropology Review*, Volume 11, Number 1 (Spring), 1995.

In addition to longstanding ethnographic, psychological, religious, and medical interest in shamans, some of the many new films on this subject are prompted by “New Age” enthusiasm, some by the opening of Siberia—the “classic” homeland of shaman studies—to outside ethnographers and camera crews,<sup>1</sup> and some by a desire to record shamans as representatives of endangered lifeways. These diverse interests were well represented both in the films screened during the festival and in the questions and comments posed by the symposium audience. Films included in this year’s festival program were selected to show a range of filmic treatments, a gendered representation of shamans, and the variety of places where shamans are active—from a village in the Amazon to urban Seoul. The geographic range represented by the films included the Venezuelan rainforest, Japan, Korea, Estonia, Siberia, the Northwest Coast of North America, a Pomo Indian community in California, and New Age Europeans. The different filmmakers’ approaches were at least as varied as recent anthropological approaches to the prose construction of an ethnographic text, from the narrative-driven unfolding of a political crisis in Tim Asch and Napoleon Chagnon’s early “Magical Death” to the rapid play of images, spanning diverse media and national boundaries, in Mihály Hoppál’s film.

Three films that portrayed shamans as part of a larger cultural and political story were screened on other nights during the festival program. “Survivors of the Rainforest” (Jillings and Lizot) and “Siberia after the Shaman” (Johnston and Vitebsky) witness the destruction of indigenous cultures where shamans once played a central religious and political role. In Mark Soosaar’s global journey, “Grandma of Boats,” Siberian and South American shamans appear as ritual technicians who facilitate the crafting of canoes.

Yasuhiro Omori’s “A Shamanic Medium of Tugaru,” too long for the symposium evening but screened on another evening, portrays a round of shamanic work and client encounters in northern Japan: divinations, ceremonies of exorcism and purification, and the careful, indeed sometimes tedious, preparation of ritual paraphernalia. Most of the shaman’s work is performed while sedately seated behind a drum. This subtle film is a useful corrective to the quick cuts of ecstatic spec-

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<sup>1</sup> Five films in this year’s Margaret Mead Film Festival made mention of Siberian shamans.

tacle encountered in so many documentary portrayals of shamans, a reminder that the day-to-day worlds of shamanic practice are far more textured and that even a relatively low-key performance may imply a significant connection with the spirits that is satisfying to both shaman and client. The film anticipates Michael Taussig's comment, as symposium discussant, that in his own encounters with the shamans of the Putumayo in Colombia he saw not only terror and violence, but boredom and humor as well.

The symposium screenings began with a twenty-minute selection from Mihály Hoppál's "Shamanism Past and Present" (the complete film was screened at Columbia University the following evening). The excerpt juxtaposed interviews with New Age shamans in Antwerp and Copenhagen, clips from shamanic theater in Hungary and the Sakha Republic (Yakutia), and montages of contemporary art in evidence of how some contemporary artists and religious seekers have turned to shamanic traditions for inspiration. Like many Festival films, this one served to "get the news out," prompting members of the audience to ask about the revival of shamanic practices and the artistic use of shamanic motifs in Siberia today. Mihály Hoppál and anthropologist Marjorie Balzer explained that the use of this imagery and discussions about shamans by the ethnic minorities in Siberia were permitted only in the climate of liberalization in recent years.

"Pomo Shaman," produced in 1953 in a darkly luminous black and white, is an intense portrayal of Essie Parish's "doctoring," the prayers and movements that will culminate in her sucking the source of illness from her patient. In his comments, Michael Taussig judged this film to be both fantastic and also difficult for audiences to watch, tending to either send viewers into trance or put them to sleep. (At least one member of the audience did find it necessary to leave the auditorium upon viewing this film.) In addition to the intimate camera work and the charisma of Essie Parish, "Pomo Shaman" draws much of its effect from the manner in which it was cut. But what is represented in this editing? "Pomo Shaman" is a recut of a slightly longer film, "Sucking Doctor," made at the invitation of Essie Parish who wanted to preserve a record of her "doctoring" work for her grandchildren. Parish herself had a hand in editing the original film. David Wayne Peri, one of the original filmmakers who was located and contacted by telephone before the festival, considers "Pomo Shaman" a "mishmash" that jumbles the significant sequence of a two-day ritual purely for visual effect. Thus

while the film breaks free of narrative conventions to assault the viewer with an ecstatic encounter, it effaces the intentions of its subject in the service of its own aesthetic agenda.

“A Kut in Seoul,” by Alex Guillemoz (anthropologist) and Gábor Vargyas (filmmaker) follows a seven-hour ritual from the arrival of a client family at the shaman’s home to petition the spirits on behalf of their son’s marriage, through the setting up of offering food in the shaman’s shrine, to appearances by numerous spirits who deliver oracles in the person of the costumed shaman. Owing to limitations of time, only the first fifteen minutes of this film were shown. The narration resembles those many written accounts of Korean shaman ritual that emphasize the structure of events and the precise sequence of spiritual appearances but are less concerned with retrieving the improvisational dramas that transpire between human and spirit as a particular family confronts its own crisis.<sup>2</sup> Even so, “A Kut in Seoul” manages to convey a sense of intimacy. Mme. Hong, the shaman, long-time fictive “mother” to Alex Guillemoz, is at ease with the camera as she performs the full gamut of her work: drumming, dancing, delivering the words of the spirits, performing feats with knives, and casting divinations. The camera also captures relaxed moments of smoking and conversation at interludes within the ritual. The viewer has a sense of “sitting in” rather than observing from a voyeuristic distance.

“Cuckoo’s Nephew” by O. Cherkassova breaks festival conventions as a work of fiction, a folktale in the form of an animated cartoon. The film tells the story of an old shaman of the Nivkh people (northeastern Siberia) who passes on his knowledge and experience to a young apprentice. The apprentice then embarks upon a visionary journey. When festival organizer Elaine Charnov saw this film at the Parnu Film Festival, she was intrigued by its artful portrayal of shamanic experiences that might be recounted in the oral literature of a people but elude the more literal lens of the documentary camera.

The screenings concluded with two retrospective films, “Magical Death” and “Children’s Magical Death,” by the late Tim Asch in

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<sup>2</sup> See, for contrast, “An Initiation Kut for a Korean Shaman” (Kendall and Lee 1991), a film that places a strong emphasis on the story of a single initiate and the emergent quality of the ritual in which she must prove herself but glosses over the shamans’ own sense of the kut as a precise sequence of procedures which permit the otherwise unscripted appearance of the spirits.



collaboration with anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon. In “Magical Death,” shot by Chagnon, the men of a Yanomamo village, led by their shaman and aided by hallucinogens, combat the destructive hekura spirits unleashed by a rival village, using their own ritual-induced powers to inflict death from a distance. In this early Asch and Chagnon film, the remarkable footage is freighted with a heavy, nearly distracting monologic narration.<sup>3</sup> It is useful to compare this treatment with the innovative Jero Tapakan films (screened in retrospective at last year’s Margaret Mead Festival) that resulted from Asch’s collaboration with anthropologist Linda Connor.<sup>4</sup> This later work is constructed as a dialogue between the medium, the anthropologist, and the camera. In one film, Jero provides her own commentary on the séance that is the subject of another film. “Children’s Magical Death” gives some indication of the artful experimentation that would mark the later work of Tim Asch. Yanomamo children play at ingesting hallucinogens and chanting to the spirits. There is no narration. The children’s spontaneous remarks appear in subtitles, including some sassy comments about the photographer.

In his remarks, Michael Taussig was highly critical of the narrative-driven treatment in “A Kut in Seoul” and “Magical Death” as a filmic form that replicates the now thoroughly destabilized authoritative voice of an older ethnography. In the case of “Magical Death,” he made an explicit link between the operation of power implicit in the timbre of the narrating voice and the political conditions under which Asch and Chagnon initially worked with the Yanomamo. More generally, he expressed unease over the West’s appropriation and essentialization of the notion of ‘shaman’. From the 1960’s and 70’s, shamans have been regarded as “the good guys,” recast in an innocuous romantic image of our own. Taussig evoked the figure of the Yanomamo shaman in “Magical Death,” an agent of terror bent upon murdering children, in contrast with the New Age shamans’ sugary invocations of “blessings,” “peace,” and “love.” He suggested that in embracing other forms of

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<sup>3</sup> In his comments, Michael Taussig cited a recent article by Eliot Weinberger (1994) which offers a critical perspective on Tim Asch’s early Yanomamo work.

<sup>4</sup> The films are, “A Balinese Trance Seance” (1979), “Jero on Jero: ‘A Balinese Trance’ Observed” (1981), “The Medium is the Masseuse: A Balinese Massage” (1983), and “Jero Tapakan: Stories from the Life of a Balinese Healer” (1983). For information regarding the making of these films, Connor, Asch and Asch (1982).

religiosity, the West has great difficulty in getting over “two thousand years of having a good god and being good.” Taussig feels that ethnographic film should be more experimental in trying to evoke the feeling of trance and shamanic performance through its use of techniques found in early films made during the teens and twenties (some clips of which appear in Mihály Hoppál’s film). He applauded those treatments that approach the unnaratable essence of a shamanic encounter: the intensity of “Pomo Shaman” or the experimental montage of shamanic art in Hoppál’s film. In “Cuckoo’s Nephew,” as an extreme approach to the difficult task of representing the unrepresentable, animation distanced the viewer from common sense notions of what is “real.”

Taussig’s comments provoked a heated discussion. Were all filmic representations, all attempts at explanation, inextricably part of the colonial legacy—ethnographic authority as authoritarianism? Is there no value in making a record for the record’s sake? Does our interest in shamans inevitably reduce them to essentialized objects of global consumption, “like soap or bananas”? How can a film like “Pomo Shaman,” seemingly free of ‘authoritarian’ ethnographic conventions, be considered a liberating project when the editors effaced Essie Parish’s own intentions? If an animated cartoon about a Siberian people contains ethnographic truth, then what about computer animations that visualize the images that New Age shamans, report to have seen during their trance voyages? Is not the experiencing of shamanic imagery in post-modern format itself another form of commodification?

If voice-of-god ethnography is dead, both in prose and in documentary film, then the question of what constitutes appropriate, visually effective representation is open to a great variety of approaches, perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in the differences of opinion regarding filmic representations of shamans. Mark Soosaar spoke of the difficulty of identifying with filmic portrayals in which all that we see is the shamans’ bodies in motion. He was skeptical of the power of animation in furthering insight. Culture is oral and people create their own unique worlds which it becomes the task of the filmmaker to represent. He noted that at film festivals we tend to see two types of films, records of action or talking heads. The challenge is in following and developing stories, real dramas of everyday life.

A member of the audience noted that the films had all focused on performance while ignoring the effect of shamanic performance upon the subjects of healing, those for whom the shaman performed. Indeed,

some of the films presented rituals that were solicited expressly for the filmmakers and not addressed to local need, footage that could thus only show what the shaman does rather than why. Among the festival films, a client story is most evident in "A Kut in Seoul" but as a necessary catalyst to the ritual rather than as a central theme. "A Shamanic Medium of Tugaru" includes client voices in brief interview clips. In general, films about shamans tend to give only cursory representation to the shaman's clients, "a ritual held for so-and-so because of such-and-such." Filmed performances, visual manifestations of shamanic experiences consistent with a prior ethnography, are inherently dramatic and more easily produced than is the dynamic interplay between shaman, client, and spirit, rapid-fire dialogue recorded in the heat of ritual and predicated upon contextual knowledge, material that demands tedious, time-consuming, and sometimes expensive translation, editing, and subtitling. Clients may be far more reticent than shamans to have their adherence to "superstitious" rituals recorded or to have their personal crises become matters of public record. Practical considerations in filmmaking thus compound a tendency already well established in much (though by no means all) ethnographic writing on shamans,<sup>5</sup> an observation in support of Michael Taussig's position that we have essentialized "shamans" to our own needs.

Laurel Kendall asked the filmmakers to comment on what it meant to introduce a camera into a shaman ritual, noting that the question she is most frequently asked at screenings of "An Initiation Kut for a Korean Shaman" (Kendall and Lee 1991) is whether the presence of the camera caused the ritual to fail, made it impossible for the spirits to enter the initiate. David Perie had also related that the stylish darkness of "Pomo Shaman" was a consequence of Essie Parish's insistence that the film be shot in low light, since brilliant floodlights and the hum in the electricity would inhibit the onset of trance. How had the festival filmmakers negotiated the presence of the camera and permission to film?

Yasuhiro Omori's subjects considered the camera beneficial and told him that the spirits favored its presence, but he also related that in all of his projects, he is careful to establish rapport before introducing his camera and sound equipment. He described how he gained the good

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<sup>5</sup> See Atkinson (1992) for an overview of the range of writings on shamans, and current trends in scholarship.

will of the medium of Tugaru through familial connections. Although he did not pay his subject, Omori, like many other anthropologists, sustained the relationship with periodic gifts. He contrasted his Tugaru experience with a Korean project, aborted because the shamans had demanded a large sum of money, beyond the means of Omori's budget, to perform a ritual. Omori's Korean experience is in contrast to the projects of Kendall and Lee (1991), and Guillemoz and Vargyas (1993) where no payment was asked but where the anthropologists already shared in long relationships with the Korean shamans and spirits who participated in the filming.

Both Mark Soosaar and Mihály Hoppál spoke of gifts of vodka made to Siberian shamans and to their spirits. Offerings of the filmmakers vodka were a necessary lubricant to the ritual that Soosaar filmed. Soosaar said that he did not want to pay people for their appearance in his film because that would "spoil" them, transforming their subsequent contacts with researchers and filmmakers into commercial endeavors rather than more friendly, reciprocal social exchanges. One of his shaman subjects had been paid by a previous filmmaker and consequently requested payment from Soosaar, claiming that he was poor and needy. Soosaar refused to give personal payment for what the filmmaker regarded as "cultural property." He did, however, make a gift of cash to the man before leaving the field. Taussig challenged Soosaar's use of the term "spoiled." He questioned whether Soosaar was indeed "protecting" the shaman or whether in fact he had been abrogating local customs in which performers are routinely given some form of compensation for the wisdom that has been dispensed or the song that has been sung. Nothing is done for free. Taussig's challenge provoked a wide-ranging discussion on form and variation in outsider relationships with shamans.

A member of the audience described how she had gone to Ecuador and experienced treatment from a local shaman. Although she had paid for this experience, she did not feel that the shaman was in any sense "corrupted" by the transaction. For this client, the critical element was her own willingness to accept the shaman as a healer. She wondered if any of the filmmakers had themselves experienced healing. Her comments skirted very close to the New Age perception that scholars who merely observe lack the insight of experiential knowledge that a New Age practitioner gains through practice.

Filmmakers and anthropologists described a range of responses to the question of participation. Hoppál felt that it was not necessary to participate in order to film. Soosaar felt that the rituals he filmed could not be staged “just for show,” that all participants, including the film crew, had to approach these events with sincerity.

The symposium exceeded its allotted time and ended with participants and audience hungry to continue the dialogue. How does an outsider “know” another culture? On what authority is that knowledge transmitted. What is the effect of other media imagery upon the representation of shamans? This meeting of “Shamans and Cameras” led a diverse audience on one evening in New York to consider some of the fundamental questions of anthropological representation.

## Films Screened

### 1. At the symposium:

- “Shamanism: Past and Present” (1994), Mihály Hoppál (Ethnographic Institute, Budapest)
- “Pomo Shaman” (1953) (b/w), William Heick, Gordon Mueller, David Wayne Peri, Robert Walter Wharton (UC Berkeley). Remake of “Sucking Doctor”
- “A ‘Kut’ in Seoul” (1993), Alex Guillemoz and Gábor Vargyas (Ethnographic Institute, Budapest)
- “Cuckoo’s Nephew” (1993), Animated cartoon. O. Cherkassova (Russia)
- “Magical Death” (1973) Napoleon Chagnon and Timothy Asch (D.E.R.)
- “Children’s Magical Death” (1973), Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon (D.E.R.)

### 2. Elsewhere in the festival program:

- “Survivors of the Rainforest” (1993), Andy Jillings and Jacques Lizot (UK, Channel 4)
- “A Shamanic Medium of Tugaru” (1994), Yasuhiro Omori (National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka)
- “Grandma of Boats” (1989–1993), Mark Soosaar (Estonia, Mark Soosaar)
- “Siberia after the Shaman” (1991), Graham Johnson and Piers Vitebsky (UK, ITEL)

## Symposium Participants:

Moderator: Laurel Kendall, Anthropologist, American Museum of Natural History

Co-producer of "An Initiation Kut for a Korean Shaman"

Discussant: Michael Taussig, Anthropologist, Columbia University

Author of *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man* (Chicago, 1986) and *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses* (New York, 1993)

### Participants:

Mark Soosaar, Filmmaker

Parnu Film Festival, Estonia

Mihály Hoppál, Anthropologist and Filmmaker

Institute of Ethnology, Hungary

Yasuhiro Omori, Anthropologist and Filmmaker

National Museum of Ethnology, Japan

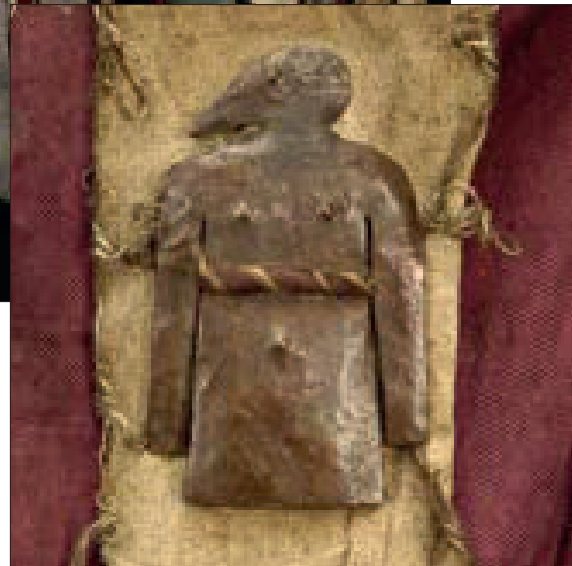
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LAUREL KENDALL/NEW YORK

NANCY LUTKEHAUS/LOS ANGELES

## Plates



1 Bird-headed human figure, a representation of a Darkhat spirit.  
Museum of Ethnography, Budapest (No. 60.96.7).  
Diószegi 1963: 68, fig. 17a. Photo: László Roboz, 2007.





2 Figure of a bird-headed man, symbolizing a spirit as represented by the Tuva living on the western shore of Lake Khövsgöl, northern Mongolia. Museum of Ethnography, Budapest (No. 60.96.39). Diószegi 1963: 68, fig. 17b.  
Photo: László Roboz, 2007.



3 (a) The Abandoned Princess Spirit before the “gate of thorns” to the other world. Photo: Seong-nae Kim, around 2000.



3 (b) Releasing loop knots in a rite similar to the Ssitkim-kut. Photo: Seong-nae Kim, around 2000.

