Shamans in Asia

Edited by

Clark Chilson

Peter Knecht

RoutledgeCurzon
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

SHAMANS IN ASIA

Shamans throughout much of Asia are regarded as having the power to control and coerce spirits. Many Asians today still turn to shamans to communicate with the world of the dead, heal the sick, and explain enigmatic events. To understand Asian religions, therefore, a knowledge of shamanism is essential.

Shamans in Asia provides an introductory essay on the study of shamans and six ethnographic studies, each of which describes and analyses the lives and activities of shamans in five different regions: Bangladesh, Siberia, China, Korea, and the Ryukyu islands of southern Japan. The essays show what type of people become shamans, what social roles they play, and how shamans actively draw from the world-views of the communities in which they operate. As the first book in English to provide in-depth accounts of shamans from different regions of Asia, it allows students and scholars to view the diversity and similarities of shamans and their religions. Those interested in spiritual specialists, the anthropological study of religion, and local religions in Asia will be fascinated, if not entranced, by *Shamans in Asia*.

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First published 2003
by RoutledgeCurzon
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE
Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by RoutledgeCurzon
29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001

This edition published in the Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003.

RoutledgeCurzon is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
A catalog record for this book has been requested

ISBN 0-203-42264-3 Master e-book ISBN

ISBN 0-203-42440-9 (Adobe eReader Format)
ISBN 0-415-29679-X (Print Edition)

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Editors' Preface

AFTER A RESTLESS hibernation of 16 years, this RoutledgeCurzon book continues the tradition established by the Asian Folklore Studies Monograph series. The series stems from the journal *Asian Folklore Studies,* which in 2001 celebrated its sixtieth year in print. In the traditional Chinese calendar sixty years marks one full cycle of life. Like many lives, the journal during its first life cycle has confronted hardships, but it has always found a way to survive, and thanks to the support of its readers and authors, it has often flourished.

The history of the journal and its monograph series starts in 1940 when, in the midst of a fierce war, the Museum of Oriental Ethnology, was founded. This museum, which was part of the then Fu Jen Catholic University of Peking, was housed in a beautiful palace that once belonged to Prince Kung (1831–1898). Attached to the museum was a small research institute that in 1942 began to publish the museum's official periodical, *Folklore Studies.* From an early stage, there were plans to also publish a monograph series, but in 1949 when the first monograph of the series was nearly ready for publication, the new Chinese government was not ready to have it. The monograph, which contained articles about the customs and folk life of Qinghai by missionaries who worked there, had to be shelved because the proclamation in that year of the People's Republic of China abruptly ended the missionary work of foreigners. The proclamation also resulted in the dismantling of Fu Jen as a Catholic University, and its foreign staff was forced to leave the country.

Fortunately, the founding editor of the journal *Folklore Studies* and the first director of the Museum of Oriental Ethnology, Dr. Matthias Eder, found refuge in Tokyo for both himself and the journal. There he successfully continued to publish the journal, and in 1952 the Qinghai monograph appeared as *Supplementum 1.* At that time, Peking was still

given as the place of publication for the journal and monograph because Eder thought that his stay in Japan would be temporary and that he would soon return to Peking. Eventually he had to accept that returning to Peking was an impossible dream.

In the early 1950s Japan was still suffering from the effects of the war, and resources did not allow Eder to continue publishing the monograph series in parallel with the journal. By 1963, however, circumstances improved to the extent that he was able to resurrect the monograph series. The Japanese economy in general was recovering fast, and, more importantly for the journal, the Society of Asian Folklore was established in association with the Folklore Institute of Indiana University, Bloomington. Owing largely to the work of Dr. Richard M. Dorson, the journal became the official publication for the Society of Asian Folklore and, consequently, its title was changed to *Asian Folklore Studies.* Dr. Dorson also secured funding from Indiana University that gave the journal a stable financial base between 1963 and 1973. During these ten years, no fewer than five monographs appeared in the series.

In 1973 Eder moved to Nagoya, where Nanzan University eventually granted him office space and an affiliation with the newly erected Institute for Religion and Culture. Nanzan also graciously agreed to shoulder part of the journal's publication expenses. Thanks to arrangements with the Anthropos Institute of Sankt Augustin, Germany, Eder was also able to publish a couple of monographs without having to rely unduly on Nanzan's resources. After Eder's death in 1980, Nanzan University decided to accept full responsibility for the journal and the monograph series, placing them in the care of the Nanzan Anthropological Institute. In the 1980s two monographs were published in cooperation with Indiana University Press, but since then the series has lain dormant.

In early 2001, through our (the editors') mutual interest in shamanism, we became aware that, although the study of shamanism had grown much in the last two decades, there was no book widely available that gave firsthand ethnographic accounts of shamans in different areas of Asia. As *Asian Folklore Studies* had included numerous ethnographic articles of shamans in Asia, we decided that we could contribute to the study of shamanism by bringing together some of those articles in a book. After serious consideration with concomitant head scratching, we chose the six articles that we believed would have the widest appeal. The titles of these articles, along with their years of publication and their volume and page numbers, are as follows:

"The Social Significance of the Shaman among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki," 1999, 58: 377–395

"Shamanism in Bangladesh," 1988, 47: 277–309

"A Hmong Shaman's Séance," 1984, 43: 99–108

"*Chaesu Kut:* A Korean Shamanistic Performance," 1984, 43: 235–259

"Miyako Theology: Shamans' Interpretation of Traditional Beliefs," 1987, 46: 3–34

"Liminal Experiences of Miyako Shamans: Reading a Shaman's Diary," 1990, 49: 1–38

In preparing this book, we have reedited the articles to remove errors and improve their style, but overall they remain fundamentally intact.

Collectively, these articles will, we believe, serve to show both the variation and the similarities of shamanism as it exists throughout Asia. In an attempt to place the different studies into the larger context of the study of shamanism, a lengthy introduction precedes the six chapters of the book. We hope that, as a whole, the book will open up the fascinating world of shamanism to new students and stimulate researchers to make new discoveries.

In the process of producing this book, we have received the help of many individuals. We are grateful to Rachel Saunders at Taylor and Francis for her encouragement and patience as we stumbled in our efforts to put this book together. James Heisig and Paul Swanson at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture saved us time and agony by solving many of the technical conundrums we encountered. We are also indebted to Edmund Skrzypczak for saving us much embarrassment by finding more errors, both small and large, than either of us would care to admit.

I (Clark Chilson) would like to thank Professor Ian Reader, my doctoral thesis supervisor at Lancaster University, for his unwavering support while I indulged in yet another project that took time away from completing my doctoral work. Finally, I would like to thank the Ozaki household, Junko and Shirotada Okada, and especially Yumi and Grace Chilson, who put up with my impatience as I tried to do more than what I could comfortably manage.

Clark Chilson and Peter Knecht
February 2002
Nagoya, Japan

Aspects of Shamanism
An Introduction

Peter KNECHT

AS REPRESSIVE ideologies and political systems started to dissolve, many ethnic groups in Asia and elsewhere began to reflect on their distinctive cultural properties in order to reconnect themselves with their tradition and their cultural roots. This led to a new appreciation and revival of folklore in various fields such as oral traditions, music, and religion. In Siberia, for example, people began to search for their lost pre-Soviet roots by expelling as much as possible what reminded them of the repressive regime. In terms of religion, they came to see shamanism, rather than Orthodox Christianity, as the fundamental basis of their worldview and their religious expressions. In other areas, such as China, where minority cultures have been granted more freedom to practice their traditions, shamanism has also had a renaissance, although not to the extent that it has occurred in Siberia. In still other areas of Asia, however, shamanism had never stopped being a central part of local traditional religions and was able to adapt to new circumstances that arose as a result of socioeconomic changes.

I witnessed one example of such an adaptation at a demonstration for participants of the first conference of the International Society for Shamanistic Research in Seoul in July 1991. On a hot afternoon, I and scholars from various countries were invited to the home of a Korean *mansin* (a female shaman) in order to witness her perform a shamanic ritual. We were seated outside in the *mansin*'s yard in front of a long cov-

ered platform. On the platform was an elaborate altar with beautifully arranged offerings of meat, fruits, and sweets. Hanging on the wall behind the altar were a number of scrolls with images of deities on them. During the ritual the *mansin* danced to the accompaniment of a band consisting of a few people with drums and flutes. Several times during the ritual the *mansin* changed her outfit so as to visually express what deity was taking possession of her at that time. She first appeared in outfits made of loosely fitted, flowing garments quite common in Korean dress. At one point, however, she quite surprisingly appeared wearing an American Army jacket and a cap of an American general. She then put on a pair of dark glasses, began to smoke a corncob pipe, and make vivid gestures. She had been transformed into the perfect image of General MacArthur. To complete the picture, she had whiskey and cigarettes served to everyone in the audience, who were told that these were the kind that the late general had preferred. After the ritual was over, the *mansin* explained that the spirit of General MacArthur was her main tutelary spirit.

The ritual of this *mansin* demonstrates the flexibility of Korean shamanism as it is understood and put into action by an individual *mansin*. As such, it demonstrates perhaps a salient feature of this supposedly "ancient" religious phenomenon of shamanism: it is adept at adapting to new circumstances.

GRAPPLING WITH THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SHAMANISM

While limitations of space preclude a full discussion of all the forms and features of shamanistic worldviews and rituals, to introduce the material in this volume it is helpful to consider some of the questions raised by the forms of shamanism as they are practiced in Asian cultures. Historically speaking, the term "shaman" as it is used in modern scholarly discourse is of Asian origin, and the phenomenon of shamanism as it has existed in Asia has attracted the attention of scholars for quite a long time. Eliade in particular brought great attention to the study of shamanism with his *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. This work, while certainly not the first book on shamanism, was a break from earlier works in that it proposed a theory of shamanism. Although it focused largely on shamanism in Siberia it also drew attention to other forms of shamanism outside of Siberia and even outside of Asia. This seminal work not only became a classic but was also instrumental in establishing among researchers Siberian shamanism as a "classic" form of shamanism.

Eliade argued that the hallmarks of a true shaman are the ability to fall into a controlled state of ecstatic trance and to visit during a trance state the worlds of spirits in an experience of "magic flight." States of trance prompted by spirit possession he interpreted as either a historically later phenomenon or as the sign of a less powerful shaman. If we leave aside the historical question, Eliade had clearly identified two different states of shamanistic trance: ecstasy as a state where the shaman can make his or her soul visit the worlds of spirits, and possession as a state where a spirit takes over the shaman's body and disables his or her ordinary mental faculties during the time of possession. This distinction and, to a lesser degree, its interpretation has been accepted by many scholars around the world. In Japan, however, a certain shift can be noticed in the interpretation of the distinction. Hori Ichiro, who did much to introduce Eliade's works in Japan, accepted possession as a genuine form of shamanism if it happens as a sign of election from the part of a spirit and is not achieved willingly as a result of ascetic training (HORI 1968, 203). Today, while Japanese scholars have become aware of many variations of trance in Japanese and Asian shamanism, they tend to agree on ecstasy as well as possession as the main categories of shamanistic trance (SASAKI 1980, 27–41; 1984, 70–101).

Rather than distinguishing ecstasy and possession and seeing them as stages in a historical process, Lewis, on rereading Shirokogoroff, proposed to distinguish several kinds of possession and trance and to relate them to phases in the career of a shaman. According to this interpretation, involuntary and uncontrolled possession occurs during the initial phase in a shaman's development. With more experience the situation changes gradually until the shaman is finally able to fully control possession and solicit a state of trance at will (LEWIS 1984, 9–10). This view does not seem to take into consideration a shaman's ability to have his or her spirit visit the spirit worlds, but it is useful in trying to understand the shamanism of Japan and other areas in East Asia, where possession of various degrees is much more common than ecstasy or soul flight. In such cases, an individual is a victim of the spirit until he or she consents to the spirit's summons and acquires the ability to call forth the spirit whenever needed. LEWIS's definition of a shaman as a "religious figure, with the power to control the spirits, usually by incarnating them" (1984, 9) corresponds quite well with many situations in East Asia, even if it is not equally helpful as a definition of shamanism in general. The question then arises again: What is shamanism?

Some researchers have proposed to dispose of the term "shamanism" because of the strong idiosyncratic, locally specific nature of "shamanism." For example, in recent years researchers concerned with Japanese folk religion have raised a problem in connection with the terms "shamanism" and "shaman." As mentioned earlier, Eliade's work on shamanism had great influence on the study and interpretation of shamanism in Japan and stimulated a great deal of fieldwork. As a result of scholarly fieldwork it became increasingly apparent that the Japanese phenomena do not fit with the view that genuine shamanism is ecstatic shamanism as Eliade described it. Although documents that show Eliade's shamanic ecstasy in Japan are not entirely absent, they are very rare, while documents of possession of various forms constitute the overwhelming majority. Because the traditionally used terms "shaman" and "shamanism" are said to be biased towards Eliade's interpretation, Japanese researchers recently have been suggesting a return to the use of the vernacular expressions – the Japanese *miko* or Sino-Japanese compounds such as *fujo* (female), *fugeki* (female and male), *fusha* (neutral) for the religious practitioners, and *fuzoku* for the complex of ideas and activities that constitute their world (BOUCHY 2001, 88–90). The Sino-Japanese character *fu* is read as *miko* in Japanese, and both words mean, according to the *Kōjien* dictionary, a divinely inspired person who transmits the divine will while in a state of inspiration. In other words, these expressions stand for persons or phenomena characterized by possession. The fact that they are generally used for persons who are able to contact spirits by incorporating them further suggests that here possession is thought to be the main form of contact.

Vernacular terms are helpful for those familiar with that vernacular, but, as we are well aware, they also complicate the matter for all those not familiar with it because they require lengthy explanations. Still, the amount of significant variations of what is called "shamanism" that have been brought to light by recent research makes a clear definition that goes beyond very general terms improbable. Definitions that try to cover all shamanic phenomena end up having very little meaning. I think that this problem is also behind attempts to discard the term "shamanism" and replace it with a term like "shamanhood." "Shamanism," unlike a world religion, is not an established system of ideas, beliefs, and rituals in its own right that can be found wherever shamanistic religion is found. Although shamanism can be said to be a "religious configuration" (HULTKRANTZ 1978, 29) whose elements are correlated with each

other, it is also an idiosyncratic expression of the religious imagination of a particular culture or individual. We therefore need to first understand the idiosyncratic expressions before we can try to build a general system. We also need to keep in mind that such a system is nothing but a descriptive construct that is rarely used by those very people called shamans or their communities. Of course, the term "shaman," which is now used in academic discourse, derives from a vernacular word used by peoples in Siberia; but over time the term has come to have a quasi universal meaning among scholars that it originally did not have. As Roberte Hamayon has warned, however, the use of such terms as "trance" or "ecstasy" possibly imposes foreign (particularly Western) meanings on phenomena that are seen differently by the local population (HAMAYON 1993). It could well be that the academic terms "shaman" or "shamanism" impose on the elements they are meant to identify a meaning that does not correspond with the meaning of local terms, even if, in the eyes of the outside observer, these elements appear similar to those in other areas. A brief sketch of some of the methods that have been used in order to understand shamanism might therefore be useful to show how scholars have dealt with the problems it poses.

APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF SHAMANISM

Academics have approached shamanism in various ways. The most widely known approaches are psychological, phenomenological, and ethnographic.

An example of an early psychological approach can be seen in the work of CZAPLICKA, who at the beginning of the last century wrote that a shaman must be "an inspired person," which he then says "is practically the same thing as saying that she is nervous and excitable, often to the verge of insanity… [yet] never passes this verge" when he practices his profession (1969 [1914], 172). Her statements are not without ambiguity but many scholars at the time and later clearly believed that a shaman suffered from epileptic attacks, that a shaman was a neuropath or a victim of "arctic hysteria," a type of hysteria believed to be caused by the harsh climatic conditions in the far north (CZAPLICKA 1969 [1914], 307–25). Seventy years later Vladimir BASILOV asks: "Is the shaman sane?" and then shows that the shaman is sane, but points out that "the idea of the neurasthenic shaman is still alive today" (1990, 3, 5). Although the state of mind of a shaman, especially during a séance, still poses many unsolved problems, scholars have generally moved away from seeing a

shaman as a psychopath. Advances in neurophysiological research and in the study of drugs and their effects on the human brain have come to suggest that shamans may be able to enhance "universal psychobiological capacities" (ATKINSON 1992, 310), sometimes with the help of drugs, in order to achieve a state of mind different from an ordinary one. In such an "altered state of consciousness" they may have insights and experiences not available to other persons. These studies have paved the way to better insights into the workings and the possibilities of the human brain, and with this to a more positive interpretation of the experiences of a shaman. However, a shaman is not an individual isolated from society. Therefore, it has been pointed out that a shaman has to be understood as an actor in a social drama, i.e., as an individual that functions in response to the expectations of society and within the framework of the worldview he or she shares with that society (SIIKALA 1978).

Somewhat like Eliade, Wilhelm SCHMIDT (1955) also considered degrees of ecstasy. He distinguished, however, "black shamans," who at the climax of their rituals become possessed by frightening spirits of the dark underworld, and thereby lose consciousness, from "white shamans," who with the help of spirits from the upper world experience only a lighter ecstasy during which they journey to a bright world. Schmidt, contrary to Eliade, further argued that "white shamanism" was a late and weakened form of shamanism. According to SCHRÖDER, however, the two differ only in the emphasis they put either on ecstasy or on possession as the sign of true shamanism. In his interpretation neither ecstasy nor possession is to be identified with shamanism as such. Both are structural elements of shamanism that act as means by which something more basic is to be achieved, namely, a change in the shaman's mode of being (*Seinswandel*) (SCHRÖDER 1955, 881).

A different interpretation was put forth by Hans FINDEISEN. His analysis of the vernacular Russian literature on Siberian shamanism, and his fieldwork experience among the Ket, made him conclude that the shaman was a "possessed priest" (or a "possessed medium") whom he compared with the mediums of European spiritism (1957, 13–17). Although he made available much of Russian research and presented a complex description of Siberian shamanism, his interpretation was strongly questioned. In emphasizing possession he was sympathetic to Schmidt's view without accepting the latter's historical interpretation.

None of these studies received the amount of popular attention given to Eliade's work, which is perhaps the most influential general Western

work on shamanism. ELIADE (1964 [originally published 1951]) proposed a different approach by which he intended to highlight the salient features of a shaman and of shamanism. Using the work of other researchers, he offered a phenomenology of shamanism that described the conditions for a shaman's vocation, the process of initiation, the characteristics of a shamanistic séance, and the shaman's main activities. He argued for the ecstatic experience of "soul flight" and the techniques to achieve it as being the essential quality of true shamanism. The primary people among which such experiences can be observed are for him the indigenous populations of Siberia. He did refer to non-Siberian cultures, too, analyzing phenomena in which people claim to establish contact with spiritual beings, but since in many of these experiences a person becomes possessed by a spirit, Eliade did not consider these experiences as truly shamanistic. And when he looked at possession as it occurs in Siberia, he considered it to be a sign of the weakening or degeneration of the shaman's power. Eliade's work was path-breaking because it proposed to identify the basic and common features in the many reports about individual shamans and by doing so to demonstrate that these features are part of a characteristic complex that includes a particular worldview, typical religious experiences, and certain ritual activities.

In reaction to Eliade's work, a number of scholars emphasized the importance of possession, which was the main feature of shamanism in many areas. As a result, the question of what the relative significance of possession experiences was for a definition of shamanism was reopened. DE HEUSCH (1971) proposed to consider ecstasy, as an experience of ascent ("de-possession"), in terms of a category altogether different from possession. Lewis, on the other hand, noticed on rereading *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* that the author, SHIROKOGOROFF, clearly said that all the Tungus groups used the term for shaman as meaning persons "who at their will can introduce [the] spirits into themselves" (1999, 269). They did not, as Eliade seems to have believed, emphasize ecstasy in the sense of soul journey. Therefore, Lewis insists first on the need to distinguish trance from possession, and then he proposes to apply a progressive interpretation to possession experiences that takes into account the phases of increasing familiarity with spirits in a shaman's career. In this interpretation the initial possession is a state of involuntary trance, while later, when the shaman has learned to control the spirits, possession happens in a state of voluntary trance (1984, 10). Accordingly, in LEWIS's words, the "shaman is an inspired prophet and healer… with the power

to control the spirits, usually by incarnating them" (1984, 9). Thus what makes the shaman a shaman is the "power to control the spirits," which is necessary to willfully "incarnate" or become possessed by a spirit. When LEWIS further states that the spirits may speak through the shaman or the shaman may "have the capacity to engage in mystical flight" (1984, 9) he appears to be saying that control of spirits can include both possession in the strict sense and soul flight. In the light of such an interpretation it becomes possible to understand the phenomena of possession as they are frequently encountered in East Asia as truly shamanic phenomena. Accepting the idea of controlled possession as shamanic, SASAKI Kōkan on the basis of his fieldwork in East and Southeast Asia identifies two types of shamans that are characterized by their different experiences: one type experiences possession, while the other type experiences ecstasy, i.e., journeying of the soul (1980, 22–41).

If phenomenological studies of shamans and shamanism at first aimed at isolating and depicting the characteristics of the phenomenon of shamanism in general, they seem to have ended up producing more questions than answers. This may partly explain the strong criticism of some scholars (e.g., GEERTZ 1973) who have dismissed "shamanism" as an "insipid" or "made-up" category. But, on the positive side, phenomenological studies have also helped to raise awareness of how complex the phenomenon is, and of the extent to which it is distributed among the cultures of the world. Research showed that shamanism could take various forms and was much more than a typically Siberian or, at the most, an Asian phenomenon.

The phenomenological studies introduced above try to present a general picture of what a shaman or shamanism is. This picture is a composite put together from elements that come from various cultures, but in the process of creating the picture the significance of a particular type of shamanism in a specific culture is largely disregarded. In order to remedy this situation, more recent research has stressed ethnographic approaches that involve direct and extended observations of a shaman's function within a society and how the society deals with a shaman. Some of these ethnographic studies were intended first to grasp the phenomenon studied from an insider's (i.e., *emic*) perspective, and then to propose the observer's interpretation from an outsider's (i.e., *etic*) perspective. It was thus hoped to arrive at a better appreciation of how the conditions of a particular culture might influence the ways a person becomes

a shaman, how the shaman acts, and what the society expects the shaman to do.

Although ethnographic research generally intends to understand a shaman in the context of his or her culture, it does not exclude the personal point of view of the researcher. One ethnographer may be interested more in the sociopsychological functions of a shaman's activities, while another may be especially attracted by their symbolic meanings. Here I shall mention a few ethnographic studies that focus on different areas of Asia and that take different approaches to shamanism.

In her complex analysis of Buryat shamanism in Siberia, Roberte HAMAYON (1990) suggests that in societies with little social stratification or hierarchy shamans occupy an influential position, whereas in complex, hierarchical societies the shaman's social position tends to be more marginalized. In the society of the Buryat hunters of the Taiga west of Lake Baikal, where there is little social stratification, shamans play a central role. These hunters see the shaman as being the mediator between themselves and the spirit of the forest that provides them with game to eat. The shaman, who is understood to be married to this spirit, is believed to enact through sexually symbolic performances a mutually beneficial exchange in which both partners are guaranteed their food – game for the humans and human souls for the spirit of the forest. To the hunters, the shaman is thus indispensable for their spiritual as well as material survival. The society of the Buryat herders east of Lake Baikal is characterized by a different social ideology, one that stresses filiation and lineality. While clan rituals for the ancestors are the responsibility of the elders, the shaman takes care of rituals for the spirits of nature. In this more hierarchical society, however, rituals performed by the shaman are clearly marginal compared with those done by the elders (HAMAYON 1997).

Some remarkable ethnographic studies of a different nature have been published by András HÖFER (1994) and Gregory MASKARINEC (1995) on shamans in Nepal. Both recorded, translated, and explained substantial texts recited by Nepalese shamans during their séances, yet their results are quite different. Höfer, like Maskarinec, describes the text in the context of the ritual where it is used, but his analysis is more of a linguistic kind, while Maskarinec interprets the text in such a way that it becomes for the reader a route of access not only to the shaman's knowledge, but also to understanding what the shaman is and does. MOTTIN's (1981) study on the Hmong shaman is linguistically less sophisticated than the two just mentioned; yet, he also uses the shaman's text to describe how

the shaman performs a ritual, and how, in the course of the ritual, mythology and the worldview of the Hmong come to life.

Carol LADERMAN (1991), searching for the reasons why healing rituals performed by shamans (*bomoh*) in Malaysia are believed to be successful, describes the shaman's situation in society and the people's explanation of the reasons for illness. On the basis of her descriptions, she analyzes the texts the shamans use in their rituals in order to grasp the nature of their ritual activities. To analyze the texts she had recorded at healing rituals in a completely different country, ATKINSON (1989) followed a similar procedure that included seeking the help of people in the audience to interpret the texts. As a result, she was able to grasp how the local people view the shaman. She describes how a person gradually becomes established as a shaman, but, unlike the other studies mentioned, she shows how the shaman goes through this process and negotiates political power in Wana society, a small-scale Indonesian society without a fixed political structure.

In the examples mentioned, shamans appear to be mostly males. In Korea and (especially) Japan, however, women are in the majority. In these societies the shamans function in a sophisticated modern and secularized society that on the surface does not seem to have a place for them. The period during which the person is called by a spirit to be a shaman involves considerable suffering, in part because the calling is often misunderstood (KENDALL 1988). Once a person accepts the call and gives signs of the power received from a spirit, however, she (or he) is increasingly sought out by people whose sufferings cannot be healed by the ordinary options available in the society (BOUCHY 1992). Kendall as well as Bouchy had the opportunity to work for years with a particular shaman. Their sympathetic studies are documents that offer insight into a shaman's experiences in a modern society. In China the study of shamanism has flourished in recent years, but due to restricted access to modern methods of research and analysis, and partly also because of political circumstances, these studies often just describe the characteristic features and acts of a shaman and do not discuss his or her function in society, or how society thinks of the shaman (MENG 2000). In other cases, in particular for minority groups, publications about shamanism serve as a means to reflect upon and also to preserve or revive cultural traditions.

In recent years, ethnography has been the target of much criticism from various perspectives. One of the questions asked is whose discourse such studies represent. Is it that of the people described or rather that of

the author? Such questions are also relevant to the study of shamanism. But it should be pointed out that, although the guiding perspective for each one of these modern studies on shamans and shamanism is different and reflects the interest of individual researchers, all of the researchers endeavor to transmit to their readers the thought of the shamans as much as possible. To present an accurate, if not complete, picture of the shaman, most ethnographic studies include ample transcriptions of ritual texts and conversations that allow readers to appreciate at least in part the thought of the shamans themselves. They also allow us to check an author's interpretation or to propose a different reading. And if the text is also documented in the vernacular, it can even be useful for the preservation of a tradition that people are under pressure to change.

RITUAL ACTIVITIES

Because of significant variations in the belief and ritual systems that now go under the name of "shamanism," it has been proposed to speak of "shamanisms" in the plural (ATKINSON 1992). Nevertheless, on a very general level, it is in their relationship with spirits and their ritual activities that we can find some common traits.

Although it is believed that people usually do not become shamans by their own free will, occasionally people become shamans because they want to or because they are made to become one. In Japan, for example, the blind women known by the general term *itako* usually have chosen their profession, but very often they do so on the suggestion of their families, who want to make sure that these women will be able to support themselves. These women join the household of an established *itako,* usually when they are prepubescent girls. There they will live for several years to learn rituals and incantations as well as practical everyday skills for living in order to eventually become independent and provide for themselves in spite of their physical handicap. In Okinawa, it is rare for somebody to want to become a shaman (*yuta*), but occasionally somebody decides to learn the trade and become a *narai yuta,* an "apprentice *yuta*."

More often, however, a person experiences an illness for which there is no ordinary cure. He or she may suffer from serious family problems, may have dreams in which deities appear, or may be able to exactly foretell future events to the extent that they frighten their family and friends. The person being called by a spirit to be a shaman may also wander into the wild and spend days or even weeks there without food and shelter.

In these cases there is no set time for preparation to take place. It is a personal matter, and it depends on how long it takes for that person to finally decide that becoming a shaman, i.e., accepting the call of a spirit, is the only way to find relief from suffering.

The process of becoming a shaman is often not a pleasant one. Reports about how Siberian shamans experienced having their bodies first dismembered, their bones cleaned, and then put together again by spirits, are well known. So are accounts of shamans who have been taken away and raised by a large bird in a nest in a tree. In Japan such reports are very rare. Once a person has become resigned to the fate of being a shaman, he or she may wander from one sacred place to another in order to find out what spirit is calling (Okinawa), or the shaman-to-be may go into the mountains in order to engage in ascetic training (e.g., standing under waterfalls) and meditation until the spirit finally reveals itself (Japan). During this period the person may or may not be under the guidance of a spiritual mentor, but once the spirit has revealed itself the person will begin to act independently. This means that the person has established a lasting contact with a spirit with whose help he or she will become active as a shaman. In spiritual terms, revelation of the protecting spirit(s) is the climax of a shaman's initiation; but in order to be able to function as a shaman, a person also needs to be recognized as such by society. This may be a long process, in the course of which people gradually come to trust that the shaman has the power to heal or to accurately foresee the future. In other cases, a shaman's initiation may take a fixed and public form during which there is a public test at the culmination of the initiation process that results in perhaps only one of the candidates becoming a shaman. This was the case with a young Manchu shaman whom I met in the autumn of 2000. He had been chosen by the clan elders, and for the final test he had to demonstrate that he had learned and memorized texts in the old Manchu language, which he found very difficult. In the final test he prevailed over his rival and was therefore chosen as the clan's new shaman. He himself told us that this is how he was chosen, but when he left the room for a short while other people told us that he was chosen not only because of his being an intelligent young man but also because he was felt to be the right person due to his good reputation as a trustworthy and promising member of the clan.

Initiation for a shaman is not so much a definite ritual that legitimizes the person in the presence of society; rather, it is a process that exhibits two complementary aspects: one personal, the other social. For the

shaman personally, initiation means an extended period of physical and psychic trials that culminates, but does not necessarily end, in a climactic experience during which the candidate is confronted with his or her future guiding spirit. As a candidate grows into the role of a shaman, the members of a society become increasingly aware of the new shaman's powers and come to acknowledge him or her.

Whether acknowledged by public ritual or by reputation, the shaman is expected to fill a social role and to respond to the expectations of society. This does not exclude (as many researchers have pointed out) the possibility that there might be persons who try to be shamans but never succeed in achieving a large enough following to actually become acknowledged as a shaman. In order to be able to function in the role of a shaman, it is necessary that the society, or that at least part of it, believes in the shaman's powers and adheres to a view of the world that accepts shamans. To accept a person as a shaman, a society must view the world as populated not only by humans but also by spirits, and must believe that both spirits and humans live in a reciprocal relationship with one another. The well-being or malfunction of a society is, therefore, thought to be the result of a good or bad relationship between humans and spirits. In this understanding, the one person especially responsible for the maintenance of good relationships, or for the mending of strained relationships, is the shaman, because it is the shaman who mediates between the two worlds of spirits and humans and knows how to deal with the spirits in order to gain their support or keep them at bay. The shaman is expected to maintain the general order of the world by controlling its spirit denizens with the help of tutelary spirits. It is for this reason that the shaman has been called a "master of spirits." But the shaman's mastery of spirits is not so much a function of sheer power as it is a function of knowing how to deal successfully with the spirits for the benefit of a group or its individual members. When I asked Evenks in the area of Hailar what the word "shaman" means, they invariably answered, "The one who knows." The shaman knows what the world's order is to be and how it can be maintained or restored. The shaman can also tell the fellow members of his or her society about the state of the world's order. The shaman is, therefore, in a very broad sense the "keeper of tradition."

Since a shamanistic worldview can coexist with another dominant worldview, it can be found in societies with quite different characteristics. Consequently, the relative significance of what are considered to be a shaman's typical or most important activities varies from society to society. It may

not be an exaggeration to say that in most societies the shaman is a healer, but not necessarily the only one. For example, all the shamans I met in northeastern China made it quite clear to me that they do not even try their hand at healing a sickness they diagnose as being of the kind that should be treated by a medical doctor. The first step of their diagnosis is, therefore, to determine from what kind of sickness the patient is suffering. They said that they can heal only a sickness that is spirit caused, or by a breach in a person's relationship with a spirit. It is, therefore, no use for them to try to heal an illness that has a biological cause. Of course, these statements have to be understood in the context of a secularized Chinese society that, at least officially, promotes a "scientific" understanding of the world and vows to eradicate what it considers to be superstition (e.g., shamanistic healing). Under such circumstances, the shamans are careful not to challenge the public view and run the danger of being punished by government authorities. But at the same time they are able to find a niche for their specific activities in an area where officially acknowledged methods reach their limits and where the shaman's "backward" interpretations and methods continue to be acknowledged as valid. It should not be overlooked, however, that in such situations the shaman is relegated to a marginal position in the shadow of official society. It is in the shadows of contemporary Chinese society that the spirits are invoked when all other means appear to have failed.

The situation is quite different with a population that believes that spirits directly control the sources of its livelihood. The Buryat hunters, for example, as described by Roberte HAMAYON (1990), believe that their most valued game is a gift from the spirit of the forest, which they receive within the framework of an alliance negotiated by the shaman in which spirits and humans give each other food. In the Buryat worldview the lives or souls of humans are food for the spirit just as the meat of game animals given by the spirit is food for humans. The sickness, and particularly the death, of a person take on a special meaning because a person's death is the moment when the promise of a reciprocal gift made by the shaman to the spirit in the hunting rituals is finally fulfilled. Sickness and death are understood as being closely related to spirits, but because they are interpreted either as a reminder (sickness) or a fulfillment (death) of a promise made to the spirit, they are not seen as completely undesirable intrusions from the spirit world. Although it is generally true that in the shamanistic worldview spirits are believed to be related to such fundamental human experiences as sickness and

death, the manner in which the relationship is interpreted is far from uniform for all societies where some form of shamanism can be found.

Although it has been argued that hunting societies may have been the first "affluent societies," the fact remains that their whole livelihood depends on a strong element of chance. For that reason, perhaps, their dealings with spirits are more centered on reducing the element of chance in the pursuit of their subsistence activities than with overcoming sickness and death. In societies with a more stabilized base of subsistence, such as herding or agriculture, sickness and death are more readily conceived as constituting a serious threat to the very existence of humans and of society. And if the causes of these threats are further believed to rest with spirits, these spirits appear to be mischievous or malignant, or they may be believed to be foreign intruders. Spirits, therefore, either have to be prevented from attacking humans, or, if they have already attacked, they have to be expelled or pacified. Shamans are expected to do this work with the help and guidance of their tutelary spirits, but there is a great variety in the methods they use to achieve their purpose, as we can learn from ethnographic studies.

LÉVI-STRAUSS, in his famous account about how a Cuna shaman helps a woman suffering from a difficult childbirth, writes that the shaman narrates his visit to the internal world of the woman's womb, where he is accompanied by his tutelary spirits. The shaman describes how he and his spirits meet with the beings that have blocked the parturition process and claims that these spirits have abducted the woman's "soul." In a dramatic competition, the shaman and his spirits defeat the other spirits so that the woman can finally deliver her child safely (1958, 206). In an example from the Evenks living next to Tunguska River in Siberia, SUSŁOV describes how a shaman worked dramatically for several days in order to heal a patient who had fallen sick because his soul had been abducted. With dramatic gesturing, dancing, and narration the shaman vividly describes to his audience how he calls upon his helping spirits, has them search for the whereabouts of the abducted soul, and has them bring it finally back to the patient (1983, 74–79).

Lévi-Strauss mentions explicitly how the shaman did not visit the woman immediately after he was called upon for help. He first verified that all the ordinary means of the midwife had been exhausted before he decided to answer the call. This is similar to the Chinese shamans today mentioned above, and corresponds somewhat to MOTTIN's description of how a Hmong shaman answers a request for help (1981, 107–15). For when

a Hmong shaman is called upon because somebody has fallen sick he does not visit the patient immediately but waits for several days. He explains to the family that spirits are causing the sickness. They should wait a few days and see how the state of the patient develops. In the meantime he also consults with his spirits to find out if they can help or not. If after about three days there are some signs of improvement, the shaman interprets them to mean that his familiar spirits can help in this case. If the patient shows no improvement the shaman does not accept the request to help, saying that it is beyond the competence of his spirits.

In all of these randomly chosen examples the shaman appears as a healer. Here is not the place to attempt a complete analysis, but a few points might be mentioned. First, these shamans do not often apply medicines but solicit the help of spirits in order to achieve a cure. Second, they believe that the sickness they are to treat is a disturbance caused by some spirit. And, third, with the help of their spirits they aim to restore the original order, and by doing so heal the patient in the process. In other words, shamans are healers in that they are able to heal by restoring the order of the cosmos, the totality of the world of humans and spirits.

A shaman is not only a healer, however. In some cases like that of the Japanese *itako*, for example, healing is only a minor activity, if it is practiced at all. On the other hand, a shaman may often be approached by people seeking advice on such problems as how to make sure that a business develops well, who would be a good spouse, or what the reason might be for continued and inexplicable misfortunes in their families. In order to respond to such requests, the shaman does not usually employ some mechanical means of divination such as the throwing of lots or the reading of the palms. Where such means are used they are often interpreted as means to verify or confirm the answer of a spirit. Ultimately it is, therefore, a spirit that is believed to reveal its will or intention through such means. A shaman of Changchun, China, with whom we discussed the practice of divination, stated emphatically what he believed to be the essence of shamanistic divination. He said that divination as practiced by a shaman has nothing to do with mechanical devices. The shaman is able to advise people in the questions mentioned above because he or she has consulted a tutelary spirit about the case and secured its advice. The answer that the shaman gives the client is, therefore, not the shaman's personal insight or foresight, it is the tutelary spirit's view. The shaman is simply the one who transmits the message to the client. Here we encounter a

phenomenon similar to one in shamanistic healing. In all these cases, the shamans achieve their goals not primarily because of personal talent or sophisticated techniques as such, but because talent and techniques are the means by which the shamans can establish and then maintain a vital contact with their spirit guides, who are the real actors.

As a shaman is a person that is supposed to have the ability to deal at will and effectively with spirits, he or she is also believed to have control over the spirits of deceased humans. In fact, the shaman is often the only person who can make sure that the spirit (or soul) of a deceased person is properly taken care of, so as to ensure that the spirit does not haunt and disturb the survivors because it does not find rest and peace in the other world. The shaman, having visited the other world on a number of occasions, knows how to safely return from it, and, therefore, is the person responsible for guiding the soul safely there. ELIADE believes that in all of northern Asia the shaman originally guided all the souls to the other world. On the basis of this belief, he claims that the situation found among the Tungus, in which the shaman is asked to bring the soul to the other world only if it hesitates for some time to go there by itself, is a later development (1964, 174). SHIROKOGOROFF, however, reports that among the Tungus "to find the souls and to satisfy them" usually requires a shaman's intervention, even though common people may sometimes be able to do it by themselves (1999, 319). According to him, the shaman is needed when it comes to dealing with souls in relation to the other world because, if common people call a soul from the other world, it may not return there again. The shaman, however, can send souls to the other world, control them there, and at times bring them back to this world (1999, 319–20). Bringing spirits back, however, is a most difficult endeavor, which is done either to revive a corpse or to transfer the soul into a permanent "placing… for further care" (1999, 320).

In Japan, certain shamans are able to deal with the spirits of both living and dead persons, but they do not guide the souls of the deceased to the world of the dead. An *itako,* for example, can be asked to perform *kuchiyose,* a ritual to summon a person's spirit. In some cases the *itako* may be asked to call up the spirit of a living person in order to learn of the person's whereabouts. (This was often done during World War II to learn if a relative was still living.) Usually, however, the *itako* is approached to call forth the spirit of a dead person. The ritual may be held shortly after a person has died, but even then it is not done in order to guide the spirit to the other world. The spirit is called in such a

kuchiyose so that it may speak to the surviving family and relatives about its own situation and feelings as well as admonish or encourage them, or to warn them of future dangers. Quite often the spirit may ask the family not to neglect performing the necessary rites lest the spirit may not become duly settled in the other world (KNECHT 1997, 204–208). At the end of the ritual the *itako* releases the spirit and has it simply return to where it came from. Unlike what the Tungus shaman described by Shirokogoroff does, the *itako* never attempts to have the spirit remain in some material "placing" in this world. Nor does the *itako* directly manage spirits in the other world by having them settled there properly. A spirit may, however, voice dissatisfaction with its present situation when speaking through the *itako,* and therefore cause the members of its family to mend their ways concerning the spirit. In this way the *itako* is indirectly instrumental in managing the spirit in the other world. In other cases, the spirit called forth is not that of a family member but that of a deceased religious leader who is asked for pronouncements or oracles on a variety of questions unrelated to the spirit's own situation. This happens, for example, in the religious confraternities of *yamabushi* (mountain ascetics), which have Mt Ontake in central Japan as their religious center (BLACKER 1975, 279–97).

In all the cases mentioned in this section, the shaman is a person dealing in one way or other with spirits as a mediator between humans and spirits. Whether the shaman negotiates with the spirits for game, receives the spirits' instruction for healing others, or makes sure that the spirits of the dead are settled and do not disturb the living, the shaman by his or her activities is instrumental for the maintenance or the restoration of order in a society's cosmos.

THE PROBLEM OF GENDER

At a shamanism conference in Ulaanbaatar in 1999 Barbara Tedlock stated that the study of shamanism was heavily biased in favor of male shamans over female shamans, and claimed that Eliade should be held primarily responsible for this bias because he presented most of his material in such a way as to suggest that shamans are almost exclusively males. While I do not intend to promote her claim concerning Eliade, she is undoubtedly correct in raising the issue of gender in the study of shamanism.

To begin with, there is the issue of the role gender might play in the relationship between a shaman and a researcher. A female shaman, for

example, may feel more limited in what she feels comfortable telling a male researcher rather than a female one. This point I began to suspect was quite important as the result of my own fieldwork experience. In China I interviewed an Evenk female shaman twice. The first time I was accompanied by a Chinese colleague, and the next time (a year later, in 2000) by a Mongol colleague. Both times language did not cause any problem, but it struck me that the shaman herself did not speak very much. From the outset of the interviews she gave the impression of being shy and ashamed to speak about the experiences that led her to becoming a shaman. Most of the talking was done either by her husband (first interview) or by her mother (second interview), both of whom she had asked to be present at the interview. Both times I was under the impression that our being unknown strangers to her was only part of the reason for her reluctance because we had been introduced by a relative of hers. Another, and possibly more significant reason seemed to be that we were males and she was to talk about her personal experiences as a woman. Although I cannot be sure of the reasons for her reticence, her reaction forced me to think about the role of my gender as a researcher and the fact that gender may greatly influence how a shaman responds to a researcher.

A look at the older ethnographies on shamanism reveals that the majority of them have been written by male researchers. Since the 1980s, however, ethnographies by women researchers have increased rapidly. I like to think that this fact in itself offers the possibility of a more balanced perspective of shamanism. Yet, even women researchers are facing limits quite similar to those that had to be faced by their male colleagues. In Japan, for example, all women were forbidden to enter certain mountains that were sacred to groups of mountain ascetics, the *yamabushi*. Today, some of these sacred mountains have been made accessible even to women, although they may have to use different routes to access them. Older members of a confraternity may still be reluctant to have women fully participate in their religious activities, and more than a few believe that women should not be allowed to enter the mountain beyond a certain point. All this shows that the issue of gender in the relationship between shaman and researcher deserves serious consideration. Of even more interest, however, are questions such as whether the ratio of female to male shamans is of significance, or what role gender plays in a shaman's activities.

The first of these questions cannot easily be answered since almost no statistical studies are available. Bernard SALADIN D'ANGLURE cites a list

of shamans compiled by K. Rasmussen in the years 1921 to 1924 that contains the names of eighty shamans for the region of Igloolik (in the eastern Northwest Territories of Canada). Broken down according to the shamans' sex, it appears that there was one female shaman for five male shamans (1986, 93–97). A single example does not, of course, allow us to conclude that in small-scale societies the ratio of male to female shamans would resemble that of Igloolik. A further reason why it is difficult to answer the question of a sex ratio is that most in-depth studies of shamans focus on a very few individuals. These studies, therefore, often do not allow us to make an accurate judgment of the relative ratio of males to females, and even less to assess whether such a ratio would express a difference in how a shaman is valued in regard to gender.

If Japan is taken as an example, there appear to be several answers to the question of how important gender is to the role of the shaman. In Okinawa, for example, the majority of *yuta* are women, but there are also male *yuta*. To become a *yuta,* one is to be called by a spirit and thus to be situated partially outside the system of public Okinawan religion. And yet, because the main actors in Okinawan public religion are women, the predominance of women among the *yuta* may not be especially surprising. For the *itako* of northern Japan, the situation is quite different, since they are almost exclusively women and blind or have little eyesight. Both factors are quite important for the *itako* and their patrons. If an *itako* were to have normal eyesight many would not trust in her spiritual powers, because, they would say, she cannot "see" in a spiritual sense. Furthermore, the characteristic activity of an *itako,* the conducting of *kuchiyose,* is for the *itako* and their patrons "women's business." As I already mentioned above, a *kuchiyose* ritual may be performed shortly after a person's death, so that it is part of a series of funerary rites performed for the deceased. While official funerary rites are performed by men, the *kuchiyose* is organized and dominated by women. If we further consider that most official religious practices in mainland Japan are conducted by males, the difference in the significance of gender between Okinawan *yuta* and northern Japanese *itako* is evident. Taking a position in between the *yuta* and *itako* are other shamanistic practitioners like those discussed by Anne Bouchy (2001), for whom there seems to be no particular gender preference, although on the whole women seem to be in the majority.

In all the cases mentioned so far, gender is correlated with a person's sex. This does not, however, exhaust the question of how significant gender is for a shaman because for a shaman gender may have even greater

meaning as a social construct. This was already suggested by M. A. CZAPLICKA when she wrote in 1914 that "socially, the shaman does not belong either to the class of males or to that of females, but to a third class, that of shamans. Sexually, he may be sexless, or ascetic, or have inclinations of homosexualistic character, but he may also be quite normal" (1969, 253).

Many ethnographers have reported that a shaman's tutelary spirit is often believed to be of the opposite sex of the shaman. In some cases a shaman may claim to be married to his or her spirit and will even refrain from having any sexual relations, even with a spouse. In some cases a shaman may also be a transvestite. Especially in older studies, in addition to being presented as a medium between the spirit and human world, the shaman was often presented as a morally deviant person, as some kind of a freak, or as not quite normal. Yet not much attention was given to Czaplicka's suggestion that a shaman in a society belongs to a "third class" between the sexes, or, in the words of SALADIN D'ANGLURE (1986, 25), a "third sex" that straddles male and female.

In his work on the Inuit, Saladin d'Anglure examines shamanism and a shaman's relationship with the spirits of both mythic beings and animals. He also analyzes in detail Inuit social categories, beliefs, and practices such as sex change at birth, transvestitism, and family strategies of naming. During his research on a small Inuit society, he found that 2% of the population had a sex change at birth, that at least 15% were recognizably transvestites, and that about 20% were either shamans or initiated as shamans. On the basis of this data he concludes that an analysis grounded in binary oppositions alone cannot do justice to Inuit social categories, and that a system of categories that includes a "third sex" is needed (SALADIN D'ANGLURE 1986, 100–101). It is impossible to summarize his complex argument here, but it can be said that he demonstrates how the shaman's role as mediator between the world of spirits and humans rests on a complex system of thought and practice that allows the sexes to be perceived at three different yet interconnected levels: the level of the fetus (birth); the level of socialization (growing up and into a social role); and the level of the cosmos (shamanism and the world of spirits). As a result of Saladin d'Anglure's research, it becomes evident that the problem of gender ambiguity in the case of some shamans cannot always be solved by simply saying that the shaman may at times assume the role of the opposite sex. To understand the role of a shaman's gen-

der, the meanings and functions of gender need to be explained within the complex of thought and practice found in a shaman's society.

DECLINE AND PERSISTENCE OF SHAMANISM

From a worldwide perspective shamanism appears to be such a variegated phenomenon that it is impossible to state with certainty whether shamanism in general is in decline or not. Even if we restrict ourselves to Asia, trying to provide an answer for the whole area would be virtually impossible. However, it might be fruitful to call to mind some of the suggestions or conclusions SHIROKOGOROFF offered already in 1935. In the chapter "Present State and Future of Shamanism" he makes a remarkably optimistic statement saying that as "an always changing, varying complex in spite of very strong pressure and even prohibitions, shamanism has been able to survive up to the present time. Among the Tungus groups, which preserved their ethnical integrity, it is not in a state of decline but in a state of elastic adaptation and therefore is subject to variations" (1999, 399). Nevertheless, he discusses some of the factors that constitute a threat to shamanism and are the causes for its decline, at least among certain Siberian populations.

Although people tend to say that the shamans of yesterday were much more powerful than the present ones, Shirokogoroff points out that, because of the lack of historical documents, such statements cannot be verified. On the other hand, he suggests that a growing atmosphere of skepticism among some of the populations does not allow them to easily accept stories of a shaman's wondrous deeds, and this contributes to creating the impression that present shamans are weak. He further opines that the influence of Mongol Buddhism, Chinese syncretism, and Russian Christianity forced shamanism to adapt, but in most cases these religions did not succeed in eradicating it. The real dangers to shamanism, however, are the proliferation of modern medical systems and of school education, as well as demographic changes that bring with them the dissolution of the traditional social institutions of these societies (1999, 391–402).

At an international conference on shamanism held in Yakutsk in 1991 the Minister of Culture said in his welcoming address that the government wanted this kind of conference to take place because it believed that shamanism was the foundation of Sakha culture, but that decades ago it had been cut off from this foundation through the propagation of Christianity and communism. The scholars specializing in the study of

shamanism were therefore expected to help the government and the people of Yakutsia (Sakha) to reconnect with their roots. Similar governmental positions can also be found today in other areas of Siberia and Central Asia where communism was prevalent. In China the situation is not that favorable, but I was very much surprised to meet with a respected and somewhat feared shaman in 2001 who said that he had about fifty disciples. I was able to meet some of them and they told me that the shaman's estimate was not an exaggeration. However, elsewhere I saw signs that active shamans have to be careful not to attract too much public attention. One shaman in Changchun, fearing that she might attract the attention of the police, had removed all the decorative flags she had received as a sign of gratitude from her satisfied clients, leaving her apartment entirely devoid of them when we visited her. Yet some of the major shamanistic rituals are publicly celebrated and attract considerable crowds. If a film I was shown of such a festival is in any way accurate, it seems that most of those in the crowd at such shamanic rituals are merely onlookers having a good time. Perhaps one reason for this was that the ritual in the film had been organized by the local authorities in order to honor the person who was considered to be one of the most famous shamans in the area.

Some years ago a young woman in Japan had made it into the local news because she had decided to become an *itako*. Her decision was felt to be most unusual for a modern youngster, especially one of normal eyesight. The news coverage of a young woman becoming an *itako,* however, should not distract us from the fact that the number of *itako* is steadily declining, and that many of them have no disciples anymore. One reason for the decline is the government's establishment of schools where blind persons can receive an education to help them in their later lives. In the past a young blind girl became an apprentice of an *itako* for the same purpose, but as an apprentice the girl had to undergo a severe training regime and numerous hardships for years before she was able to become independent. In this case, changes in economic and social circumstances are seen to be the cause of the decline. In Okinawa, where the mass media has sometimes engaged in a campaign against *yuta* and their activities, this did not become a significant obstacle for the calling to be accepted by new candidates. A considerable number of modern shamans, however, can be found in the large cities, where some of them gather a considerable and steady group of believers who seek advice on their business activities as well as their family problems (Bouchy 1992).

A *yuta* may have had a *yuta* among her ancestors, but this is rare in the case of *itako* or the more recent shamans in Japan. However, they all have one thing in common, something they share also with the shamans in other areas discussed so far: they are chosen and receive their charisma in order to serve whoever seeks their help. The people who turn to shamans may be a group of clients who do not know each other, or they may be the members of a social group for whom the shaman is a means by which they try to guarantee the general order of their social universe. In this respect, these shamans differ radically from those modern-day shamans known as "neo-shamans," who usually are from Western industrialized countries. Although nothing precludes neo-shamans from helping other members of society, they perform the rites they have learned and adapted from traditional shamans primarily for their own benefit. True, the more traditional shamans may also find personal benefit in becoming shamans in that, by accepting the call of their spirits, they are able to find relief from an earlier, possibly long, affliction. They may also eventually benefit by achieving a certain amount of social prestige. Any fame they may achieve, however, usually comes at the personal cost of reduced family life and restricted economic activity, because the acceptance of their call is first meant to benefit society and only secondly to benefit themselves.

Shamanism is not a system of beliefs and practices that has a definite form. As such it is capable of "elastic adaptation" (SHIROKOGOROFF 1999, 399) and can thus respond to a variety of cultural and social circumstances. Because of its ability to adapt to new situations, shamanism will probably persist as long as there are people who believe that spirits have the power to support, or to sabotage, their lives.

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The Social Significance of the Shaman among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki

F. Georg HEYNE

AROUND THE END of the 1820s, a small group of Evenki migrated with their reindeer into the mountain taiga of the Great Amur Bend in northeastern China. The area was rich in game at the time, and there was sufficient moss for the reindeer. Necessary bartering was done with the Cossacks of the border areas on the left banks of the Amur and the Argun rivers.

At present the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki are an extremely small ethnic group numbering approximately only two hundred people. They speak a North-Tungusic dialect. Their future as a cultural entity is very much endangered.

When they set foot on Chinese territory they nominally belonged to the Russian Orthodox Church, but to this day they remain de facto faithful to their animistic worldview in which the shaman[1] plays a most important role as mediator between human society and the world of spirits. Since the Evenki shaman was a being of two worlds – of this world and the otherworld – he had great significance for the community. As the only such person in his community he was able to visit the otherworld even during his lifetime. For his birth on earth his mother was responsible; for his second, spiritual, birth it was the spirits. These powers called him and gave him the strength to conduct a new life as a shaman who could see behind the veil of life and enter into contact with beings of the otherworld and with spirits. Because of his ability he could act for

the benefit of his community. According to the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki, the universe was filled with spirits who lived in such places as the sky, the sun, the moon and stars, in the clouds and the wind, on tree and mountain tops, on rocks and in the taiga, in the earth, and even in animals and plants. All events in nature, any success or failure in human activities, illness, death, and so forth were all attributed to the spirits.

The Reindeer-Evenki of China lived in clans. The clan (*ḳāla*) was the most important social unit. It was formed by a closely linked group of relatives of the male line, conscious of a common descent and under the influence of common clan spirits (*seva*) (ŚIROKOGOROV 1935a, 160). The interest of the shamans in their clans did not end with death; they remained attached to their communities but they also helped people who were strangers to their clans.

For some years after their arrival on Chinese soil each clan of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki still had its own shaman (see KAJGORODOV 1968, 129, 130). The decline of the original clan organization, however, finally made it impossible for each clan to have its own shaman, and after the mid-1930s only one shamaness survived in the whole group – Olga Dmitrievna Kudrina. She was the only woman professional in the community who helped in the hunt, accompanied the souls of the deceased, cured the sick, and was knowledgeable about spirits and religion.

Because the belief in the malevolent influences of various spirits was so deeply rooted in the psyche of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki, positive thinking seemed to be impossible after the loss of a shaman, and misfortunes piled up in every area of everyday life. The hunts were without success, the reindeer did not prosper, and violence broke out.

S. M. ŚIROKOGOROV describes the extreme situation that arose in an Evenki clan after the death of its shaman:

> When, after the death of a shaman, the spirits of a group become loose, terrible and inexplicable illnesses occur in the group.... Adults fall into a nervous state, commit acts of inexplicable brutality, even crimes; a state of general excitement spreads, accompanied by an inclination to attacks of hysteria. Death as a consequence of this morbid state and other misfortunes of many kinds increase. The group's normal life stops; sometimes the group may be in danger of ruin. Such a state may continue for several years. (1935b, 79–80)

This observation by the Russian researcher and traveler was confirmed in the case of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki after the demise of

the shamaness Olga Dmitrievna Kudrina in the fall of 1944. Deprived of its security valve, the group was now left without protection against the spirits and experienced a catastrophic period without a shaman. The spiritual safeguards the deceased shaman had erected while alive broke down; abnormal states of mind became frequent; illness, accidents, suicides, and other misfortunes increased; between the clans cruel excesses and some terrible murders prompted by desires for blood revenge occurred.

At that time the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki were organized into three groups, depending on the place of their trading connections with the outside world. The Moche group in the north traded mainly with partners from Moche, a location on the Amur; the trade of the Cigan group (*cigan'čen*) was mainly carried out with the populace of a place on the Argun called Cigan; the Three-River group (*gunačen*) secured its supply of necessary goods from trading partners among Russian emigrants in the so-called Three-River area.[2]

After a young Evenki of the Moche group killed a Japanese in 1944, the approximately fifty members of this group all migrated back into the Soviet Union across the Amur, because they feared repressive measures would be taken by the Japanese occupiers.

In 1945, while their areas were still under Japanese occupation, blood feuds erupted between members of the Cigan group that had remained in northeast China and members of the Three-River group, and continued until after 1949. Families from both groups were afraid to lead their nomadic life in common in case they met each other (KAJGORODOV 1968, 126, 129, 130; n.d., 11, 32, 35–38, 107, 109, 190, 453, 646, 658, 694–95, 838, 884).

The deplorable events of this period can be traced for the most part, I think, to the lack of a shaman. When I asked Kajgorodov about this he expressed a similar thought in a letter:

> Those researchers who write that at the death of a shaman the spirits become liberated and empowered to cause great misfortune, are correct. This can easily be seen in the case of the Three-River Evenki. Among their clans murder followed murder. The Russian trading partners (*andaki*) of the Evenki requested the Russian military administration (at the time of the Russian occupation of Manchuria from 1945 to 1948) to prohibit these terrible rituals; however, as a result of the great distances in the taiga, this could not be realized. No doubt, the Evenki believed that malevolent spirits had been released, because

> after the death of Olga Dmitrievna I heard them talk of her plans to invite a shaman of the Oročon[3] so that he might contain the spirits and protect the Evenki against them. As far as I can remember, this plan was not carried out, though.

The reason for this might have been that, originally, when there still were clan shamans, people avoided calling upon "clan-outsider" shamans because of the belief that such shamans could not help anyway – they knew only "alien" spirits. But there had always been cases in which a clan could not avoid calling in an outsider, e.g., when, after the death of a clan shaman, there was no appropriate person to inherit the spirits. In such a situation the clan's spirits had to be gathered and, if possible, put out of reach by an outside shaman. Still, to engage a shaman outside of one's clan or group was always a last resort.

Consequently, the presence of a shaman and his functioning appear to have been absolute necessities for the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki. His participation in regulating spirit activities was often requested. By checking the spirits he could prevent their undesirable actions and thereby provide the people with the peace it needed to lead a successful economic and social life (cf. Śirokogorov 1935b, 87–88).

Śirokogorov (1935b, 88) trenchantly remarks in regard to this phenomenon: "In view of the present-day intellectual level of the Tungus populations the lack of shamans would threaten them with the severest consequences."

The critical situation of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki community changed only with the appearance of a new shaman. The installation of a suitable candidate was, therefore, in the existential interest of the whole group, and everyone was eager to find such a person as soon as possible.

The process of becoming a shaman was a complex affair among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki and attracted the keen interest of the social group. A detailed description of how a person of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki becomes a master of the spirits, a shaman, is beyond the purpose of this article and will therefore be dealt with on another occasion.

In this context an observation by Śirokogorov (1935b, 79, 80) is of interest. He notes that the relatives in the descending line of a defunct shaman are particularly prone to fall victim to mysterious illnesses, especially younger people of both sexes. Those afflicted in this way became depressed, distracted, and unresponsive; they were unable to work, slept for long periods, often talked during sleep, jumped up from their beds,

and ran into the taiga in order to avoid contact with other humans. They often remained in solitude for a long time; refusing to eat, they lost weight. Attacks of hysteria accompanied by convulsions, insensibility, fear of brightness, and so forth were sometimes the typical symptoms of such illness. In most cases the situation of the afflicted deteriorated greatly till, in the absence of any witnesses or assistants, a spirit took lodging in a shaman candidate deep in the taiga. When this happened the person fell into a state of ecstasy and lost consciousness, and the spirit finally came to dwell in him or her. After some time the candidate would return home, but sometimes he perished in the forest if he was not found by people who could bring him back to a camp.

After the spirits had taken possession of a shaman candidate for the first time, he was left undisturbed for a while. He would then return to a more balanced state and sometimes would try to shamanize. During this period the members of his community would give him special care and observe him because they knew that the spirits of the deceased shaman were the reasons for his sickness and abnormal behavior. This phase, during which the candidate was afflicted by the "shamanic sickness," constituted something of a trial period.

Then, as a general rule, one evening or night a severe attack would occur, and while it lasted the candidate would shiver like a shaman, jump around, and gnash his teeth. After that he would begin shamanizing. Each shaman of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki was invariably "sick" – in other words, possessed by some spirits, before he began his activity. It would be quite correct to call "shamanic sickness" the symptoms of a sickness that pointed to the ability to become a shaman, typically meaning the more severe cases of a disturbed psychomental state. Such "sickness" was generally the basic condition for his later functioning as a shaman. The special conditions of his sickness induced the candidate to act as a shaman. As long as he resisted the "call," his state of health would deteriorate. Acceptance of his duty as shaman was a prerequisite for him to experience the necessary relief and relaxation and undergo a process of recovery. If the candidate originated from a family that had earlier produced shamans, nothing would interfere with his acknowledgment as an accomplished shaman.

Next to the idea of a shaman's call by the spirits, the concept that the ability to become a shaman could be inherited was to some degree important among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki. Most frequently a shaman's powers were transmitted in a direct line of male filiation from

grandfather to grandson, but sometimes also from grandmother to granddaughter. The reason why sons and daughters were skipped over might have something to do with the double weight his spiritual duty put on the shaman, because he had to exercise that duty in addition to his daily breadwinner activities, such as hunting and reindeer husbandry. However, the qualification to be a shaman could also be acquired through another kinship lineage, e.g., from an uncle or an aunt, in some cases even from a brother or a sister. The "caller" need not always be an ancestor. Consequently, there was no fixed order of succession, and the transmission of a shaman's duty could not be restricted to certain degrees of kinship. In order to be genuine, shamanhood required personal aptitude as an absolute criterion. Nevertheless, among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki a strong linkage of shamanic aptitude to family and clan was evident.

In addition, as ŚIROKOGOROV (1935a, 382) learned, a new shaman who was to "gather" the liberated spirits of the deceased shaman could not appear later than nine years after the death of the former shaman, because otherwise many people would have to suffer from the spirits.

According to LINDGREN, the shaman Olga Dmitrievna Kudrina experienced her calling in 1923 at the river Niznaya Ulugiča, where in a dream she received her predecessor's tutelary spirit, who then transmitted to her the aptitude to be a shaman (1936, 128).

In a letter addressed to me, Kajgorodov wrote the following about Olga Dmitrievna Kudrina becoming a shamaness: "Before she became a shamaness she often meditated and avoided human company. The decisive moment came after she had spent two weeks in the deep forest, where she lived without fire and food while conversing with the spirits. When she returned to the tent she was already a shamaness" (KAJGORODOV n.d., 130, 693, 797, 883).

Olga's grandmother (*ewe;* died about 1914) had also been a shamaness. Furthermore, her uncle Vasilij Jakovlevic Kudrin (died about 1920) and her cousin Innokentij Ivanovic Kudrin were both shamans (LINDGREN 1936, 123–28); the latter, however, had only minor spiritual power and lacked the charismatic qualities of Olga.

When the clan system was still intact among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki and each clan had its own shaman, the chosen neophyte underwent formation at the hands of an experienced shaman of another clan. From him the neophyte learned the technique of ecstasy and the ability to make his spirits subservient and pliable to his needs, as well as how

to conduct the *kamlan'e* (shamanic séance) for diverse purposes. He became knowledgeable concerning the various symptoms of illnesses and the methods required to cure them, and he learned the topography of the world above and beneath and the roads leading thereto.

When Olga Dmitrievna Kudrina became a shamaness there was no shaman of her nationality left who could transmit to her the necessary esoteric knowledge. Therefore, she approached a master shaman of the Kumarčen living on the river Kumara[4] who was known as a mighty shaman (LINDGREN 1935, 222; 1936, 129, 130; KAJGORODOV n.d., 32); for the reasons mentioned earlier, the Reindeer-Evenki community always showed a keen interest in having a shaman among them who was strong in power and rich in knowledge.

For his practice the shaman needed a special outfit consisting of a costume, a headdress (*derboki*),[5] and a drum with drumstick. These requisites were of great significance for the shamanism of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki.

The costume represented a mental microcosm and was both symbol and seat of the shaman's spirits. When he donned it, the shaman crossed the borderline between profane space and spirit world. Since this meant the beginning of his separation from this world, he donned the costume only immediately before the start of the séance. For outsiders it was generally dangerous to touch the costume, and even a shamaness would not touch the localizations of spirits attached to it during menstruation (cf. ŚIROKOGOROV 1935a, 302).

Among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki the costume symbolized a red deer (*kumaka; Cervus elaphus xantropygus* Milne-Edwards) whose natural as well as supernatural qualities would be transmitted to the shaman.[6]

It was the duty of the clan or of the social group to make the new shaman's paraphernalia. Every member made an effort to participate in the process because by doing so each person participated directly in the shaman becoming that person's future protector.

The parts of the costume made of leather or cloth were sewn by women, if possible by those who were already beyond the climacteric. If no such women were in the community, others could do it as well, but then the finished costume would have to be purified by the smoke from certain plants.

Wooden parts were made by able carvers, and metallic parts by blacksmiths. The blacksmiths of the Reindeer-Evenki were famous for their

prowess. Small bells used on sledges, as well as metal hooks and eyes, were acquired from Russian *andaḳi* by barter at trading sessions (*bogzory*) (cf. LINDGREN 1935, 227; 1936, 218, 223; Kajgorodov 1968, 126; n.d., 90, 130, 131, 159).[7]

A drum and drumstick were the most important elements of the shaman's outfit. Without them a séance would have been impossible among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki, since they helped the shaman to fall into trance. There was a mystic relationship between the drum produced by the whole social group and the shaman. To procure the materials and to make the drum was the special privilege of the clan or the group's men. It was a task of utmost importance because whether its later use was effective or not decided not only the personal success of the shaman but also the life and well-being of each clan or group member. It can therefore easily be understood that in the making of such an important instrument, whose efficacy involved reaching heaven and the realm of the dead, each step of the process was solemnly executed following the instructions of the shaman, who, for his part, received his instructions from the spirit that initiated him. Therefore, from the beginning there existed an intimate threefold relationship between community, shaman, and drum. The tree whose wood was used for the frame, and the animal that survived and sounded in the membrane, did not merely provide the material of the drum; rather, they were received as sacrificial and spiritual beings whose existence had not been ended by the cutting of the tree or the killing of the animal. When the dull sound of the drum carried the Evenki shaman away with it, the drum became his mount to the otherworld, his magic elk or magic deer, depending on what animal had provided the drum's membrane according to the will of the spirits. The drumstick was the whip. This idea could be found in all of Siberia. In order to function satisfactorily as the mount of the shaman, the membrane needed to come from an animal that was suited to the task by its age and physical constitution. The Chinese Reindeer-Evenki preferred the hide of a two-year-old Isjubr deer or of an elk because it would give a better sound than the thicker hide of an older animal. The hunter whose task it was to hunt the animal was chosen by the shaman and had to dedicate himself with all his energy to the important task.

The experience of the call and the making of the paraphernalia were then followed by the initiation of the candidate. This, too, was related to dreams and visions and meant the climax and the end of a long and painful period of preparation.

The soul of the candidate traveled into the otherworld. There it was killed and cut into pieces by the spirits. In the process the young shaman experienced his being made into a skeleton. The spirits consumed his flesh and afterwards reassembled his bones. He was revived and finally returned with the capacity to act as a fully established shaman for the benefit of his community.[8] Now he was in a position to leave this world, if need be, and to converse with beings in the otherworld.

In most cases psychic or psychosomatic illnesses prompted the initiatory experience. Long meditation in the solitude of the deep forests, combined with the avoidance of food, produced the same result. Shamanic initiation always occurred as self-initiation, as a purely individual experience of the candidate. It brought about his separation from the life he had conducted till that point and his changing into a new form of existence, one characterized by temporary sojourns in an otherworldly realm not accessible to ordinary human beings of his group. After his return from his initiatory travel he was not the same person he was before: he had died and had come to life again.

The visible proof of a person's becoming a shaman among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki was that the shaman, under the guidance of his spiritual master, performed during three summers a *ƙamlan'e* at which he called the spirits to a meeting of several clans. After the shaman had come to know all the spirits called by his master, had successfully passed trials and sometimes painful tests, and had become familiar with the essential practices, a last and solemn ceremony took place as a kind of "ordination" conducted by the master. In this manner the new shaman demonstrated to all members of his community that the spirits had called him. This conclusion of his "formation" was at the same time a social highlight imbued with an especially solemn and cultic character by the sacrifice of a reindeer or an elk.[9] With this ceremony the shaman was fully acknowledged by his group. From this time on he conducted all spiritual activities independently and on his own (cf. QIU 1962, 98).

At the outset of his career the young shaman of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki had to master five or six spirits; at its end he was expected to master all of them, either directly or with the help of other spirits. The more powerful a shaman was, the more spirits were subservient to him. These spirits did not have the quality of tutelary spirits, for the shaman was their master. But he was obliged to look after them with sacrifices and treat them well. The shaman was therefore the more active partner in his rela-

tionship with his tutelary spirits; he secured the help of his spirits, but they did not necessarily protect him (ŚIROKOGOROV 1935a, 351, 357; SCHULZ-WEIDNER 1947, 52, 53).[10]

The ties of the Reindeer-Evenki shaman with his community are made particularly clear in the range of his tasks. He always swung into action when the normal life of a group member or of the whole community was being disturbed or was falling into disorder as a result of the interference of spiritual powers. In addition, he was the most important keeper of the people's traditions. If we were to compare him with professionals of our time, he would be physician, priest, historian, diviner, poet, storyteller, and dancer. Besides fulfilling these roles, he had to earn his living as a hunter, the same as all the other members of the group. This means that he needed to command mental and physical strength and capacities to a much higher degree than others in his clan.

The opinion of some earlier researchers that shamans are epileptics or psychopaths seems to be mistaken, because epilepsy causes unusual mental lethargy, forgetfulness, and a narrowing of the range of vision. Besides, an epileptic is never able to consciously control an attack. For such reasons the assertion that the shaman's states of trance are nothing but epileptic attacks is not acceptable. The shaman has to have a remarkably quick mind, and in any case has to possess a larger measure of mental ability than his fellow clan members. To carry out his duty was dangerous for the shaman as well as a strain on his strength. To deal with the spirits, to call them forth and install them when one wished in one's body was a task that demanded and consumed an unusual amount of strength. A communication from KAJGORODOV (n.d., 130) has to be understood in this sense. He says that among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki only the most courageous and the strongest was allowed to become a shaman. Between him and his fellow clansmen a difference in degree existed that was responsible for his "being unusual" and "abnormal."

The most important social duties of the Reindeer-Evenki shaman were:

1. Conducting the religious sacrificial ceremonies on the occasion of seasonal and social celebrations (e.g., annual celebrations, weddings, memorials for deceased persons, etc.);
2. Offering sacrifices and influencing otherworldly powers in order to ward off misfortune and catastrophes;
3. Supplicating the spirits (masters of animals) responsible for success in the hunt;

4. Divining and predicting the future;
5. Curing of sickness;
6. Guiding the souls of the deceased into the realm of the dead.

In the old times ritual fighting among shamans was part of a shaman's duties in a wider sense. The rival shamans changed themselves into animals, i.e., into the animal-shaped bearers of their souls such as bear, elk, reindeer, and so forth. The fight of shamans was a fight to death and was intended to help one's own community. The Chinese Reindeer-Evenki of today still pass on stories of fights between their earlier shamans and those of the Kumarčen on the rivers Kumara and Panga.

While shamanizing would bring the shaman himself relief and would sometimes rid him of certain physical diseases, his activities also meant a psychic and physical cure for the society he lived in.

As already mentioned, the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki were convinced that most psychomental disturbances were caused by the influence of spirits. These spirits could use the human body as their dwelling and settle themselves in it. When that happened the person was "possessed" by the spirits. In most such cases the "spirit" was the characteristic expression of a pathological state. Various degrees of a sickness corresponded with various spirits. The Chinese Reindeer-Evenki saw it as a necessary evil that spirit forces affected human beings in this manner, but they were not prepared to simply give in to them. Every method was tried, therefore, to dispel the spirits. First every individual attempted to ward off the spirits. But there existed many more spirits of a special kind, those expressing certain psychomental phenomena and illnesses, against whom the powers of an individual were insufficient and only a shaman could provide help. At this stage the afflicted approached the shaman, whose duty was to assist the members of his group in such cases. Confidence in the power of a shaman was so strong among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki that the simple existence of a shaman or even just the choice of a candidate was enough to achieve a psychological effect. As soon as a shaman was present, the spirits were no longer free to act at will, they now had to reckon with the possibility of being overcome and chased out by a shaman of great power and knowledge. As a result, they preferred to retreat from their human victims, and as a consequence, cases of sickness decreased. This unconscious process can probably be interpreted to be, among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki, an adaptation to an individual's personal disposition and the result of long experience.

The community's feelings of confidence and trust obliged the shaman. He could not avoid his duty. Once he received the calling he had to be ready to help, day and night, without considering his own interests and without sparing his strength. He often had to abandon his personal affairs in order to travel hundreds of kilometers through the taiga in order to visit a patient. Such activity could be very strenuous and might eventually lead to the shaman's total exhaustion. If he did not impose certain restrictions on himself he might even become the victim of his own psychological excesses and of his own "spirits." This could even lead to his losing his ability to shamanize and only a more powerful shaman could cure him. He might also die or be killed by "his spirits."

Most prominent among the tasks of a shaman was the treatment of patients. A séance with the shaman falling into a state of trance constituted the climax of this process. If the sickness was grave and the patient close to death, the shaman attempted by this method to overtake the soul on its way to the realm of the dead and bring it back.

As a matter of course, the shaman knew how to apply medicinal herbs and plants. Amongst his technical methods of curing we might also reckon the monotonous music of the drum and the shaman's singing, because they helped to increase his hypnotic influence on the patient.

When all the attempts of the shaman failed and the spirits proved to be stronger than him, the patient would die according to the will of the spirits. When that happened it became the task of the shaman to guide the soul of the deceased into the land of the souls (*buno;* see ŚIROKOGOROV 1935a, 141), because only he knew the road to that land. Quite often the shaman had first to search for the soul, which would be wandering aimlessly somewhere in the universe. It was, so to say, the last act of charity the shaman could perform on behalf of a deceased member of his clan or group. By doing this he proved to the survivors that the soul need not aimlessly wander about and fall prey to some evil spirits but could reach its final destination as the result of the safe guidance of a powerful shaman. Such assurance went a long way to supporting the people when they thought about their own deaths. The sacrificial reindeer killed during the *kamlan'e* for the dead became the mount (i.e., the soul of the reindeer) of the deceased on his trip to the land of the dead. Part of the victim's meat was, together with alcohol, consumed by those present, the shaman included. For the shaman alcohol meant a stimulus to trance and an increase of his powers when dealing with the spirits. Those human beings whose souls had to remain on earth and who could not reach the land of the

dead because of some adverse circumstance, such as the lack of a shaman, were most unfortunate. To guide the soul to the land of the dead was therefore one of the most important functions of the shaman, one in which he had to muster all his ability. At a later *ḳamlan'e* held in honor of the deceased during the summer meeting season of the clans, the deceased could transmit his advice and wishes to his survivors through the mouth of the shaman.[11]

In terms of frequency, however, the treatment of minor illnesses and the performance of various sacrifices, divination, and so forth took the main stage in the daily life of the shaman. For example, at a wedding a séance would be held to divine the future of the young couple, or at the beginning of the main hunting season the shaman would ask for game (KAJGORODOV n.d., 188).[12]

The *ḳamlan'e*[13] was the personal experience of the shaman, but at the same time it was a group event of utmost significance for the group's social organization. A séance called for a number of preparations, such as the construction of a platform for the sacrifice (*delken*), the killing of the sacrificial animal[14] and the cooking of its meat, the readying of the paraphernalia, and so forth. The shaman's costume was suspended in the tent and in front of it the drum was fastened. These preparations were executed by particularly experienced and worthy men in the shaman's following. The character of the *ḳamlan'e* as an event of the community was expressed by inviting guests from another hunting camp to the event whenever other families were camped nearby.

With the preparations finished, the séance could begin. Whether it would take place in a tent or under the open sky depended on the number of participants, since even the largest tent made of birch tree bark could not accommodate much more than ten persons (see ŚIROKOGOROV 1929, 255).

Most often a *ḳamlan'e* began at night under a full moon. The darkness helped to increase the shaman's capacity for concentration and to heighten the feeling of mysterious expectation among the onlookers.

As if acting on a secret command, all participants in the spiritual performance appeared in order to be present when the male assistants (*jār'i,* according to ŚIROKOGOROV 1935a, 329) would solemnly clothe the shaman. Participation in the *ḳamlan'e* by the audience meant that they joined as a choir in the singing of the shaman's songs (*jar* or *jara,* according to ŚIROKOGOROV 1935a, 329). They joined both the songs sung in a lower voice and those sung in a louder voice and with a faster rhythm.

Also, the shouts of the shaman marking the end of a motif were repeated in similar form by some of the men, in general the shaman's assistants. By increasing the speed of the singing and drumming, the shaman put himself in a trance. When he fell into trance and was lying on the floor the support of his assistants was very important. Lasting for several hours, the *kamlan'e* was a preeminent community experience and reinforced the relationship of confidence between the shaman and the group he had to protect.

KAJGORODOV's description of a séance the shamaness Olga Dmitrievna Kudrina held under the open sky in the summer of 1940 on the occasion of a Reindeer-Evenki wedding demonstrates with equal clarity the event's quality as a community activity. He writes (1970, 158):

> …the guests let the reindeer roam freely and gathered with a serious expression on their faces around the fire. The reason for the change in mood was evident; it was because the shamaness was preparing herself for the *kamlan'e*. She donned her somber shaman's costume and reached for the drum…. All Evenki, guests as well as hosts, became seated on the floor, forming a wide circle, and waited in silence for the ceremony to begin.
>
> With a sudden move of hand the shamaness pushed a strand of her hair over her face and looked into the surrounding audience with a disturbed glance. Then she suddenly hit her head with the drum which she held fast in her right hand. The echo of the drum's sound, resembling the distant howling of a band of hungry wolves, made a frightening impression on me.
>
> For a moment she rolled her eyes and stood motionless. Then she danced slowly, as if it was beyond her strength, once around the fire. Suddenly she jumped from her left foot on to the right; with each passing minute her movements grew increasingly fast and abrupt…. Pulling the drum away from her head the old woman beat it abruptly, and at that point, something indescribable happened. Now she hopped on the spot, now she moved in a strange dance around the fire, all the time frantically beating the drum. With wild guttural sounds she called the spirits…. When they saw this, many Evenki, too, reached a state of ecstasy. They all jumped up from their places and roared wildly along with the shamaness, rolling their red eyes. One of them, I suspect it was Usatkan, began first to roar, then to lament, and his brother Fedor uttered sounds resembling a hysteric laughter…. Gradually the movements of the old

> woman grew weaker, one could observe how her strength deserted her. Her voice became raucous, and pearls of sweat covered her face. Slowly she circled the fire one last time, strangely raised her arms as if she intended to cling to something in the air and fell to the ground with a heavy groan. With a dull sound the drum rolled to the floor.
>
> The Evenki jumped up from their seats and surrounded the woman lying on the floor…. Her face was wet and of a gray color like the earth; from time to time her whole body twitched and only with difficulty she moved her swollen tongue. The Evenki listened intensively and tried not to miss a single one of her words….

At certain times (e.g., during menstruation and after giving birth) the magic powers of a female shaman were diminished. During such times she could fulfill her social functions only partially or not at all. For this reason great shamanesses of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki were mostly without children. The shamaness Olga Dmitrievna Kudrina, too, had no children of her own.

The shaman of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki did not receive remuneration for his performances and activities, except for small gifts of alcohol and food. The shaman's task required an entirely altruistic behavior and did not generate any material advantage.

To conclude, we can sum up the findings of this article as follows. Since, according to the mind of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki, the most variegated spiritual beings affect human life by their mysterious power, and since an ordinary human being was not in a position to influence them, the shaman was entrusted with an important social role as an esoteric specialist dealing with spirits. Being the protector and healer of a clan or group, he fulfilled important tasks and functions for the community. When a clan or group lacked a shaman, the spirits grew dissatisfied and sent sickness and other misfortune. Only if somebody could be found who was prepared and suitable to accept the heavy task of a shaman would the group return to a normal state. For such reasons, the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki always tried to have a shaman among them, and each member of a clan or a group had a personal interest in finding or choosing a suitable candidate. Once such a person was found, the men and women of the community participated enthusiastically and with great interest in the preparation of the shaman's outfit in order to share in the process of making that person become a future guardian. They accom-

panied the candidate on his difficult road to becoming a shaman. The shamanic séance as an experience of the community had an equally high value. It can be said beyond doubt that the shaman and the group that he was to protect shared common interests. The activities of the shaman, and the psychological influence those activities had, were absolutely necessary for the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki to eliminate social tensions and to restore harmony after the community had been disturbed. Since the shaman had been born into the same culture and environment as the other members of his group, what distinguished the shaman and constituted his being "unusual" were certain extraordinary capacities, qualities, and abilities.

Because he served as a mediator between human beings and spirits, he enjoyed social recognition. His social standing among his people or clan was generally high, while the amount of prestige enjoyed by him depended upon his ability. If he fulfilled his task with a sense of responsibility he could enjoy the confidence of his companions and their grateful recognition.

As the shaman lived in constant danger because of his dealings with demons and spirits and because during séances he fought with these powers before everybody's eyes, he was naturally regarded with feelings of reserve and terror. People knew of the shaman's power and were happy and grateful if he used it for the benefit of the community, but one could never be quite sure if he might not abuse this power some day. Dealings of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki with their shaman were usually characterized by politeness and friendliness, but also by reverence and respect, accompanied by a certain amount of fear.

Despite having power in spiritual matters, the shaman never officially was head of the clan or a political leader of his people. His special psychomental state would not allow it. Because of the importance the activities of shamans commanded in the life of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki, the shaman was intimately linked to his community and fulfilled an important function within it. He had to be a capable and inspired person. Belief in the power of the shaman had a suggestive effect on the members of the community.

In the fall of 1993 I had a chance to make an excursion into the northern Greater Hinggang Range and visit the Reindeer-Evenki who still live there today.[15] There, in the autumn larch forests, I encountered the more than eighty-year-old shamaness Njura Kaltakun in a hunting camp of five tents of the taiga nomads. Her famous predecessor, Olga Dmitrievna

Kudrina, died in 1944, and she has been active among her people since the 1950s.

Njura had taken over the spirits of her predecessor. She is now, as Olga had been until her death, the only genuine shamaness among the Reindeer-Evenki of northeast China. From the Isjubr deer antlers with six branches made of metal that adorned her shaman's crown it was clear that she was considered by her people to be a strong and great shaman. The old shamaness was present in this *urilen* (Evenki for nomadic economic community) in the upper region of the Albazicha river system because she was out searching for a hunter who two weeks earlier had vanished in the taiga without leaving a trace. He was sent out by his community to scout for a new place to camp. Her presence ensured that the missing hunter's family would not be seized by despair and hysteria, which would then spread like wildfire throughout the whole *urilen*.

My personal observations confirmed, therefore, research findings concerning the social position and semantics of the shaman in the society of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki even at the present time. There is, therefore, nothing that has to be added to or changed in the conclusions reached earlier. What follows is, accordingly, an additional corroboration of the insights gained earlier through study of the available literature and correspondence with specialist scholars.

Njura, who was born around 1912, told me that she experienced her calling when she was only sixteen years old. After that the spirits made her become a shamaness. At that time she became, as Olga before her, the disciple of a powerful shaman of the neighboring Kumarčen in order to acquire the esoteric tools necessary for her difficult task among her people. This famous shaman of the Kumarčen, by the name Mentjihan, lived on the upper reaches of the Kumara river in friendly relations with the Reindeer-Evenki. Still, relations between the shamans of the Reindeer-Evenki and the Kumarčen were not always harmonious. Njura recounted the tradition according to which the shamans of both people fought against each other with the help of their spirits, and that such fights between shamans often ended in the death of one of them. The contesting parties changed themselves into their alter ego under an animal shape and/or let their theriomorphic assistant spirits fight each other. Once, Njura had attended a *ḳamlan'e* together with Olga in the vicinity of Mt Okoldoi (Along Shan). During the extremely antireligious Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) in China Njura was forbidden to shamanize any longer. Her entire shaman outfit was confiscated and trans-

ferred to the Museum in Harbin. The ultra-leftists, in their at times criminal zeal and one-sided bias, did not even notice that their action deprived the whole ethnic group of its safety valve. However, the shamanism of the Reindeer-Evenki continued to exist in secret and, after Liberation, under the new policies of Nationalities Njura received new shamanic paraphernalia. The shaman's new costume and the drum were made, as usual, by some specialists in the group (Vladimir Kaltakun, Maria Sologon, Pelageja Kaltakun). On the basis of my observations, I assume that when the shamans of the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki can still fulfill their functions without restriction, there are fewer cases of spirit-caused sickness than in times when there is no shaman. The latest resurgence of shamanism after a period of persecution definitely proves, I think, the necessity and the desirability of shamans in the future as well. But, for how long? Together with the Reindeer-Evenki the shamans are dying out. Their drumming, their roaring, their singing will soon fall silent in the remote larch forests of the Greater Hinggang Range. Here, in Northeast China's most distant corner, they have their last refuge and, perhaps, their Urheimat.

NOTES

Dedication: In grateful memory of my friend Anatolij Makarovič Kajgorodov (1927–1998), the outstanding expert on the Reindeer-Evenki of the Chinese taiga.

1. The Chinese Reindeer-Evenki use the term *s'aman*. A female shaman is often called *odoyan* (see ŚIROKOGOROV 1935a, 269, 270).
2. For more on the structure and historical development of Evenki trading see HEYNE 1992.
3. Oročon are a horse-breeding Tungusic neighboring group on the river Gan.
4. In modern China Kumarčen, or Manegren, are combined with the horse-breeding Oročon and Birarčen in the Oroqen Nationality.
5. On top of the headdress were antlers of the red deer made out of iron with from four to six prongs attached to them. The more powerful the shaman, the more prongs on the antlers (ŚIROKOGOROV 1935a, 291).
6. The theriomorphic costumes of shamans are the largest and most important group of costumes among all Eurasian peoples. Besides costumes resembling birds or deer, costumes symbolizing bears were also common, and in rare cases other animals (e.g., dragonflies among the Ket) or imaginary beings were represented.
7. For more on the barter method of the Russian-Evenki see HEYNE 1992.
8. According to FINDEISEN (1957, 51), the so-called shamanic sickness is a mystic self-sacrifice for fellow clan members. He writes: "The essence of all these truly terrible processes… is that the shaman can cure only those sicknesses that are

caused by spirits that have received their part of his body at the time of the terrible cutting up of his body."

9. As a consequence of the relatively small number of reindeer among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki, they had imposed some restrictions on themselves. Therefore, a reindeer was killed only when there was a great need for meat. The killing of a reindeer could further be justified by reason of some acceptable social function, such as a wedding or the sending off of a reindeer's soul as the mount for the soul of a deceased (Śirokogorov 1935a, 92).
10. The Chinese Reindeer-Evenki used the term *ojan* for the state of "mastering the spirits" (Śirokogorov 1935a, 271).
11. The Chinese Reindeer-Evenki believed that another relative (member of the clan) would die if they did not succeed in answering the needs and wishes of the dead. Special attention was given to the treatment of the soul (Śirokogorov 1935a, 215).
12. Findeisen (1957, 137) reports: "Among the Tungus, too, the shaman becomes active at the beginning of the hunt. Further, if for some supernatural reason their hunting luck has disappeared, his help is asked for. In order to support the hunt the shamans of hunting peoples perform rites in which they implore the spirits for their assistance. For example, in the thinking of the Yukagir the spirits first have to catch the 'shadows' of those animals that later will be really caught by the hunters. Among the Tungus the shaman has to perform ritually those actions that are necessary to catch the game." Here we meet with concepts and rituals of hunting magic.
13. Among the Chinese Reindeer-Evenki the term for "shamanize" is *sama* (+ suffix) or *n'imya* (Śirokogorov 1935a, 269, 297, 309).
14. When a reindeer was killed for a shamanic sacrifice certain specific rules had to be observed. It was important that during the spiritual method of killing the animal no blood was spilled. The animal was forced to the ground and its chest opened by a cut with a sharp hunting knife. The person killing the animal swiftly inserted his hand into the opening and compressed the aorta so that the animal died instantly (Śirokogorov 1935a, 92).
15. The text of the present article was originally written in 1993 to be included in a volume on shamanism that was to accompany an exhibition in Cologne. The exhibition did not materialize. Instead, I was given the chance to visit the Reindeer-Evenki in the Greater Hinggang Range in the fall of 1993 through the kind offices of Dr. Ingo Nentwig (Leipzig) and the intervention of Professor Wu Bingan of Liaoning University in Shenyang (China).

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Shamanism in Bangladesh

Anwarul KARIM

WHEN I WAS young I visited my village along with other members of my family. A relation of mine had a daughter, the first child. The daughter was then three years old and was beautiful and healthy, but she suddenly fell ill and died within two days. It was discovered that some of her hair had been taken away, and there were marks of scratches on her chest. Everybody in the family believed that it was the work of a sorcerer, who caused the girl to die in order to bring a cure to a certain childless mother whose babies had all died shortly after birth.

The family called a *faquir*, a mystic and native healer who was capable of detecting such a sorcerer's crime with the help of magical methods, such as the use of a magic glass known in Bengali as *aina-bharon*. The *faquir* explained that the sorcerer took away some of the hair and chest skin of the victim and put these into an amulet either on a Shanibar (Saturday) or Mongolbar (Tuesday) during the night of the new moon, or *amavasya,* and then sealed it with wax from a bee's comb. The *faquir* further said that the victim in such a case must be a mother's first child, and that the death of the child would procure an offspring for another childless mother. The offspring who was thus procured would live a healthy life. The *faquir* added that if the crime of the sorcerer was detected before any damage was done to the life of the victim, this was to be brought at once to the attention of everybody in the village. An announcement should be made that the sorcerer had taken away the hair or nail or chest skin of the victim. Then all the victim's hair should be

cut, burnt, and buried at the meeting point of three roads. The victim would then be safe. During our stay in the village, we came across another incident in which the hair of a child was cut. At once the villagers were informed by an announcement, and a ritual was performed accordingly and no damage was suffered by the victim.

This kind of sorcery is not uncommon in rural Bangladesh. Although sorcery for malevolent use was condemned, the story of a childless mother suggests that such actions could be done also for benevolent intentions. It had been used to facilitate childbirth and to procure offspring for barren women. It also helped cure ailing children. A sorcerer is capable of using both magic and witchcraft for fulfilling his designs. He can destroy a person but at the same time can explain misfortune and reveal the cause of sickness with the help of supernatural powers.[1]

A shaman is like a sorcerer, but performs primarily white magic and deals only secondarily in black magic and witchcraft to counter sorcery and its evil effects. In traditional societies, a shaman is a kind of healer who makes use of supernatural powers and magic for various healings or for curing of disease. A shaman specializes in spirit illness and spirit possession, deals with good as well as evil spirits, and is a mediator between the supernatural and the community (KAKAR 1983, 90). On many occasions the shaman is found working as a medium and mouthpiece of supernatural beings, and his power comes from direct contact with the supernatural (LESSA and VOGT 1979, 308). It may be pointed out here that although witchcraft is considered evil, a shaman may use it in an attempt to benefit society as a whole.

The term "shaman" is believed by scholars to have its origin in Asia, though it is used to describe similar phenomena in many parts of the world, which are found not only among hunters but also in contemporary peasant, nomadic, and urban communities as well (ELIADE 1964).

Shamanism is assumed to have originated in association with hunting and gathering (LESSA and VOGT 1979, 301). It is commonly held that the shamans are a kind of mystic and can cure sickness by virtue of their techniques of ecstasy and magic. The shaman can "see" the spirit and he himself occasionally behaves like a spirit. He can leave his body in a trance and travel in ecstasy in all cosmic regions. He recognizes various diseases through mystical insight or with the help of his "pet-spirits" who are at his disposal, and he is capable of curing these diseases with his heal-

ing techniques. Although he has a number of auxiliary spirits at his disposal, he is not possessed by them.

Bangladesh is a small country with an area of over 55,000 square miles and a population of over 100 million. It has 68,000 villages and few cities. At least 80% of the people live in rural areas where most people are illiterate and have limited health and medical facilities. There is one physician for 7,810 people and one hospital bed for 4,000 people (GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH 1985). Although Bangladesh is a land of rivers, these are dry most of the time, and people must depend on the rainy season, which, in fact, is a gamble on the monsoons. They live in houses built of mud with thatched roofs and narrow rectangular windows. These people still drink water either from rivers or ponds and suffer from various diseases, including diarrhea, dysentery, jaundice, and fever. Cholera and dysentery often break out in epidemic form. Their farming is still primitive and at a subsistence level. In the absence of proper diet they suffer from acute anemia and malnutrition.

A recent study of mine in three Bangladesh villages reveals that 90% of the rural men and women use indigenous health care. Shamanistic and herbal care are common. The persons engaged in shamanistic and herbal healthcare treatments include both men and women.

Shamanism in Bangladesh, which evolved as an integral part of folk or animistic religion, later was assimilated into Hinduism and Buddhism, especially Tantric Buddhism. With the introduction of Islam by the Sufis, who syncretized different religious ideas and incorporated them into mystic Islam, shamanism became an integral part of folk life. It may be pointed out here that, although shamanism is rooted in animistic culture, it is intended for correcting disturbances in the individual's social order. The shamans perform the same role in a traditional society as psychotherapists in modern society.

The objective of this paper is to present the role of the shaman in traditional Bengali society. The study is based on the author's personal observation as an insider in three villages of Kushtia, a western district bordering West Bengal. The paper suggests that a shaman is a healer who uses magic and witchcraft for benevolent purposes. He is not a sorcerer who is engaged in malevolent activities. The paper's key assumption is that Bangladesh as a traditional society still holds to animism as the basic belief and guiding light of the cultural attitude of the people.

SHAMANS: TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS

In rural Bangladesh people turn to the shamans for healthcare as their treatment is less expensive and less time consuming. It is also found that people turn to these shamans or traditional healers when modern medicine fails to cure them. The shaman acts as a psychoanalyst who effects a psychotherapeutic cure by mobilizing strong psychic energies inside and outside the patient that are no longer available in modern society (LÉVI-STRAUSS 1963, 186–205). This psychotherapeutic tradition tells us about certain social values in Bengali society and throws light on the symbolic universe of Bengali culture in which its various healing traditions are embedded.

Basically there are two types of traditional healing: 1) shamanism, or magico-religious healing, and 2) natural, or herbal, healing. The first of these includes magic and charms, holy words, and holy actions to cure disease. The second involves the seeking of cures in the herbs, plants, minerals, and animal substances of nature. Both shamanistic and herbal healing have been widely practiced in Bangladesh. Although the shamans in Bangladesh use herbs together with mineral and animal substances including clay, mud, animal organs, and human urine and excrement, I shall confine myself to the study of shamanism as a way of magico-religious healing.

As far as I know there has been no previous study of shamanism in Bangladesh, although scholars have dwelt adequately on herbal and natural folk medicine. During my fieldwork I came across a number of manuscripts and *puthi* literature[2] with elaborate occult texts and formulas. I met a number of shamans who made good use of these *puthi* texts. I also collected various mantra or incantations from the shamans I met, and attended a number of musical programs that were held in the villages as a part of shamanistic cures.

The persons professionally engaged in shamanistic activity in the villages are known as *ojha,*[3] *faquir,* and *kabiraj*.[4] In certain areas they have names like *khunker* (not *khundker*).[5] The *pir,* mullah, and *munshi* are not considered shamans because they are not professionals like the *ojha* and *faquir;* they are religious specialists who engage only occasionally in faith healing. *Pir* is a Persian word that denotes a spiritual headman or guide among Muslim mystics called Sufis. But among Bengali Muslim folk the *pir* is more than a mystic guide, saint, or holy man. He is regarded as most powerful and considered to be a demigod. Shrines of the *pir*

are found in every nook and corner of the country. These *pir* exert great influence over supernatural beings by virtue of a certain magico-religious power. People go to them not only for mystic guidance but also for treatment of different kinds of diseases including spirit illness and spirit possession. The *pir* use holy words from the Quran, charms, or amulet knots. They enjoy vast social status and position.

The mullah, or *munshi,* are religious persons who generally engage in leading prayers and various social functions, such as funeral services. They are also faith healers. Although they are considered religious specialists, they do not live by faith healing. They have other occupations like teaching in a madrassa (Islamic school). They are not landless people, and they maintain social intercourse with those around them. People go to them for religious instruction.

The professional shamans, as already mentioned, belong to one of three types: *faquir, ojha,* and *kabiraj.* The word *faquir* is derived from Arabic and means "poor." It is used in the sense of being in need of mercy, and one is poor in the sight of God rather than in need of worldly assistance. *Darwesh,* similar in meaning to *faquir*, is a Persian word derived from *dar,* which means "a door," and it signifies one who begs from door to door. Both terms are generally used for those who lead a religious life. Both *faquir* and *darwesh* are religious personages who belong to the Sufi order. In Bangladesh the *faquir* belong to different religious sects of the Sufi order, and are known as exorcists and faith healers. *Faquir* include both men and women. Most of them come from a low economic stratum. Although there is no caste system in Islam, the Muslims have a stratified society in the pattern of a caste system, though it is not rigid as in Hinduism.

The *ojha* also belong to the *faquir* community. The word *ojha* is possibly derived from a Turkish term *hodja,* suggesting a Muslim priest and teacher who conducts religious ceremonies in mosques and at funerals or during religious weddings. They are considered to have supernatural healing powers, and are believed to have, at their disposal or command, "armies of jinn" for their use against other evil-producing jinn.

The *ojha* in Bangladesh have similarities to their Turkish counterparts in so far as the healing of patients is concerned. They treat ailments of children and others, cattle diseases, women suffering from hysteria, and cases of snake bite and hydrophobia. Their chief occupation, however, is the healing of snake bites. They are also exorcists, driving out ghosts and other supernatural beings. The Hindu *ojha,* however, belong to

peasant communities and are of low caste. Their profession is generally hereditary but it sometimes happens that the senior *ojha* appoints one of his followers as *ojha*. In his capacity as a shaman the *ojha* is much more dreaded than loved, because the rural folk suppose that he can inflict diseases and carry out all sorts of mischief if he is offended in any way.

In my study area I interviewed as many as eleven healers. Eight of them belong to the weaving community, one to the oil pressing community, and two to the farmer class. Eight of the women shamans interviewed belong to landless families. Their husbands work as servants in other houses of the village, pull rickshaws, or work as day laborers. Three belong to families having less than one acre of land. A female shaman stands for purity. She wears a clean sari. Her house looks neat and clean. The shamanesses have either inherited their knowledge from their family, or they have studied with a guru (preceptor). Some of them were instructed in dreams.

These shamanesses, particularly those who are engaged in witchcraft, are sometimes dreaded because they are believed to have power to harm others. Children or young boys and girls do not visit their homes, and mothers carefully guard them from their shadow. Generally marriage to an outsider is not possible. This is not the case with the religious specialists like mullah or *munshi*. They occupy a better social position than the *faquir* or *ojha*.

Besides the aforementioned shamans there are certain traditional healers who perform both shamanistic and herbal healing. They are known as yogi, *kabiraj,* and *bediya*. Yogi and *kabiraj* belong to a Hindu community of low caste.

Yogi follow a Hindu system of meditation and self-control. Both male and female yogi are often engaged in exorcism and herbal healing. Their number is small, following a large-scale migration of the Hindu community to India after the partition of the subcontinent.

Kabiraj also belong to a low Hindu caste. They have a good knowledge of human physiology, and consider a human being as a conglomeration of three kind of humors: wind, bile, and mucus. They hold that if there is proper balance of these humors in body, mind, and spirit, there will not be any disease. According to them, disease is often the result of a state of disharmony in the body as well as in the mind. A balance is necessary to maintain good health. The *kabiraj* put great emphasis on proper diet, cleanliness, correct breathing, and meditation to keep body and mind in proper balance. They use herbs, minerals, and animal sub-

stances as medicine. They also utilize holy words and amulets in the case of spirit illness.

Bediya belong to a number of vagrant gypsy or nomadic groups professing to be Muslims, but they sing songs in praise of Rāma and Lakṣmana in addition to Allah and Muhammad. They also exhibit painted scrolls representing the exploits of Hanuman, who accompanied Rāma. Their women work as shamanesses and are skillful in the treatment of various kinds of disease and the removal of nervous and rheumatic pain. They belong to a lower social stratum of the Muslim community. These people once lived in houseboats, but now as they move from village to village they use improvised makeshift tents. Their men are often engaged in magic and monkey shows. The women, besides healing, and selling trinkets, are also engaged as snake charmers. They use herbs and animal substances as medicine. The *bediya* community maintains strict formalities and discipline within itself. They cannot marry any outsider. Any violation of these rules is severely dealt with by the chief of the community.

The shamans in Bangladesh, both Hindu and Muslim alike, are quite conversant in their own way concerning the movement of the heavenly bodies, and consider these heavenly bodies deities. They believe that there is a direct influence of the planets on human life. Another important aspect of the treatment by shamans is the use of mystic numbers like three, seven, nine, eleven, and so forth, and in particular the numbers seven and nine. For example, *suvarna* (gold), *rajata* (silver), *tamara* (copper), *variga* (tin), *sisa* (lead), *rangska* (zinc), and *loha* (iron) are seven metals that are considered very important, and are known as *dhatu.* The doctrine of seven includes seven *rsi* (ancient sages), seven mouths of fire, seven heavens, seven seas, the constellation of seven stars, and so forth. Nine, too, is a mystic number. It is found in nine planets, nine gems, nine nights, nine *rasa* (amorous, ludicrous, pathetic, vehement, heroic, terrific, loathsome, absurd, and peaceful, according to Hindu sexual art), nine *lakṣmana* (marks of Brahma), nine *sakti* (energies), nine doors (the human body), nine islands of the Ganges, and so forth.[6]

The shamans in Bangladesh also have a good knowledge of human physiology and the nervous system. The human nervous system has been described accurately in the mystical Tantras. The shamans consider the nervous system a *cakra,* or "wheel," which corresponds to the plexus or ganglion. Proper use of the *cakra* may help one obtain psychic power.

FOLK BELIEF AND THE CONCEPT OF DISEASE

Shamanism in Bangladesh has evolved from fear of the terrifying effects of spirits. The vast majority of the peasantry, regardless of their religion, consciously or unconsciously worship various deities. They believe in magic and charms and in unseen powers and nature spirits. They believe in ghosts and demons commonly known as *bhut*.[7] This word is mostly applied to persons who have died as a result of unnatural death such as accidents and suicides. Besides ghosts, the people also believe in jinn.[8] These *bhut* and jinn, who may be called ghosts, are believed to be capable of either entering or leaving a body in various ways. They are believed to enter either through the head or the mouth. The hands and feet are also considered ways by which they might enter into the body. Women are considered common targets for ghosts.

In a society where such beliefs prevail, the existence of shamans and other kind of traditional healers cannot be overemphasized. The inhabitants of Bangladesh before the arrival of the Muslims had strong animistic beliefs. When converted to Islam by the Sufis who syncretized many different ideals, they incorporated many of these animistic beliefs, keeping them as a part of folk life. The majority of the people consider Earth the Mother Goddess (Besu Mata, Maa Khaki) and hold that she provides succor and fertility. Mother Goddess has a number of deities and nature spirits in her following. These include Durga, Kali, Chandi, and others (CHATTOPADHYAYA 1968, 264–65). Islamic ideals based on the Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet do not admit these practices. Still, it has been observed that the folk who are mostly Muslims continue to follow their age-old beliefs. Sufism made the Islamic religion more syncretistic and adaptable to the existing beliefs of the people (see ROY 1983, 207). Almost everywhere in Bangladesh, Muslims in rural areas have respect for trees, river spirits, and Hindu deities, and they believe in magic. This magic is either malevolent or well intentioned. It may be designed to destroy a rival or to cure an ailment. The sorcerer usually practices malevolent or black magic, while the shamans perform benevolent or white magic for the cure of a disease.

In Bangladesh, particularly among rural people, there is a common belief that disease, sickness, and death are not the result of natural causes but are the works of supernatural beings or evil spirits. When cholera, smallpox, or similar diseases break out in epidemic form, it is said that a spirit has been offended and that an atonement on the part of the whole

community is needed. Disease is also considered a sort of punishment for sin or wrongdoing by an individual. There is a common belief that Providence, which is essentially good, beneficent, merciful, and the sustainer of all things, may bring disaster, misfortune, and calamities through agents or supernatural beings in the form of death, drought, flood, and cyclone. In such cases special prayers are offered and sacrifices made. Sessions of religious songs are also arranged when an epidemic breaks out, for the purpose of appeasing a particular deity. In rural areas of Kushtia, religious songs in honor of Manasha,[9] a Hindu deity, are arranged when any calamity befalls the community. Rural people, Hindus and Muslims alike, perform the function with much enthusiasm. One such song is *Padma-Purana*.[10] The male members of the troupe participate in the music and dance sequence. There is, however, no female participation in the said musical soirée. The male members perform any female roles. It is also commonly held that a child may be born blind or deformed following sinfulness, moral lapses, or ignorant action on the part of the parents or of other persons. Sickness that is caused by a sorcerer is considered most dangerous by rural people. A sorcerer or an evil person makes incantations on tangible objects and his spells cause an immediate effect on the victim. This practice is known as *baan*.[11] A person suffering from disease caused by a sorcerer cannot be cured unless he goes to a good religious healer.

The following episode illustrates this fact. A medical doctor, a relation of mine, told me recently that when he worked in the Dhaka Salimullah Medical College and Hospital a patient with severe pain was brought to the emergency ward. He did his best to relieve the patient of his pain, but the pain did not subside. The patient was X-rayed, and to his surprise the X-ray plates showed marks of needles pricked all through the body. The doctor added that the film was thoroughly checked and the patient was X-rayed again, with the same result. The doctor then consulted a professor of surgery, who also was puzzled. Meanwhile the patient's relatives said that it might be the work of a sorcerer and they took the patient to a *faquir* to counter the action. The patient was then healed.

Incidentally, a similar story was told by W. Ivanow in a report "A Witchcase in Medieval India" (1923). Here the victim was a Sufi saint named Shyakh Islam Fariduddin Masud, a *pir* of Shyakh Nizamuddin. A sorcerer caused an injury to him through magic and witchcraft. The Shyakh experienced severe pain. His disciple, Shyakh Nizamuddin,

however, unlocked the mystery. He discovered some tangible objects in the hole of a grave. It was a figure made of flour, into which some needles were stuck, and which was firmly tied with hairs from a horse's tail. That figure was brought to the Shyakh Fariduddin Masud. He ordered Shyakh Nizamuddin to pull out the needles and to untie the hairs, which were knotted. Every time a needle was pulled out, his pain subsided. When the disciple had pulled out all the needles and untied the hairs, the saint's health returned completely. The flour figure was destroyed and thrown into running water.

There is a common belief in rural areas that the evil eye can cause serious ailments to persons fallen victim to such action. The vegetable and animal world may also face similar action. Loss of appetite, headache, fever, and general weakness with pain all over the body are said to be characteristic symptoms of a person affected by the evil eye. It is also held that the evil eye can cause one's death. There are human beings, men and women, whose shadow and breathing may cause sickness to every living being, animal or plant. Mothers paint their newborn babies, farmers set up deformed wooden dolls or puppets, broken plates and boxes together with torn shirts, etc., to ward off the evil eye. In rural areas the rich do not eat before the poor and hungry for fear of being affected by the evil eye. The hungry look of the poor people can instantly cause loss of appetite and various stomach troubles of a painful nature. Certain animals, particularly dogs, may also cause harm through the evil eye. Mothers zealously guard their children and put a black mark around their cheeks, or use amulets. I have also noticed on a certain occasion that a beautiful milch cow stopped giving milk despite medication given by a veterinary surgeon. There are reports that milch cows after being affected by the evil eye stopped giving milk, and that their swollen udders bled. But as soon as an *ojha* or *faquir* is called, the cow and the calf return to normal. The same is true for bulls, horses, and buffaloes. Growing plants and fruit-bearing trees may either wither away or bear no fruit because of the evil eye.

In general, people in rural Bangladesh hold their ancestors in high regard. It is believed that various kinds of sufferings may take place in the family if the ancestors' wishes remain unfulfilled or if they are offended. The spirits of the ancestors are offered sacramental food on certain occasions, namely *Shab i barat,* as it is believed that after death the individual continues to exist and that it has power to influence the family. There is a custom among the people in rural Kushtia to offer food to

dogs on certain religious occasions in the belief that a dead person returns to the house in the shape of a dog. In such a case the food is offered to the dead in a secluded area outside the house. There is another belief in Kushtia that if a person dies leaving his family in debt, he reappears in the form of a dog and guards the family until the debt is paid back. An idea prevalent among Hindus has it that unless the used plates from the previous evening meal are touched by a dog, these are not clean. There is a common belief that if a dog is heard barking in a melancholic tune, some misfortune will befall the community. Similarly, the cry of a crow on a housetop, or of a cock at midnight, or the yell of an owl is considered an ill omen. There is also a fear of the dark on the occasion of the new moon, or amavasya. It is believed that the spirits, particularly the evil ones, move freely during this night.

In rural Bangladesh the dead are always remembered by their surviving relatives and friends. The belief in the dead or their reported appearance either in dreams or in the shape of a ghost is very significant for explaining crises and causes of illness in the family. The living perform various rituals as soon as the person dies in order to appease the dead. There is also a belief among rural people that the persons who meet an unnatural death may turn into ghosts and take up their abode in certain trees. When these trees are either damaged or destroyed, the ghosts will take revenge by causing death or sickness to those responsible. In Kushtia, tree worship known as *garshi*[12] is common in the months of September and October.

Among both Hindus and Muslims the relatives have certain obligations towards the deceased. In both cases the kinsmen arrange feasts for the salvation of the departed soul. Hindus have more religious functions concerning the dead than Muslims have. On the day of the Sraddha ceremony[13] the sons of the deceased invite all their blood relations to bathe and dine with them for the benefit of the deceased soul. The ceremony is performed on the 11th day after a death. Through the Brahman officiating at the Sraddha, the soul of the deceased is presented with all the requirements for its survival and comfort; these include food, bedding, clothes, and furniture. It is believed that these provisions will be used by the deceased, without which the latter would suffer.

In Kushtia, Muslims distribute sweets among everybody attending the burial rites. Rural people offer cooked food to the animal deity if the grave is damaged by an animal. This is done in order to appease the deity who might have been annoyed with the deceased while living. The Baul

community, an obscure religious sect, performs the *sandhya* ceremony at the grave of the deceased. This includes burning of incense and lamps and offering prayers in the evening. During any religious festival of the Bauls, the food prepared is first offered to the dead spiritual leader or the dead member and then it is taken by his followers. Among the Hindus, the sons as well as the wife of the deceased avoid salt for ten days. The sons avoid use of any metallic utensils and bear in their hands a piece of iron. The sons and their wives avoid physical comforts and become strict vegetarians for a certain period.

SPIRIT POSSESSION AND EXORCISM

Spirit possession is considered quite common in rural areas. As mentioned earlier, the proportion of spirit possession is higher among women than men. Menstruating, pregnant, and parturient women are believed to be especially vulnerable to the mischievous action of evil spirits. Broken taboos are also considered responsible for spirit possession. There are taboos to be followed by menstruating or pregnant women and mothers giving birth, without which there is a danger of being possessed by a spirit. A pregnant woman is not allowed to lie down during a solar or lunar eclipse. She must keep on sitting or walking. She must not go out alone or sit with her hair loose. She should not go to defecate at noon in the bamboo groves, particularly on Shanibar (Saturday) or Mongolbar (Tuesday). The same is true for menstruating women. Spontaneous abortion and a stillborn child are always believed to result from spirit or *bhut* action. During childbirth both the mother and her child are vulnerable to spirit possession. As a result they are always kept segregated either in a dirty room or in a makeshift hut not frequented by any member of the house except the attendant. During this period, which continues for forty days, the mother is not allowed to come out of the room except when she is in dire need. She is provided with an insufficient quantity of food. She has to keep an iron rod in her bed beside the baby and when she goes out she must carry it with her for fear of being possessed by a spirit. It is believed that spirits shun iron. The room of the mother is constantly filled with smoke and the burning of incense to drive away evil spirits. Her room or hut, called *āturghar*[14] in Bengali, is considered most unclean and unhygienic since it is associated with childbirth. The doors and windows are always shut to avoid an evil spirit or the evil eye. In fact, menstruation and childbirth are considered polluting, and during this time women are not allowed to touch anything that

is not their own. *Amavasya* (the new moon), the full moon, and twilight, morning, and evening are considered moments when the spirits move around.

In my fieldwork, I noticed that almost all cases of female disease were attributed to spirit possession. I came across a number of such cases. Methods adopted to drive away spirits vary from place to place. There are, however, some features common to most areas. It is a popular belief that the holy Quran can counter an attack of spirits, and certain Suras (verses) can help keep or drive them away. The Muslims use Quranic verses written on the doorway or the opening of the confinement room in order to avoid any attack of spirits, or to scare away ghosts. A *faquir*, particularly a religious specialist, is called to help prevent the attack of the spirits known as jinn. Sometimes offerings are made at the *asthana* of the abode of the *pir.* When anybody is attacked, a *faquir* or an *ojha* is called, and he then adopts various measures not always conforming to the Muslim faith. The *faquir* or the *ojha* are generally less educated, and in most cases they are illiterate. It may be pointed out here that the Hindus believe that ghosts cannot stand the name of Rāma, Śiva, and Kali. Whenever a man happens to pass by a haunted place or is terrified by an apparition, he uses the names of gods and goddesses. Similarly, the Muslims utter the names of Allah and Muhammad, the Prophet, or the name of their *pir.* The *faquir* or the *ojha* in most cases use mixed religious names in their acts of driving away spirits. In certain areas, houses and confinement rooms are often protected from evil spirits by using divine names, enchanted dust, or mustard seeds strewn over the doorway. Other methods include hanging up a piece of a fishing net, the horn of a cow, or a piece of the bark or twig of certain plants.

Other preventives popular among Hindu and Muslims are charms or amulets (MITRA 1933). These are also quite common among the educated class. The amulets are tied around the neck or the arm of the person liable to be haunted by spirits. Sometimes a coil of thread or a cowrie is used, and religious incantations are pronounced over them. When roots and leaves of plants are used, these are collected either on Shanibar or Mongolbar. The new moon, or *amavasya,* is also considered an auspicious time for collecting them. Plants growing on graves are used, too.

For the shaman, as the term is used to designate the *faquir* or the *ojha*, the first thing to do is to protect himself by reciting certain mantras or incantations, and the next is to protect the house or room of the patient. He then makes a circular line between him and the patient. After that

he holds a parley with the spirit, asking him who he is and what he wants to do, and then he orders the spirit to leave the patient. If the spirit is unwilling, the shaman throws turmeric into the fire and asks the patient to inhale the smoke. This is done in order to evict the spirit through the nuisance of the smoke. He also reads out incantations and blows them over black peppers, asking the patient to chew the same. Likewise, hot mustard oil is put into the ears in order to make the spirit talk through the patient. Sometimes the patient is beaten mercilessly. The shaman also uses a looking glass and split bamboo for magical use to diagnose spirit illness, or he may resort to some other tests. He draws three long lines and then several short ones across the long ones on the ground with a twig and then fixes the twig in the ground inside one of the squares. He then reads incantations and jerks his head and body a couple of times, each time destroying the figure drawn until he can diagnose correctly that it was an evil spirit that caused the sickness. Occasionally a winnowing fan and an earthen lamp are used. The shaman holds the winnowing fan upside down in his left hand. He places a small lamp filled with oil and a burning cotton wick in it. Holding the lamp with his left hand he begins to swing it slowly to and fro. He then implores deities to tell if any spirit is causing the malady. When the flame of the lamp suddenly burns brightly, he assumes that the sickness has been caused by a spirit. It has also been observed that the shaman in the course of his performances uses a twig of a *nim* tree (*Melia azaddirechta*) and brushes the body of the patient with it, and recites mantra or incantations. Some water, after it is properly ritualized by incantation, is given to the patient to drink and is sprinkled over his body. A Muslim shaman takes the name of his *pir,* shows deep veneration, and asks the relatives to sacrifice a fowl or a goat, as the case may be, at the shrine of his *pir.* The Hindu shaman asks for a sacrifice at the temple of his deity. Sometimes roasted fish, milk, or unripe plantain fruit are offered. It may be mentioned here that in rural areas people consider jinn to be male and *pari* to be female. A female is always attacked by a jinni and a male by a *pari.*

EXAMPLES OF SHAMANS IN ACTION

Faquir

The patient was a village woman aged over thirty who became mentally sick and deranged. She was a beautiful lady. She was jumping from one place to another, shouting abusive language, stamping on the floor, and

was almost naked. Everybody in the family was of the opinion that an evil spirit or a bad jinni possessed her. The woman was quite sound in body and mind before she was thus possessed by the evil spirit. She had been very modest, sober, and always wore a *purdah* (head cover). It was quite unusual for her to go almost naked. It was learned that she had gone out alone at dark, as she felt the necessity to respond to the call of nature at a nearby bush. She was menstruating at the time. Reportedly she had seen a monster in front of her on her way back home. Thereupon she fainted and was afterwards recovered by her relatives, and since then she talked incoherently and occasionally muttered unintelligible sounds. Sometimes she looked moody, danced, and sang, to the utter surprise of everybody, since she did not know how to sing. She had two children and a husband. A *faquir* was called for treatment. He was a middle-aged bearded man with a thick moustache and long loose hair. His eyes were sharp and penetrating, his teeth broken and uneven. He was constantly chewing betel leaf and occasionally puffing *gunja* (cannabis).

The first thing he did upon arrival was to look straight into the eyes of the patient. The moment the patient saw the *faquir,* she shrieked and went to a corner. The *faquir* had a small looking glass and a stone ring. He asked the patient to look into the magic glass but she refused violently. The *faquir* then read a mantra while blowing on her. He again asked her to look into the glass. The woman made a sign that she could see an object in the looking glass. The *faquir* then shouted at the top of his voice, using abusive language to the evil spirit who was believed to have possessed the woman. His whole body began to shake and tremble. He then recited some incantations taken from the religious books of the Muslim and Hindu community. He used the names of Allah, Hari, Mahadev, Muhammad, Kṛṣṇa, Fatima, Ali, and Makali, and he made a circle around himself and the patient. He burnt turmeric and asked her to inhale. He also brought an old shoe and asked the patient to sniff the smell. The patient refused and got violent. The *faquir* then stroked her with a broom and put hot mustard oil into her ears. He repeatedly asked for the identity of the spirit. The patient refused to comply with his requests. Then the *faquir* burnt mustard seed and read out a mantra. This brought the desired result. There was a burning sensation all over the body of the patient, and she agreed to talk. The following is the exchange between the *faquir* and the patient or the spirit who possessed her.

Faquir: Who are you? Where do you live?
Patient: (with a strong nasal accent) I am Kalu, I live in the bamboo groves behind the house.
Faquir: Why have you come into the body of this woman?
Patient: She is beautiful. I like her.
Faquir: Leave her immediately.
Patient: No, I shall kill her husband.
Faquir: I order you to leave her body.
Patient: I shall not go.
Faquir: See how I force you to leave.

The *faquir* began to mutter mantras. Then he brought out the root of a herb that he kept in his bag. Meanwhile his associates started to beat a tin can that made a roaring sound. The *faquir* flogged the woman cruelly. She was fleeing from one corner to the other. Her women associates could not control her movement. She had acquired much strength. Her hair was disheveled and her clothes fell off her body. At last she was forced to eat the root of the herb, which she chewed and swallowed.

Faquir: Would you leave now? Have you seen I am more powerful than you?
Patient: Yes, I will leave her. Don't torture me anymore.
Faquir: What sign will you make of your departure?
Patient: I shall leave her. Don't worry.
Faquir: Break a twig of a tree or carry with your teeth the earthen pitcher full of water from the house and break it when you leave her.
Patient: Yes, I will do as you order.

She carried with her teeth an earthen pitcher full of water and broke it after going five or six yards. Then she fainted. The *faquir* revived her by sprinkling water on her face. She was taken to a room where she slept for hours and awoke normal. The *faquir* then asked the husband to make a sacrifice and offer a small amount of money to a shrine of a Sufi saint known to the family.

In many cases the *faquir* or shaman burns the body of the patient with an iron rod. As the case concerned a female patient, exorcism was done in the presence of close relatives.

In another case, in which a young man was mentally retarded, a *faquir* was called, and he diagnosed a spirit illness. He conducted the

following shamanistic performance. It was nighttime. The patient was kept in a small room. There was a limited number of people in the room. The *faquir* had an attendant with him who was present with a tin can to be used as a drum. He asked everybody to look down and to remain silent until the activities of the *faquir* came to an end. The light was put out and the attendant began beating the tin can. Everybody in the room was alert to hear the voice of the spirit. The *faquir* was reading out an incantation. At one time he shook his whole body. The attendant was beating the can violently. After a while there was an incomprehensible sound. The spirit spoke. The *faquir* asked him to tell the cause of the ailment. The spirit, with a strong nasal accent, said that the man was possessed by a female spirit when he was young. The *faquir* prescribed certain herbs and asked for the sacrifice of an animal.

There are other interesting stories regarding spirit possession. In one case a woman patient and an *ojha* were involved. The patient was a widow and occasionally became mentally ill. But it was found that she was cured when she could meet the *ojha* in a closed room. The *ojha* had to marry the woman when she became pregnant as a result of the meeting. In my field area I observed many married women becoming mentally sick or deranged because of dissatisfaction in their sex life. A number of women became spirit possessed when they went out to attend nature's call at noon or nighttime. They were spirit-possessed in a solitary place near the jungle and at a time and place not frequented by any person. It has been observed that the women who were thus spirit-possessed had husbands working in distant places and rarely saw them come home. I also heard stories of rape and murder that were initially attributed to spirit possession. In a Kushtia village there were four mysterious killings involving children and newborn babies during October 1985. I visited the village and talked to the inhabitants. Everybody in the village attributed the case to spirit action. Deaths occurred in intervals of two to three days. The dead bodies were found floating in a nearby pond or ditches. The *faquir* were called and they stated that it was the action of an evil spirit. People invented a number of stories concerning the spirit and its movement. But when the law enforcement agency posted police in the village, there were no further deaths. The police afterwards interpreted the case as murder by an organized group that was involved in village politics, and the police took them into custody.

Nevertheless, I believe that spirit possession is a reality. I know of a case in Kushtia where the niece of a highly qualified physician was pos-

sessed by a spirit. The doctor took it as a case of mental disorder and applied all modern drugs, but these did not work. He was a modern man trained in foreign countries and did not have faith in spirits or *bhut*. He was struck dumb when he heard his brother's daughter, who lived all her life in a village and was not at all conversant in the English language, start talking in English. This was witnessed by many, and the doctor called a *faquir,* who cured her. Such a case of spirit possession was confirmed by Dr. Syed Ali Naqui, a highly qualified professor of sociology who witnessed cases in which simple village folk living in rural areas started talking in English when possessed by a spirit.

But one thing remains unsolved: Why did these spirits talk in English? In the case of the doctor's niece, the spirit talked in Bengali too. In the Kushtia villages where I observed such cases of spirit possession, all the spirits used Bengali and gave Bengali names as their identity. Many of them said that they were murdered secretly and that no religious ceremony was held for them. There were others who said that they had committed suicide. A colleague of mine now serving as an associate professor of geography in a government college told me that he personally saw a ghost together with other members of his family. At night the ghost came again in a dream and told him that he had been murdered secretly long ago, and no funeral ceremony had been held. My colleague told me that he consulted with his neighbors, who also told him that the ghost had appeared a number of times in the vicinity. He said that the ghost in his dream revealed the location where he was murdered. It was an old dilapidated house adjacent to his own. Upon digging in the area he found a skeleton in a sitting position. Funeral rites were performed, and since then there has been no disturbance from the ghost.

In a Kushtia village I came across a woman *faquir* who made her living as a shamaness and who deftly acted as such. I was told that on each Thursday she was possessed by a spirit and when patients visited her she prescribed various herbs and other methods for getting cured. She received a regular income from this. When I visited her on a Thursday night, I found a large number of patients – men, women, and children – waiting anxiously. Her husband told me that the spirit visited her every Thursday evening after the Mughrev prayer, and his visit was marked by a buzzing sound. I found the woman sitting on a cot. Her husband was inside talking to her. There was a lantern in one corner of the house. We were told that in a few minutes the spirit would visit her. We heard a buzzing sound, and the woman was in trance. She was giv-

ing necessary instructions to the awaiting patients. However, when my turn came I met her along with a *faquir* who was introduced to her by her husband. This infuriated her and she abused him verbally for taking me to her place. The *faquir* told her that he failed to cure me of my disease and that was why he took me to her. This appeased her. Then I asked her what the disease was I was suffering from. She could not help. It appeared that she was extremely nervous. After some time she fainted. Her husband explained to me that the spirit had left her. The *faquir* told me later that she was a fake. I interviewed some of the patients who visited her earlier. They told me that the prescriptions did not in any way help cure their disease. I did not find any old patients there.

Besides performing exorcism, the *faquir* also treats other kinds of diseases. When a patient suffered from severe headaches, the *faquir* touched the forehead of the patient and recited the following incantation.

> In the name of Allah-Hari, oh Mother Earth, you are my mother; I am your son. Whatever you may do, Mother, do as you like. You are my mother truly.

The shaman then used sticky soil moistened with urine and rubbed the affected part of the body of the patient. After some time the patient was cured of his headache.

The use of urine is common with the Bauls, who belong to an obscure religious cult. In case anybody among them suffers from fever the Baul shaman or *faquir* rubs his body with urine. Another practice among them is to drink urine when they suffer from colic pain. When they go for treatment, they use the following incantation:

Guru Satya, Thakur Satya, Hari Satya
Tomar Angate byamo mukto

Guru is true, Thakur is true, Hari is true
The disease is cured at your behest.

The Bauls also make frequent use of human milk, particularly when they suffer from tuberculosis.

The invocation of spirits is an important part of Bengali shamanism. This is done to command the presence of jinn or demons for the cure of certain diseases, or to secure accomplishment of wishes – temporal or spiritual. The *faquir* in the course of his magico-religious practice uses

the name of the patient. If the patient is named Ahmed then his name should correspond to what element he belongs to, to which planet his life cycle is planned by or connected with, and so forth. For example, the initial of Ahmed is *A,* his element is fire, his planet is Saturn, his sign of the zodiac, Ram, Lion, and Archer. The initial of Rahela is *R,* her element is water, her planet is Venus, and her sign of the zodiac is Crab, Scorpion, and Fish. The *faquir* also makes a diagram on the ground that names certain demons, fairies, and jinn in order to ascertain the cause of the disease.

The Ojha

Like the *faquir*, the *ojha* is also associated with magic healing technique. He specializes in the treatment of snake bites. Rural people in Bangladesh consider serpents to be deities. The belief prevails that a snake bite is not always an accident. It may have been effected by a god or spirit because of a sin or if a deity takes offense. It is thus important to find out what spirit is behind the snake bite and how it can be appeased. It is the duty of the *ojha* to find this out. In Kushtia there is a custom that if anyone is bitten by a snake someone runs to the house of an *ojha* or a shaman with the news that a man or woman, as the case may be, has a *kata gha* (cut wound). He does not say that the person has been bitten by a snake. If this were said, it is believed that the patient would die.

As soon as the *ojha* gets the news he gives up everything and runs to the house of the person bitten. Should he fail to heal the person, he will forget everything and will never again be able to play the role of *ojha*. On reaching the place the *ojha* makes the person sit on a low stool and then moves the person's right hand in the air in a circular pattern, uttering incantations and using the most abusive language. Then he shakes himself violently and falls into a trance. In this state if his hand catches hold of a particular part of the victim's body it will be considered that the venom has spread to that part of the body. If the hand catches hold of the head, it will then be held that the venom has spread up to the head and there is no way to help the person. If the hand falls on another part of the body, all precaution will be taken to prevent the venom from spreading. It will then be tied with a rope or an arrangement will be made to check the flow of the poison. Meanwhile, the *ojha* will continue reciting incantations. He rubs the place between the bandage and the actual place of injury, constantly using incantations, until he declares that the venom has come down to the place of injury caused by the snake bite. He then collects

seven *kachu* (Eng., arum) leaves, cuts the place of injury and takes out blood in sufficient quantity and keeps it on the *kachu* leaves. After he has taken a good quantity of fresh blood from the patient, he declares that the person bitten is out of danger. In most cases the *ojha* uses chickens to gauge whether he has sucked out the poison from the injury. Chickens will die as long as poison is left within the body of the patient. If the chicken does not die while the *ojha* is sucking blood, the *ojha* declares the patient free from danger. In Kushtia rural people believe that the serpent deity may cause suffering if it is not worshiped. They, both Hindus and Muslims, arrange certain religious songs known as *bhasan,*[15] *padmapuran,* or *behula laksmindar.* In these songs the serpent deity Manasha along with other gods and goddesses is invoked. One such song was used to help cure a woman in the village of Philipnagar, who was bitten by a snake at night. Another treatment is reported by BHATTACHARYA (1977, 218).

> Three sanctified cowries are sent to fetch the snake which caused the bite. The cowries are found stuck on the body of the snake, one at the head, another at the middle and the third one at the tip of the tail. Thus the cowries carry the snake to the place where the exorcist is waiting with the patient for its arrival. As soon as it arrives the exorcist makes it bite the patient again on the same spot with the intention of drawing out the venom from his body. After that a cup full of milk is placed before it. It is believed that the snake vomits into it the venom which it had drawn out of the body of its victim. Thus the patient is cured.

The *ojha* in rural Bangladesh represents the mystical experience characteristic of primitive and archaic religions. Although his principal function is healing snake bites, he plays an important role in other magico-religious rites. He is also a specialist in spirit illness and spirit possession. The *ojha* are Muslims, and though they are considered spiritually and supernaturally powerful, they rarely go to the mosque for prayer.

Other Shamans

In addition to the *ojha*, the other groups of shaman, like mullah and *faquir,* also treat people by faith healing. Faith healing is based on the belief that sickness may be treated without any medicine or appliances if the prayer is accompanied by true faith on the part of the sufferer. In Bangladesh faith healing is still very common. It is usually associated with amulets,

charms, and knots. In Kushtia I have seen a number of cases in which a cure was made through faith healing. I know an old woman who had been suffering from a severe facial paralysis. She was asked by a *faquir* to pray at a sacred place in the name of a dead *pir.* To my utter surprise, the old woman was seen totally cured on the next day following her visit to the sacred place. In Kushtia there are a number of shrines, such as Jhaudia and Swastipur. Each Friday hundreds of men and women go there and offer sacramental food and other gifts. At the shrine of Lalon Shah, a Baul spiritual leader, I have seen a number of people visiting regularly to have diseases treated. These people believe that Lalon Shah has power to cure even from his grave. They also offer food and money at the shrine for prosperity in their worldly life.

The mullah or *munshi* is possibly the most sought after person for faith healing. This religious priest, whose breath is considered holy, has acquired supernatural healing power. He breathes on the head and afflicted parts of the patient, laying at the same time his hands upon the patient. He then produces a tiny scroll of paper inscribed with some sacred words; he orders the sufferer to either soak the paper in water and drink the liquid or wear it on his person for a stated number of days. This is not an exclusive practice of the mullah and the *munshi.* In Bangladesh it is customary to provide the patient who believes in faith healing with amulets. Muslims and Hindu priests, including *faquir*, *ojha,* and yogis, provide their patients with amulets. Cabalistic talismans are prepared by religious specialists as preventives against and cures for real and imaginary calamities. These are worn constantly by persons believing in them. Such talismans are often composed of cabalistic calculations based on the numerical value of the letters constituting the name of the interested person.

Baul faquir

Baul *faquir* belong to a group of unorthodox native *faquir* who have taken music as a chief vehicle for communicating their ideas. The word "*baul*" means a person who has either attained or is making efforts to attain control over the self by following certain secret practices related to breathing and yogic actions. As with other *faquir* who practice shamanism, they also belong to the lower ranks of Muslim communities in Bangladesh. The Baul *faquir*, because of their obscure religious cult, have their own hamlets separated from the general village population. They do not go to the mosque or say prayers five times daily, nor do they attend any reli-

gious festivals. Their method of treatment is similar to that of the other *faquir* except that on occasion they use their *panca-rasa sadhana* together with a magic charm. This is also known as *khaḳ sadhana*. The *khaḳ sadhana* concerns the human body and earth. The Baul *faquir*, while treating his patient, recites the following words: "In the name of God, in the name of God, oh Mother Earth, you are my mother, I am your son, whatever you may do, Mother, do as you like, you are my mother truly." After this he uses sticky soil soaked with urine and rubs it on the afflicted part of the patient's body. This the Baul *faquir* do in order to cure various colic pains or headaches. These *faquir* also take urine, semen, human milk, and menses, believing that these would help them lead a disease-free life. However, they are not exorcists and do not cure people suffering from spirit possession.

Bediya

The *bediya* belong to a number of vagrant gypsy or nomadic groups professing to be Muslims, but do not follow any tenets of Islam and sing praises of Rāma and Lakṣmana beside Allah and Muhammad. The *bediya* as such do not form a tribe, nor are they religious practitioners. They generally live in houseboats, but occasionally they live in villages as well. Their main occupations are snake charming and selling of indigenous medicines and various kinds of household goods. Their women work as shamanesses and are skillful in the treatment of various diseases, including diseases of women and children, and in the removal of nervous and rheumatic pains. They practice massage for rheumatism and suck out bad blood from the body by a method known as *singha*. They know the use of herbs to cure footaches. The *bediya* are also hunters and fowlers. Some of the animals that they catch are used for medicinal purposes or for charms. The flesh of the *pankauri,* a kind of water bird that looks like a crow, if killed on Mongolbar or Shanibar cures enlargement of the spleen and puerperal (childbirth) disorders. The claws and droppings of the spotted owlet (*pencha*), if pounded up with betel nut, work as a love potion. The dried flesh of the bird Dahuk is very beneficial for rheumatism. The female *bediya* are also palmists. They carry with them a bundle of herbs, minerals, animal bones and substance, and various kinds of amulets and charms against physical and mental disorders. They are much sought after by village maidens for the sake of the potion with which they restore to them their estranged lovers. They also make forecasts as to the sex of unborn children.

TWO SHAMANESSES

Fulkumari – A Hindu Yogi and Shamaness

In one of the Kushtia villages where I worked for several years I came across a female shaman named Fulkumari who was a Hindu yogi and a Vaishnava by faith. She was 70 years old. Her husband, Shushil Das, died long ago. She had one son and one daughter; both were married and had children. Fulkumari lived in her house in a village named Uttar Lahini, supporting herself by healing. She had a temple by the side of her house, where she sat every Mongolbar and Shanibar. She applied various healing techniques including exorcism and was widely known.

Fulkumari told me that she did not learn her trade from her family nor was she instructed by a guru. Once in a dream it was thrust upon her by a deity whom she identified as Kali. On each Mongolbar and Shanibar I found her giving prescriptions to at least forty patients. The number of female patients was fairly large. Fulkumari had a magic stick that had been given to her by a Tantric woman whom she visited in a crematory after being made a shaman by the deity. The stick had belonged to a Muslim *faquir*. There was a river flowing beside the temple and residence of Fulkumari. It was known as Kaliganga. Fulkumari's neighborhood had thirty families and all belonged to the Vaishnava cult. Adjoining areas were all Muslim. Fulkumari has visited a number of holy places and shrines in Bangladesh and India. She learnt various healing techniques by using magic and charms. During her visits she came into contact with various Muslim *faquir* and learnt the Muslim way of healing as well. Before beginning her day's job, Fulkumari recited the following mantra while seated in front of the image of the goddess Kali:

> I take the name of Brahma Bishnu, you are ahead of me and behind. I am in the middle. I take the name of the wind; whosoever is sick, you cure him or her. I am nobody. I take the name of Kali, Raksha Kali, and Bhairabi. You exist. I take a seat before you, oh mother! Raksha Kali. My name is Fulkumari. You have to fulfill your obligation to me. Sixty-four *mohanto,* ten *kapalik,* six *kabiraj.* Oh mother Raksha Kali, 108 Kali, I take thy name, oh mother.

The following is an illustration of how Fulkumari acted as a shamaness on 27 May 1986. Fulkumari was as usual in her Kali *mandir* (temple). She took her seat in the temple, as she did every Shanibar and Mongolbar, and treated various sick persons, the majority of them

women. Most of them came from neighboring villages. I also found patients coming from distant parts. A young man brought to her his sister, a woman named Rupjan, from a neighboring village. Aged 40, she suffered from spirit possession. Fulkumari touched the head of Rupjan with her magic stick *kalchander lathi* ("stick of *faquir* Kalachand") and made a circle around her while reciting the following mantra:

> In the name of Brahma, Bishnu, and Hari I make this circle. Jinn, *bhut* or *pret,* you have no power to go beyond this magic circle. You have to appear here for talks.

Fulkumari then caught the hair of Rupjan with her left hand and kept on touching the head of Rupjan with the magic stick and again recited the following mantra: "I take the name of Goddess Kali. Mahadev help me drive the evil spirit out. I pray to you, I pray to you. I am your servant. I worship you, oh Mother Kali. Please help me drive out the evil spirit." The woman was in a trance. Fulkumari then asked the spirit possessing the woman, "Who are you? Why do you possess this woman? What do you want from her? You must leave her; otherwise I shall inflict punishment on you. You know who I am?" The evil spirit in the woman said that his name was Kadaruddin. He liked the girl and had been staying with her for the last fourteen years. He will kill her husband to get the woman completely. Fulkumari then read a mantra silently and said to the spirit that he should leave her at once. Kadaruddin (the spirit) replied that he would not leave her because his face had been burnt by a *faquir* who used burnt turmeric for treatment, and it would be difficult for him to go back to his own people with a burnt face. Fulkumari said to the spirit if he would go back to his own people he would find everybody with a burnt face. Fulkumari used her magic stick and recited a mantra in unintelligible words and asked the spirit to leave immediately. The spirit appeared to be frightened when Fulkumari said that she would force him to leave. Then the spirit agreed to leave Rupjan. But Fulkumari pressed him to show a sign of his departure either by breaking a branch of a tree or by breaking an earthen pitcher full of water. The spirit in Rupjan agreed to break the pitcher. To my surprise I found the woman Rupjan carrying the earthen pitcher full of water with her teeth only. After moving a few yards she dropped the pitcher, which broke, and Rupjan fell down completely senseless. Fulkumari then touched her several times with the magic stick and read out a mantra. Rupjan came to her senses and

inquired what had happened to her and why she was brought to a Kali *mandir*. She talked normally and showed no sign of the abnormality she showed while possessed by the spirit.

It should be mentioned that Fulkumari was the only shamaness I saw who used a magic stick and incantations to drive away evil spirits. She attributed all sickness to the works of evil spirits. In curing disease other than spirit possession, Fulkumari applied the following procedure. She took a clay bowl and filled it with betel leaf, betel nut, paddy, *durba* (a kind of grass), mango twig, and sweets. She then covered the bowl with a piece of new cloth provided by the sick. This being done, Fulkumari took her seat before the bowl (which was kept in front of the image of the goddess Kali), put a piece of new cloth round her neck, and then repeated a number of times incantations or mantra as a shamanistic device. When the patient was cured, Fulkumari exclaimed,

> Look, you are cured. Now bring an amulet made of three metals: iron, brass, and silver. And also bring with you three small hooks, three needles, and three thorns taken from three different trees. You must also bring a piece of new cloth, some milk, three different kinds of flowers, leaves, and fruits next Shanibar or Mongolbar.

Of all weekdays, Shanibar and Mongolbar are considered special by the shamans because they believe that the deities are active either for good or bad during these days.

I interviewed Rupjan and accompanied her to her house. There I heard the following story: Rupjan was first married to a man named Moksed Shaik of Alampur Village. She was then only eleven years old and she did not have her first period during the first year of her married life. She was sexually tortured by her husband. Once at night she screamed. Everybody in the family, including her husband, said that she was possessed by an evil spirit. After two years of married life she was divorced. Later on, Rupjan was again married, this time to Aftab Ali Biswas of Harisankarpur, fifteen miles away from the village of her first husband. There she lived as a married woman for fourteen years. During this period she gave birth to two sons and two daughters. Rupjan's second husband was very poor. He was a worker in the local textile mills. Rupjan occasionally behaved abnormally in her second husband's house also. Everybody in the family held that she was possessed by an evil spirit. She was never taken to any physician. She was given *tabiz* or amulets by a Muslim *faquir* as protection against jinn or *bhut*. It worked well with her

for some time. Then she was again possessed. This time a *pir* was called. He used certain herbs and roots together with mustard oil and poured it into her ears and eyes. He also used religious incantations. This exorcism made her well for several years. But during the last five years she was sometimes abnormal. Her husband, who lost his job two years earlier because of his sickness, maintained the family by pulling a rickshaw. One of her daughters was married, the other was eight years old. The eldest son was also a rickshaw puller. Her husband wanted to divorce her, but he was prevented by his relatives for the sake of their minor son and daughter. At last the brother of Rupjan took her to Fulkumari. On investigation it was found that Rupjan suffered from acute anemia. She also suffered malnutrition because of poverty. Her husband was not at all sympathetic. A medical examination revealed that she had suffered from hysteria.

In Fulkumari's temple I met another woman, named Jahanara, who had come for treatment. She was twenty years old and had been married for five years but had not given birth to a child. She did not start menstruating until after she was married. Her period was very irregular (sometimes it took two months before it recurred), and the color of her blood was black. She conceived a number of times, but after some months she would suffer a miscarriage. Her mother-in-law was critical. Her husband, Omor Ali of Ujangram (I gathered while talking with Jahanara) was also not happy with her because of strained relations with his father- in-law because the latter failed to provide him with a bicycle and cash to supplement his business. Her failure to give birth to a child was another source of displeasure on the part of her husband. Jahanara was sent back to her father's house. The women of the family considered her inability to give birth the work of an evil spirit; Jahanara agreed with them. She said that she feared that she was influenced by an evil spirit who kept an evil eye on her. She was given a *tabiz* (amulet) by a *faquir,* but it did not work. Upon returning to her father's house, a woman relative took Jahanara to Fulkumari. Fulkumari claimed that Jahanara was suffering from an evil spirit. She gave her herbal medicine[16] and a *tabiz*, the use of which she said would prevent evil spirits from causing any harm to her.

A medical doctor later told me that it was a case of blood incompatibility leading to habitual miscarriage. He said further that even if a child were born to the couple, there was a possibility that the child would not have survived.

I also met a couple there who had married recently. Both of them had severe abdominal pain and experienced a burning sensation all over their bodies. They had no appetite. Fulkumari immediately concluded that an evil eye caused the disease. They had been administered polluted food without their knowledge in order to cause harm to them. Fulkumari prescribed an amulet and herbal medicine for them. She recited a mantra and touched their bodies with her magic stick. After a couple of minutes the couple said that they felt better. Fulkumari told them to drink a glass of water every Saturday morning after dipping the magic amulet into it seven times.

As I observed Fulkumari for several days, I became convinced that she was a psychoanalyst. In 80% of the cases her remedy was temporary and short-lived, but in the other 20% the cure was permanent. She did not attend to any patients except on Shanibar and Mongolbar, and she would only meet with them in the temple. On no other days did she have any power to cure. The patients and their relatives looked on Fulkumari as a superhuman who had power over spirits.

Sakhina Khatun – A Muslim Shamaness

Apart from Fulkumari, the other shamanesses I met were all Muslims by faith. Among them was Sakhina Khatun, who was a 45-year-old resident of the village Jugia. Her husband, Rowshan Ali Surdar, was a rickshaw puller. Sakhina's father was a veteran shaman before his death. Her elder brother, who lived in the same village, was also a shaman. In the course of my meeting with Sakhina she told me that she had received mystical signs and instructions in her dreams, which suggested that she was being possessed by a spirit. Her father, Rajab Faquir, whom I knew for years, was very happy to learn this. Gradually Rajab Faquir trained her in various shamanistic methods. Sakhina made effective use of magical words or mantra while trying to heal others. She used mantra for everything from snake bites to difficult childbirth and exorcism. In a difficult childbirth of a woman of the same village, Sakhina used the following mantra:

> I take the name of Rāma, Lakṣmana, and Śita. I take the name of Rāma and then Lakṣmana. Now I take the charge of childbirth. There is blood in the generative organ. It has shaped into flesh and bones. In collaboration with Mahādeva I shall make release. After ten months and ten days the child is delivered.

These magic words or mantra concerning childbirth, although they have little or no meaning, proved quite effective and meaningful in facilitating a difficult childbirth. The use of mantra in childbirth is somewhat exceptional in rural Bangladesh because women have easy deliveries, and any difficult childbirth is always attributed to the working of an evil spirit. The shamaness takes the name of the Hindu deities Rāma, Lakṣmana, Śita, and Mahādeva in view of a folk belief that these deities have power over evil spirits and would serve as guardian deities. I observed that Sakhina also took the name of Allah, Hazrat Muhammad, and Hazrat Fatima (the wife of Hazrat Ali and daughter of the Prophet Hazrat Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam) while making a *jharphuk* (a kind of massage of the affected part of the body together with an occasional blowing of the mantra by the *faquir* or shaman over the affected part). Women facing difficult childbirth believe in the effectiveness of such *jharphuk* or mantra, as do others in their societies.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, analyzing a song used by a Cuna Indian shaman to facilitate difficult childbirth, suggests that the effectiveness of the song lies in its power to psychologically manipulate the patient's generative organs. The shaman's song provides a mythical language in which the patient can express the inexpressible incoherence of pain and disorder. By attaining the psychological release, the shaman also effects a physiological cure.

Lévi-Strauss maintains that the sick woman having a difficult childbirth accepts the mythical beings and never questions their existence. Once the sick woman understands, she does more than resign herself. Lévi-Strauss argues that this does not happen to a sick person suffering from a bacterial disease because the relationship between germ and disease is external to the mind of the patient: for it is a cause-and-effect relationship; whereas the relationship between monster (evil spirit) and disease is internal to his mind, whether consciously, or unconsciously: it is a relationship between a symbol and the thing symbolized. Lévi-Strauss thus considers the shaman a psychoanalyst. In fact, the use of mantra or magical words, charms, and amulets that the healers use as effective methods for healing serve as a psychoanalytical cure. The patient develops confidence in the healer, who makes use of the patient's faith in the community's myths (Lessa and Vogt 1979, 318–27).

ANALYSIS

The belief in the magic effect of charms, amulets, or shamanistic events survives an increase in knowledge or reasoning even in religions such as Christianity. According to Don YODER (1972, 201–202),

> In both Eastern Christendom and Roman Catholicism healing shrines and healing saints were recognized and in most cases the people's drive toward connecting faith and healing was diverted into ecclesiastical, Church-sanctioned channels. Through its system of blessings, benedictions, and its wide use of sacraments (essentially expressing the belief in the holiness of material objects) the medieval Church ministered to and encouraged the principles that we consider basic to folk medicine of the magico-religious sort: the ideas of the availability of supernatural powers for healing, and the mediation of that power through material objects as well as human healers.

Use of amulets, magic, and charms is common. Despite great advances in modern science, shamanism is very alive. It is no longer viewed as superstition, and its psychological value is recognized. There is no doubt that occasionally a shaman may display "neurotic" or "psychotic" symptoms, though in a given society most of them display no such symptoms (LESSA and VOGT 1979, 327). A shaman is, however, a person who "imposes order upon the disordered and chaotic wild" (SHWEDER 1979, 327). The shaman attempts to convince the gods to place things back in order and not leave anybody abandoned in the wild. The shaman is thus indispensable in a traditional society because only he is capable of giving meaning to supernatural revelation and taking care of illness. In fact, the shaman is someone who restores confidence not only in the mind of the patient but also in the community, and thereby leads the way to security and health.

Rural people in Bangladesh believe that the *faquir*, *ojha*, and others who act like shamans have distinctive cognitive capacities. They believe that the shaman as a magico-religious specialist connects the community with everything that gives meaning to life. What appears to be hysterical or psychotic is to the people concerned a time-honored ritual through which the shaman heals sick people or divines the future.

Spirit possession is an important phenomenon in the shamanistic activity in rural Bangladesh. Modern science, however, does not accept spirit

possession as real. Medical doctors in Bangladesh and elsewhere consider spirit possession to be hysteria. Most of the medical doctors in Bangladesh whom I interviewed are of the opinion that hysteria is, due to ignorance, most often misunderstood as spirit possession. Hysteria (or spirit possession) is prevalent among women, passive men, and occasionally children.

In our society women play a role inferior to that of men. They are not encouraged to express their emotions. In regard to love, marriage, sexuality, property, etc., they are denied the right to express their feelings. Although Islam advocates equal rights for women and men, the reality of rural Bangladesh is quite different. It is thus no surprise that this denial of freedom sometimes makes women resort to forms of hysteria. In a joint family or in a situation where not much mutual aid and support can be expected, cases of hysteria may occur among women and passive men.

According to the observations of medical doctors and also of myself, those suffering hysterics may not produce their symptoms willingly, but they may in fact gain some advantage through them. The patients attract other people's sympathy and attention and may thus avoid responsibilities, either in the family or elsewhere. Emotional disturbances are often a sign of hysteria, which in turn is very often misinterpreted as spirit possession.

I also observed that 80% of the illnesses believed to have been caused by spirit possession are in fact either caused by mental and emotional disorders or are the consequence of such female disorders as *sutika*. In the case of *sutika*, which is quite common in rural areas of Bangladesh, the patients show symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, and weakness leading to frequent fainting. Excessive bleeding during menstruation or childbirth, which may occasionally lead to death, is most often attributed to spirit possession.

Given the low social status of women, accusations of spirit possession often serve as a cover for not acknowledging the truth concerning a woman's health. The woman thus becomes a scapegoat. Her social condition, together with poor health and restricted medical facilities, makes women easy victims of the age-old belief in spirit possession. In all cases, the woman is blamed. A woman's low status in the family, continued mental stress due to failure to give birth to children or to bring with her the amount of money that her father might have promised on the occasion of the marriage ceremony, being neglected by everybody (particularly the mother-in-law and sister-in-law), can cause her to behave abnormally,

leading to mental sickness that very often is taken as spirit possession. Unfulfilled sexual urges or sexual discontent among married women also may cause psychic disorder leading to hysterical action. Rape and murder of girls in rural Bangladesh is quite common, and these are often dismissed as the acts of an evil spirit. However, police investigations sometimes reveal that these acts are done by criminals who satisfy their carnal desire and then afterwards kill the innocent girls.

Despite all these natural explanations, spirit possession is not wholly untrue. In Kushtia, to the surprise of everybody, a young uneducated village girl was heard speaking in English while she was possessed by a spirit. A modern doctor was puzzled when, after failing to help a patient suffering from severe pain, he took X-rays that showed signs of needle punctures.

It may be said that, even though modern science dismisses faith healing or shamanism as superstition and as a matter of witchcraft, shamans such as *faquir*, yogi, or *ojha* can be understood as playing the role of psychoanalysts. Faith healing and shamanism seem to be the exact opposite to psychoanalytic cure. In fact, however, shamanistic cure and psychoanalytic cure are quite parallel. Modern medicine cannot always guarantee a permanent cure, but both modern medicine and shamanism can bring temporary relief to the patient, the one by drugs and the other by means of symbols. Shamanism thus lies on the borderline between our contemporary physical medicine and psychoanalysis.

NOTES

In 1985, while I was at Harvard, I gave a lecture at the Folklore Department on "The Shamans and Their Role in Bangladesh." It caught the attention of the scholars and Dr. Sylvia Marcos (at that time a Visiting Lecturer, Divinity School, Harvard University) asked me to present a paper on "Traditional Healing and Women Healers of Bangladesh" at the XIth World Congress of Sociology, held in New Delhi in 1986. The present article was prepared for *Asian Folklore Studies* under the instructions of the editor, Peter Knecht, who took much care and attention and helped remodel the whole article sent to him earlier. The author deeply appreciates and gratefully acknowledges his help and kind assistance.

1. See Lessa and Vogt 1979, 332–33. The editors in their introduction to chapter seven ("Interpretations of Magic, Witchcraft, and Divination") explain the use of magic and witchcraft in traditional healing.
2. *Puthi* refers to a kind of folk literature in circulation among the rural people of Bangladesh. The number of *puthi* texts runs into the several hundreds, and only

rarely does a scholar have an overview of even a major portion of this literature. The occult texts speak of spirit illness, their causes, and possible remedies.

3. For further information see KARIM 1982. The *ojha* can also cure hydrophobia and scorpion stings. See also MITRA 1915.
4. *Kabiraj*, a medical practitioner who follows the Hindu system. For further information see RISLEY 1891, 362–66.
5. *Khunker* refers to a group of traditional healers in the district of Noakhali. They have low social status. *Khundker* is an upper-class Muslim belonging to the *pir* community.
6. See JAGGI 1973, xvii–xxv. Also see KARIM 1979–1980.
7. See CROOKE 1968, 234–67. Also see BLANCHET 1984, 54–60. Nilmani CHAKRAVARTI (1914) gave a brief account of spirit belief in the Pali Jataka stories, which form the earliest and largest collection of fables in the world. He says "the origin of the belief in spirits can be traced back to the Pan-Indian soul theory of the Upanishads, according to which every being, whether rational or irrational, possesses a soul, which never dies but passes from one body into another. Even the tree is not without a soul; when the soul leaves the tree it dies. According to these stories there are two types of spirits: the good and the evil. The evil ones are known as *yakkha* (male) and *yakkhāni* (female). For further information see CHAKRAVARTI 1914, 257–61.
8. The jinn are believed to have been created out of smokeless fire. They are sometimes identified with serpents and sometimes with Satan and his host of evil ones. The Quran takes into consideration both the jinn and the evil spirits (the Sura Falaq-Dawn cxviii and Sura Nas Mankind cxlv).
9. Manasha, a serpent deity. There is a common belief among rural people that barren women may be blessed with children if they worship the serpent goddess Manasha. There are certain places in villages of West Bengal and Bangladesh that are considered sacred and holy. Barren women hang pieces of rag, with small pieces of stone tied at one end, on the branches of trees adjoining such places in the hope of getting children. In rural Bangladesh serpents, which generally live in the straw roofs of the houses, are known as *vastu* (dwelling place) snakes. They are believed to possess the souls of some deceased members of the family. In Bangladesh it is a common practice among the Hindus to carry a dying man out of the house to allow his last breath to pass in the open because it is believed that this soul, if unable to free itself from earthly bondage, takes the form of a snake and lives within the very house where it escaped from the body. The rural people in certain areas of Bangladesh also believe that if mating snakes are covered up with a piece of cloth, the same piece when recovered possesses magical qualities – it cures disease. Many folk narratives concerning serpent lore have been composed in honor of Manasha.
10. *Padma-Purana* and *Behula Laksmindar,* two musical folk narratives, are such serpent lore. In *Behula Laksmindar* the hero, who had been bitten by a snake, was thrown into a river and ultimately brought back to life by supernatural means. It is thus a folk practice in rural Bangladesh for the body of somebody who dies from a snake bite to be thrown into a river. It is believed that a person who dies of snake bite remains alive for a couple of days and may come back to life if contact with water is constant.

11. *Baan* means to shoot an arrow. Here it is symbolically used as witchcraft.
12. *Garshi* is a kind of tree worship. Rural people in Kushtia perform certain rituals concerning fruit-bearing trees in the months of September and October. They paint the whole house. Then they put rice, *durba* grass, green coconut, marigold flowers, small pieces of sugar cane, and various kinds of bread on an earthen plate. The cow is given a bath and then fed with various kinds of grass. Then they beat a winnower and burn flames at night to ward off insects and worship the trees. Hindus and Muslims alike participate with much enthusiasm in such ceremonies in rural areas.
13. A Hindu funeral rite. The members of the deceased family feed the poor in the belief that the latter will pray for the salvation of the soul of the deceased.
14. *Ātur* in Bengali means one who is delicate or weak. Here it refers to a room for childbirth.
15. *Bhasan* is also a folk musical narrative similar to *Behula Lakṣmindar.* The word *bhasan* suggests one who is floated.
16. Fulkumari told me that the use of herbs was communicated to her in dreams.

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A Hmong Shaman's Séance

Jean MOTTIN

AMONG OLD Indochina hands the Hmong are better known by the name *Meo,* but this term is pejorative and will not be used here. The word "Meo" derives from the Chinese "Miao" 苗, which seems to translate as "the inhabitants of the wild grass" (i.e., "the savages," or " the barbarians"). For one reason or another, "Miao" was transformed into "Meo" when the ethnic group passed first into Vietnam and then further to Laos and Thailand. "Meo" means "cat" in Vietnamese and may be an allusion to "wild cat." Whatever the case may be, the ethnic group calls itself only by the term "Hmoob" (pronounced *hmong,* with an aspirate, and in the high tone). Consequently this is the only term suitable to them. Some educated persons, such as Mr. Yang Dao, assume that "Hmoob" means "free man," but as far as I know there is no evidence that would legitimate this claim.

Their history

It is of interest to know that the Hmong were settled in China before the Chinese. When the Chinese advanced into the territory that is now China in the third millennium B.C., they encountered autochthonous inhabitants they called "Miao," or " Man" 蠻. There are trustworthy indications that make us think the Miao themselves had come from Mongolia or even from the arctic regions of Siberia. Their legends, for example, speak of "frozen plains" and of "days lasting six months," of which they presently have absolutely no experience. Under pressure from the Chinese, the Miao moved little by little to the south, where they

finally reached the province of Guizhou and its environs. This province, with an average altitude of two thousand meters, served for a long time as their refuge. About eighteen hundred years after Christ, with the Chinese infiltrating more and more into the mountains, the Hmong had to fight serious battles. A certain number of them had once again to emigrate southward, moving, according to Chinese and Vietnamese sources, "in most savage hordes, killing everything that crossed their path." Around the year 1800 they arrived in Vietnam, where they were repelled in their attempt to seize Hanoi. As a consequence they turned to the mountains in northern Vietnam and began to proceed further into Laos around 1810. In Laos they spread out a little bit everywhere, always preferring elevated places, until they ended up crossing the border into Thailand around 1860. Within Thailand the Hmong continued to advance. They then reached Uthai, two hundred kilometers northwest of Bangkok.

In the course of the last wars in Indochina the Great Powers always tried to make use of the Montagnards, who often are very good fighters and know the forests like their own pocket. The Hmong themselves were firmly committed to the struggle against the Laotian and Vietnamese communists under the leadership of their famous general Vang Pao, who later retired in America. Between 1975 (the year that the Pathet Lao took power in Vientiane) and 1984, 140,000 Hmong crossed into Thailand as political refugees. Some 60,000 were received by the United States and 7,100 by France (6,000 went to France, 1,100 to French Guiana). About 70,000 were still in Thailand and did not have any desire to go anywhere except Laos, where they had truly felt at ease.

In the early 1980s, when the research for this article was conducted, there were approximately four million Hmong in the world: close to three million in the People's Republic of China, 250,000 in Vietnam, from 160,000 to 300,000 in Laos (figures from before 1975), and between 70,000 and 80,000 in Thailand. But statistics related to this matter are far from precise.

HMONG SHAMANISM

Shamanism is an important form of religion in the world, yet it is one of the least understood forms. We may find the word "shaman" in many dictionaries, but only rarely do we encounter the words "shamanism," "shamanery" (*chamanerie*), or " shamanic." The word "shaman" has come to us from the Tungus language, but ethnologists agree unanimously that

it is not a Tungus word. The term is alien to that language, an imported term. A very intriguing hypothesis suggests that this word came from the Sanskrit and found its way into Lamaism, whence it was then borrowed by the Tungus. The influence of the Lamaist form of Buddhism extended all the way to east Siberia. As a matter of fact, we find pagodas on the banks of the Amur. In Thai the word became "*samana,*" meaning "the one who has overcome [i.e., repressed] his passions," in other words "the bonze." Thus, the Apostolic Nuntio in Bangkok is called "Samana thut" ("monk ambassador").

The geographic center of shamanism is to be found in Siberia, among such groups as the Yakut and Tungus in the east, the Samoyed in the arctic regions, the Teleut in the center, the Buryat in the south. Shamanism is also practiced by the Vogul of the Ural and the Tatars by the Volga. It is further spread among the Mongols, the Altaic populations, and the Uigur. It can also be found in many other areas of the world: among the Eskimo, certain Indian tribes of North America, and the Araucans of Chile, and in Oceania, Indonesia, and even Africa.

Essential characteristics of shamanism

The shaman is first of all a master of ecstasy. It is thought that his soul becomes detached from his body during a séance in order to leave for the invisible world. He becomes therefore a spirit and puts himself on an equal standing with the other spirits. He can see them, talk to them, touch them, and if necessary catch them and liberate them so they can return home.

The shaman is a healer. At least among the Hmong, the ancestor of the shaman is a being called "Siv Yis" ("the one who can heal"). As a matter of fact, the Hmong do not attribute illness to natural causes but to supernatural ones. Only the shaman has the ability to fight against them. Rather than being a religion, shamanism is first of all part of the field of medicine, but it is a special field as it is founded on beliefs.

The shaman is also the adversary of whatever evil forces there might be in order to make sure that the community can always enjoy all the security it needs. He is the preeminent champion in the struggle against the demonic, the great protector against demons. His primary implement is the dagger that he implants in front of the altar at the outset of a shamanic rite, which serves to fight off the evil spirits. The shaman should not be confused with the sorcerer, who concludes a pact with the demons to the greatest detriment of his own fellows.

Finally, the shaman is the master of his spirits. Everywhere in the primitive world we find individuals who claim to entertain special relationships with the spirits, but the shaman distinguishes himself by the fact that he is not an instrument of the spirits. He is superior to them and commands them.

Basic beliefs

The Hmong believe that every human being possesses several souls, but they do not quite agree on their number. Some think that a person has two souls. Others, however, assume that a person has three, seven, nine, twelve, or even thirty-two souls. Such differences in opinion depend on which number a particular person might see as the perfect number. The number two probably does not mean anything more than the plural in its most elementary form. Three is often a basic number corresponding from antiquity with a division of the universe into three worlds: the sky, the earth, and the netherworld. But it could equally correspond with the three classes into which the Hmong group souls (souls of humans, animals, and plants). Many of those who favor this number hold that after death one of the three souls remains at the tomb of the dead, while the second is reincarnated into an animal and the third into a plant. The numbers seven and twelve are probably of Mesopotamian origin, signifying plenitude. The number thirty-two is of Indian origin and corresponds with the thirty-two parts of the body. Accordingly, each of these souls would then animate one part of the body.

It is thought that sometimes souls may not be satisfied with their owner and would therefore try to incarnate themselves elsewhere. Say, for example, that I am a hard-working Hmong farmer. My right hand is wrinkled and callous, damaged in an accident that happened while I was at work. Close to me there lives a young girl that takes great care of herself. She has very tender and beautiful hands. One day, the soul of my hand cannot stand it any longer, and it " falls," as the Hmong would say. By this "fall" it is understood that the soul of the farmer's hand escapes in order to reincarnate itself in one of the girl's soft hands.

By abandoning its owner, the soul leaves him mutilated and sick. Fortunately for the owner, however, this is not the end of the story. The soul can reincarnate itself, but to do this it has first to receive a certificate of reincarnation from the deity of death, the terrible Ntxwj Nyoog (pronounced *ndzeu nyong*) who lives in a heaven that is formed out of twelve mountains arranged in order of increasing height. The path to

the cave of this deity is only a very small footpath that winds through the forests and is littered with a thousand traps. Thus it is a very dangerous and very long journey. This is precisely the reason a sick person must seek the aid of a specialist who can enter the world of the spirits, run after the fugitive souls, and bring them back home by force. This kind of specialist is the shaman.

What is it then that enables the shaman to enjoy such exceptional powers? The Hmong say that even before the advent of humans there was a deity who lived somewhere on the moon and was very good. His name is Saub (pronounced *shao*), or grandfather Saub. If Ntxwj Nyoog is the deity of death, Saub is his antithesis, because he is the deity of life. He presided over the creation of the world and over the creation of the original couple and its descendants. Every day he opens the window of heaven in order to glance at his creatures and to see whether they have grown and multiplied as he planned. He was greatly surprised one day when he saw that Ntxwj Nyoog was devouring humans one after the other with such rapacity that their race threatened to disappear for good. Because he could not take care of everything himself, he decided to choose a human being and to provide him with special powers to fight Ntxwj Nyoog. So he chose a young man filled with zeal and called him "Siv Yis," "the healer."

He gave him a winged horse that would allow him to circulate through invisible space, a troupe of auxiliary spirits to assist him, and all the weapons he needed. Siv Yis began to fight Ntxwj Nyoog and even blinded him until one day because of an inexcusable mistake, he had to leave this world and rejoin the heavens. He is the ancestor of the shamans and lives today on the same mountain as Ntxwj Nyoog. But while the deity of death lives at the foot of a mountain, Siv Yis lives right on the top of it and so controls the demon. He resides in a cave that is cut into the side of a rock wall, surrounded by a multitude of auxiliary spirits fluttering back and forth; around the cave he cultivates a garden full of medicinal plants and has a pond whose waters are endowed with curative properties.

When Siv Yis announced to humans that he had to leave this world, they were desperate. Who, now, would protect them against Ntxwj Nyoog, cure them from illness, and release them from death? At that time Siv Yis promised not to abandon them, but to choose successors and share his powers with them. But only he himself would appoint them, and thus nobody becomes a shaman by his own will. Once acquired, this status

is not transmitted from parent to child. Siv Yis alone selects his chosen individuals. He makes them very ill to show that he is calling them, and an experienced shaman then confirms the choice. Men as well as women may become shamans, but female shamans are fewer in number.

The Hmong still have shamans to cure their diseases. And from my own observations I can say that they are quite numerous, amounting to about one shaman (male or female) for every five families. Their large number is understandable, since the Hmong live in small and isolated villages and cannot run the risk of lacking healers.

HEALING TECHNIQUES

When somebody in a family becomes sick, the head of the family goes to see the shaman, falls to his knees before him and says, "Ah, Father, my boy is badly sick. We implore you to come and help us."

The shaman reassures him with good words and then, without any delay, he throws to the ground in front of his altar his instruments of divination (two halves of the extremity of a goat's or a buffalo's horn) in order to consult with his auxiliary spirits, and demands their help. If the sick person feels better after three days, it means that the spirits are ready to come to the aid of the head of the family. Upon that, the man will come again to see the shaman, who will then go ahead with the healing ritual proper. But if after three days the state of the sick seems to have deteriorated, it means that the spirits feel they were not capable of finding relief for the boy. In such a case the father has no choice other than to wait longer or to look for another shaman.

By waiting three days to see if the sick person starts to recover, the shaman, we can presume, is making sure before the very important healing ritual that he will not be blamed for any failure. He will not attempt to start the ritual without first being certain of its success. When he is sure of success, he asks, as we shall see later, that a pig be sacrificed. The shaman is concerned about his reputation. To avoid being reproached, he must not just request that the sick person improve but must also convince the head of the family that an improvement has occurred.

If the patient improves after three days, the head of the family comes to see the shaman again and asks him to begin with the healing ritual. There is, however, no hurry about all this. The two men agree on a day convenient for both of them. It may be two or three weeks later, giving the head of the family enough time to procure a pig. On the agreed day the shaman visits the family of the sick. It is to be noted that he has not

encountered the sick person until this moment. Yet this does not really matter, because everything is a question of the spirits, whom he could consult as well at home. The hosts prepare a small altar, symbolizing the cave of Siv Yis, and in front of the altar they put a small bench that serves as a "winged horse" for the shaman. The latter sits on the bench, covers his face with a black veil (which is a symbol of the invisible and dark world he is about to enter), grabs with his right hand a disc circle that is fitted with a small handle (symbolizing his horse's bit), and on a finger of his left hand he puts a metal ring that has small bells (they are the bells of his horse). He leans over the joss sticks his aids have prepared on the altar and, deeply inhaling their smoke, he gets ready to fall into a trance.

A shamanic séance lasts from thirty minutes to two hours. During this time the shaman sings of his experiences: what he sees, what he does, and especially the orders he gives to his spirits. While he sings he dances on his bench and shakes the ring and the bell rhythmically so as to imitate a frantic cavalcade.

THE SHAMANIC SÉANCE

What follows is a description of a shamanic séance. I have studied about twenty such séances and they have all contained a five-part sequence. The basic element of each sequence is italicized.

1. *The shaman enters into trance and summons the spirits.* With an (invisible) leap the shaman enters the realm of the spirits and finds himself before the cave of his ancestor. But the auxiliary spirits are just like big children. If they have not been called upon for services they disperse here and there to amuse themselves. The shaman has to summon them first. The spirits are innumerable and appear in couples. Some of them are animal spirits: spirit tigers, elephants, boars, bears, dogs, monkeys, etc. There are also nature spirits: thunder, rain, wind, sun, moon, etc. We can further distinguish physician spirits, blacksmith spirits, ancestor spirits, and the like. This crowd gathers in a big rush. They all have already put on their armor and rifles fire here and there. The spirits settle on the altar, on the table, or on the benches. Spirits charged with the task of receiving the arrivals have cups of tea or pipes with opium passed around. This is what is asked for by the laws of human hospitality, and is the same among the spirits. After that, the shaman presents his case: a Hmong family has come to make an appeal to them about a thorny problem. Therefore, it will be necessary "to go and make a tour of the

sky and the earth." It will be a rough day. One has to be prepared for all eventualities!

2. *The shaman and his troupe proceed to the house of the patient to search there for traces of the fugitive soul.* The troupe of auxiliary spirits flies off to the patient's house. Swallow and Sparrow Hawk (names of spirits) fly ahead and land on the roof of the house or in the hand of the master of the house. The shaman knocks on the door. The domestic spirits open the door fearfully, frightened by all the noise. But, recognizing the auxiliary spirits, they throw the door wide open and the troupe bursts into the house. Everybody greets one another and they exchange the latest news. They have not seen each other for a long time. Those in charge of the welcoming service pass around tea and opium.

But the shaman claps into his hands and reminds the troupe that they did not come to this place to have a good time. They should search for the traces of the soul gone astray, because they will not be able to take up its pursuit blindly. The lantern spirit, full of vigor, takes up his lantern, followed by his mate, the phoenix, whose dots of color suggest eyes. The two rummage through every corner of the house. Suddenly there is a cry of joy: the spirits have found a hole in a partition wall. Evidently this is the hole the soul went through to join Ntxwj Nyoog.

3. *Fantastic cavalcade in search of the escaped soul and discovery of that soul.* The start to a renewed flight is pathetic, because now it is not a question of a simple excursion – rather, they are entering a war. In order to indicate this, the shaman jumps onto his bench twelve times, symbolizing by this action the twelve leaps of his horse over the twelve mountains that form the heavens. This cavalcade brings the spirits right to the entrance of Ntxwj Nyoog's cave.

The little soul, sensing that it is being pursued, doubles its efforts to escape, but there are numerous obstacles in its way. The shaman, for his part, also has no intention of giving up. He pushes his warriors ahead. The troupe misses the right way. It sets out on a path to the left, but it should have gone to the right. The fishermen spirits throw their nets on all sides, but the soul has had time to evade them. Finally, they catch up with it. Gasping and exhausted, it stumbles at the edge of a hole and falls into it. Immediately the auxiliary spirits sound the bugle. The troupe surrounds the hole. The spirits with long arms (the monkeys) roll up their sleeves, kneel down at the rim of the hole and give a helping hand to the quivering little soul. It is pulled out from the hole. The nurse spir-

its blow water from the pond that lies in front of Siv Yis's cave over its face to reinvigorate it.

Then the shaman requests the brawny spirits to throw a large stone into the hole to fill it up because the soul cannot be trusted. Who knows? It still could escape and leap into the hole again. (The term "stone" that is used here is in fact a euphemism. In reality it is a pig that is meant.) At these words, the assistants of the shaman throw themselves on a live pig that has been provided by the family and that is running around near the venue of the séance. They tie it up, bring it into the room, place it behind the shaman, and strangle it. There is no shamanic séance without a "stone."

4. *The troupe leads the fugitive soul back to the house.* A small female spirit is designated to carry the convalescent soul on her back, the same way all Hmong and Chinese mothers carry their babies. The whole troupe returns to the house of the patient. The shaman knocks on the door. The domestic spirits open with caution until they recognize their friends. Each spirit congratulates himself and boasts of his deeds. Everybody recovers by drinking a cup of tea or by taking a puff from a pipe. But the shaman summons everybody and very delicately the spirits take up the little soul and place it into a small chest that is laid out with satin and silk. They then put the chest at the foot of the main pillar (the center of the house, and of the Hmong universe). Then they proceed to give the house a thorough cleaning, resetting the pillars and sweeping out the dirt. In fact, it is not sufficient that the soul has come back, for the universe in which it is again to move needs to be healthy and pure, so that the soul will not again be tempted to escape. At the end, the shaman directs the domestic spirits to be more vigilant from now on. He thanks them for their welcome and steps over the threshold of the house to leave.

5. *Return of the spirits to their altar and return of the shaman to the world of the humans.* The drum spirits call for a final gathering while the "sergeants" check their lists to see if everybody is in attendance. It would not be good to leave somebody out. The whole troupe flies off and perches on the shaman's altar. Everybody takes off his armor. Some lay their helmets and their cuirasses on the altar with much care, as they are supposed to, but others just throw them down pell-mell because they are too tired to be careful. Swallow and Sparrow Hawk fold their tails as one would fold a fan. The Great Groom leads the shaman's horse, dripping with sweat and pawing the ground with impatience to receive its fodder, back to its stable. The quail spirits are asked to cover the paths

where the shaman has been in the spirit world by putting brushwood and leaves over the shaman's footprints. This is done so that the evil spirits will not be able to pursue and find him. Like a good father, the shaman throws popcorn to the small spirits who cry and ask for sweets. Then he falls back into the world of the humans with a gigantic pirouette, happy that he finally is able "to reengage in conversation with beings of my own kind."

The shaman rises from his bench and takes off his veil, while his assistants prostrate themselves before him, touching the ground with their foreheads and proclaiming, "Ali, here you are all out of breath! You have made the tour of the sky and of the earth. Here you are dripping with sweat!"

Everything has come back to normal, but the shaman is exhausted and his face is dripping with sweat. His assistants step forth and wipe his face with a towel previously dipped in fresh, or perhaps lukewarm, water. While he is gradually recuperating from the long ordeal, the shaman sits on a bench behind the small fireplace of the house and smokes a pipe.

While the shaman is resting, the women of the house are busy preparing rice and boiling the slaughtered pig and a chicken. After the men have examined the uncooked remains of the chicken for purposes of divination, they sit down for a meal that continues late into the night. Finally the shaman picks up the pieces of meat that are his share, the head and a leg of the pig, and leaves for his home.

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Chaesu Kut

A Korean Shamanistic Performance

John A. GRIM

SHAMANISTIC performances in Korea are still actively performed by female shamanesses (*mudang* 巫堂) and by male shamans (*paksu mudang* 博手巫堂). These ritual performances (called *kut*), can be identified as shamanistic because the professional practitioner, or shaman, invokes a spirit-power and manifests the radical change in personality and behavior associated with possession. During this altered state of consciousness the shaman is said to have had his or her personality displaced by the evoked spirit. The spirits residing in the body of the shaman are capable of transmitting efficacious power or of withholding their harmful presence in response to a ceremonial request by a patient or client. Financial transactions are a significant element in the arrangement of a *kut*-performance, but these exchanges of money are traditionally understood as a payment to the spirits through the shaman, who is a channel for power. According to a Korean shamaness, if spirit-power is to be efficacious, it must be correctly solicited and purchased.

The ritual performances, or *kut,* are generally attended by groups of women often related to the client or personally committed to the shaman.[1] Actually, since the majority of shamanic practitioners in contemporary Korea are women, the term "shamaness" is more appropriate. A shamaness who divines the response of the spirit-powers during her

thaumaturgy is commonly referred to as a *mudang*.[2] The disrespect and low status associated with this term, however, has caused many of the shamanesses in the Seoul area to prefer the title *mansin* 萬神, or "ten thousand spirits."[3] A more individualized name is usually acquired by placing the shamaness's family name before *mansin,* for example, Woo-mansin, or a term designating place of birth, such as Pyongyang-mansin (from the northern province of that name). A term descriptive of the shamaness such as "grandmother," *halmoni,* may also be used, as may a term referring to the neighborhood of her practice, for example Namsan-mansin (HARVEY 1979, 20, 40 and 86).

Korean shamanistic ceremonies are identified according to purpose, such as guiding the dead (*chinogi* or *ogu* 誤鬼 *kut*) and healing the sick (*pyong* 病 *kut*). In a similar manner the ceremony may be named according to the principle spirit honored, such as the dragon (*yongsin* 龍神 *kut*) or after the initiation of a new shaman (*naerim* 降神 *kut*).[4] The *kut* and their identifying titles vary in different areas of Korea, but in general the northern provinces are traditionally distinguished from the southern provinces. Within these two regions similar spirit-personalities and ritual practices are evident, but the names and manner of celebration of *kut* differ according to local customs. Another difference between north and south is in "call." The shamanic practitioners in the north are spontaneously called to their vocation and their rituals are considered more ecstatic, whereas the more priestly figures in the south are chosen through lineage inheritance and their rituals are more structured.[5]

On 7 May 1982 I attended a *chaesu* 財数 *kut* with an interpreter in the Sang Do Dang section of Seoul. The purpose of this *kut* was to drive away misfortune and to increase prosperity and good fortune. It was organized and performed by the shamaness Woo Oek Ju (Woo-mansin) and her assistants. The ritual performance had been solicited by two entrepreneurs in the import–export business. Their rationale for sponsoring the *kut*-ceremony was to improve their faltering business by divining and propitiating the underlying causes of their recent lack of business success. Some days earlier I had been interviewing Woo-mansin when the two businessmen made their initial inquiries. The shamaness invited me to this *kut* with the permission of the two patrons so that I might write a description of the setting and performance of the *chaesu kut* as well as photograph its various parts.

THE SETTING

FIGURE 1. Woo-mansin discussing the feathered headpiece on which the spirits perch during the *kut* performance.

The *chaesu kut* was held at the home of Woo-mansin. Specifically, it was performed in her altar room (god hall, *sindang* 神堂) located on the ground floor parallel but separate from the "hot-floor" family room (*anbang*). The shamaness's altar was located on the north side of a room approximately 4.5 meters long and 2.5 meters wide. There was a smaller altar table set up in the doorway on the west side, which was connected to a sitting room with Western furniture. There was an outside exit on the east side of the room. The audience was seated in this sitting room and had a good view into the performance area looking over the smaller altar table. The audience varied in number from three to ten persons and was composed of the apprentices or "spirit sons and daughters (*sinttal*)" of the shamaness, friends of the clients, visiting musicians, the interpreter, and myself.

Woo-mansin's permanent altar, dedicated to her personal spirits, was on the north side of the room because, she explained, this directional location was necessary for the descent of her guardian spirits (see appendix). The altar was set up on top of a large wooden cabinet approximately 1.5 meters in height. In the cabinet's glass cases were ritual instruments, costumes, and bolts of material for the more than twenty types of *kut*-ceremonies that this shamaness performed. Among the many items on top of the altar were flowers in vases, candles, and large incense containers. Several of these incense containers were filled with ashes from various shamanistic temples in Korea. On the eastern side of the altar was a glass box, approximately ten centimeters square, containing a baby doll dressed in Buddhist monk's robes (Fig. 2). This doll was said to represent the "lost spirits" of babies who died young. Their resentment (*han* 恨) arising from their untimely death and their subsequent attacks on living humans are believed to be a source of human illness. A shamaness can transform this resentment into a healing force if she is able to placate the spirits.[6] Near the eastern end of the altar was a statue of the mountain spirit, San Sillyŏn Nim山神 靈, as he is typically depicted with a white beard, dressed in red and blue and seated on a tiger. This archetypal wise

old man with the tiger is found in most shamanistic altars and represents a connection to ancient folk religious themes.

Behind the main altar and above it were hand-painted pictures of Woo-mansin's personal pantheon. The paintings varied in size but they were generally fifty centimeters square. They pictured national figures such as generals, noblemen, and scholars, as well as folk deities such as the leader of the deceased ancestors and the esteemed spirit of the seven stars of the Big Dipper constellation. Several figures had a singularly personal meaning for the shamaness, for example, a painting of the male shaman who performed her initiating *naerim kut;* a general associated with Magpie mountain in her home province of Hwanghae; and also a painting of the shamaness herself. The total panorama of symbolic figures dominated the altar room. Undoubtedly it assisted the practitioners, clients, and audience to enter imagistically into the ritual action of the *kut.* This action consists of the invocation, communication, and playful entertainment (*nolda*) of spirit presences through the possessed body of Woo-mansin.

FIGURE 2. The eastern end of Woo-mansin's permanent altar, picturing numbers 9 and 18 in the diagram.

There were also four statues located on the main altar. Two statues depicted Yaksa, the bodhisattva of healing; one statue was of the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama; and one statue represented Kwan'um (Avalokitesvara), the bodhisattva of compassion. Woo-mansin indicated that the Buddhist figures were inferior to her spirits, who were much older, she maintained, and more efficacious in healing rituals. Thus, the Buddhist statues on her altar were "mostly for my clients." The spirit paintings and the statue of San Sillyŏn Nim, however, represented that congregation of Korean spirits who are considered instrumental in both the cause and cure of misfortune.

Arranged in platters before the paintings and beside the statues were rice cakes, pastry mixed with oil and honey, and various sweets and

fruits. Complementing these offerings on the permanent altar was an elaborate arrangement of offerings for the ancestors on the side altar approximately fifty centimeters in height. It held several platters of grains, cooked and uncooked rice, white and powdered rice cakes, vegetables, water, kelp, nuts, candles, tea, rice wine, a cooked pig's head, two dried fish in an aluminum kettle, wands with paper cuttings, and iron knives with colored ribbons attached to their handles. Along with these offerings were several ritual instruments to be used during different stages of the *kut*. They included knives, swords, tridents, and halberds.

Woo-mansin had indicated in an earlier interview that the arrangement of the offerings, which she herself had determined, communicated the needs of the clients to her guardian spirits as well as to the client's ancestral spirits. Furthermore, she implied that the offerings were esoterically connected to the twenty-eight parts of her complete *kut* performance.[7] Because her *kut*'s ritual structure had already been symbolically incorporated into the arrangement of the altar, the shamaness said that she could freely alter the length of performance. Thus, the abbreviated *chaesu kut* performed for the two businessmen had only seven ritual steps, or *kŏri* 巨里, and took approximately eight hours to perform. In all ritual matters, therefore, the shamaness had absolute authority, for she represented the transformative spirit powers.

THE SHAMANESS

Born on 17 November 1920 in Hwanghae Province, Woo Oek Ju remembers her early childhood as happy. At some time between her sixth and ninth year she was taken away by a Japanese policeman who admired her beauty. She was brought to Japan and raised by this family until she was sixteen. At this time she began to experience dizzy spells and loss of consciousness. She also felt compelled to return to her homeland. Her health immediately improved when she was reunited with her relatives in the northern province of Hwanghae. At the age of eighteen, however, she fell into a stupor that was interpreted by her family as "shamanic sickness," or *sinbyŏng* 神病. She eventually awoke from this stupor condition, she said, while digging in the ground to recover the ritual implements buried in the grave of a deceased shaman. Gradually recovering her psychic balance, Woo Oek Ju began to learn the traditional shamanistic dances, songs and costumes, guided by an older male shaman, Kim Kibaek, and a shamaness, Lee Choi Il. She was initiated by the shaman and his portrait is among the spirits pictured in her altar

room. Woo-mansin still uses the cluster of bells on leather straps that she dug from the former shaman's grave (Fig. 5).

Woo Oek Ju has continued her shamanistic practice for over forty years and, she feels, it has brought her both pain and reward. She believes, for example, that the financial impoverishment of her formerly wealthy family and their early deaths were due to her vocation as a shamaness. Moreover, her first marriage at thirty lasted only a year, until her husband discovered that she was a shamaness. After this divorce she continued to perform *kut* even during her arduous escape from North Korea during the Korean Conflict. In 1960 she married Park Dong Shin, a Living National Treasure and head of the Kangryong Mask Dance Group. She now has more than sixty apprentices and has actively promoted knowledge of Korean shamanistic performances among folklore groups and at various universities and colleges.[8]

THE PERFORMANCE

The *chaesu kut* began at 1:30 p.m., after the clients had been served something to eat. Woo-mansin moved gracefully through the viewing room, making sure that all her guests and clients were properly attended. She then went into the altar room, where her apprentices were preparing the ritual costumes and instruments. Woo-mansin was said to have trained more than one hundred and sixty apprentices, a number that she confirmed as exceptionally high. She has guided her apprentices, who also are required to have had their own spirit "call," and has taught them the shamanistic arts of Hwanghae Province.

During this *kut* these shaman apprentices were actively engaged in learning by performing. One "spiritual daughter," an older woman, played the *changgu*-drum. Another played the cymbals in addition to chanting and helping with costumes. Several apprentices chanted in accompaniment with Woo-mansin or responded as a chorus after her leading lines. A sixteen-year old female shamaness apprentice, having already undergone her *naerim kut* initiation, danced three parts of this *chaesu kut*. Another young male shaman-apprentice danced an especially vigorous part of the *kut* called *taegam kŏri,* which is discussed below.

The opening performance of the *chaesu kut* was *pujŏng kŏri* 不浄巨里. This rite purified the house by expelling evil spirits and invoking the roof beam spirit (*sŏngju* 城主) and the foundation spirit (*chisin* 地神). The guardian spirits of the shamaness and the ancestral spirits of the clients were also invoked.[9] A special platter was placed just outside the altar room

FIGURE 3. The dance with dried fish to entertain (*nolda*) the *pujŏng* spirits.

FIGURE 4. Through guided questioning, Woo-mansin clarifies the client's requests in the presence of the spirits who have possessed her.

FIGURE 5. Dressed in the regal red of the kingly spirits with the military blue of the warrior spirits underneath, Woo-mansin invokes the auspicious spirits of the mountains and the heavens.

FIGURE 7. A client dressed in the shamaness's clothes. This break in the ritual stages, called *mugan ssuda,* is intended for the delight (*nolda*) of one's own body-*taegam* spirit.

FIGURE 6. The shamaness-apprentice, Kim Sun Due, shown whirling during *ķamang ķŏri* with the long sleeves of the red regal costume gathered in her hands.

FIGURE 8. During a break in the *chaesu ḳut* Woo-mansin performed a divination (*chom*) for some regular clients (*tan'gol*).

FIGURE 9. Woo-mansin entertaining the *ch'ilsŏng* spirit, the seven-stars spirit of the Big Dipper. The shamaness's gestures during this dance segment strongly suggested flight symbolism.

FIGURE 10. Divining the approval of the *ch'ilsŏng* spirits, Woo-mansin balanced a heaping platter of powdered cakes on the wooden drumstick.

FIGURE 12. The major divination of *taegam ḳŏri* is pictured here as the shaman apprentice with Woo-mansin balanced on a rice cake the trident (*chongsasil*) mounted with the pig's head.

FIGURE 11. The shaman apprentice dancing the *taegam ḳŏri*. Here he holds the pig's head that he had stabbed at the *taegam* spirits' prompting.

with food offerings for the spirits. These offerings included *ḳimpche,* water with ash and red peppers, an empty cup, and an iron knife with colored ribbons attached to the handle. Meanwhile Woo-mansin went into the altar area and sat before the apprentice who was playing the *changgu*-drum. She wore a light turquoise dress (*chima*) with a blouse of a lighter shade of turquoise, both appropriate for an older woman. Her hair was gathered in a bun and held in place by a black headband with a loop at the back. Sitting along the south wall under the ritual costumes were, from west to east, the two clients, three apprentices and the *p'iri*-flute player.

The shamaness invoked the spirits while the apprentices chanted responses. Another apprentice poured rice wine into the empty cups on the permanent altar and the side altar and in the offering tray outside the altar room. After fifteen minutes Woo-mansin stood up and took two iron blades similar to that on the offering tray and beat them in rhythm with the drum as she read the *pujŏng* chant from a sheet of paper placed on the drum. The opening lines, which were similar to those cited below, addressed the *pujŏng,* or "unclean" spirits, and the *ḳamang* 感応, or spirits of illness:

> Let us worship both the clean and unclean *Kamang*.
> Let the clean one in and the unclean out.
> The *Pujŏng* is outside and inside the deceased one's home.
> The *Pujŏng* of the great horse catches the horse.
> The *Pujŏng* of the great cow catches the cow.
> The *Pujŏng* of fire is in heaven.
> The *Pujŏng* of water is in earth.
> The *Pujŏng* of the dead and the living is in the flying birds and crawling insects.
> The *Pujŏng* of the white butterfly is on a strand of hair.
> Let the *Pujŏng* pass slowly through the rear and front [door].
> On the inside and the outside of all the mountains.
> The gift of the unclean spirits is revealed. (Lee 1977, 4)

The shamaness's *pujŏng* chant summoned a lengthy list of clean and unclean spirits to take part in the offerings. She then urged them to give their "gift" of abandoning all evil machinations against the clients.

She then set down the blades and picked up the two dried fish and the kettle in which they had rested on the side altar (Fig. 3). Waving the fish in her right hand she occasionally used them to drum the kettle in

her left hand. She continued chanting invocations as she gracefully whirled and rocked on the reed mats of the altar room. Her facial features gradually softened into the detached smile she manifested throughout the *kut,* indicating her spirit possession.

Suddenly she moved from the altar room to the open front door of the house. Here she flipped the dried fish into the air and allowed them to fall onto the threshold of the house. Thus, she divined the entry and initial approval of the spirits. The two heads of the fish both pointed out-of-doors, indicating a positive response from the spirits. This divination ended the opening ritual section.

A complete meal was now served in which the shamaness, her family, and the guests participated in welcoming the invited spirits. After the meal, the shamaness, apprentices, and clients returned to the altar room, where Woo-mansin, speaking with the voice of the spirits, engaged the two businessmen in conversation. The shamaness elicited personal information and discussed their needs in the presence of these spirit powers (Fig. 4). The interpreter indicated that the clients appeared "very impressed" when Woo-mansin informed them that a deceased, blind uncle was responsible for their flagging business fortune.

Standing up, Woo-mansin began to prepare for the second stage of the *kut: san ch'on kŏri* 山天巨里. During this part the spirits of mountains and of the heavens were invoked. The mountain spirits are especially important for they guard the entrance and exit to the regions in which the deceased ancestors stay. The shamaness put a dark-blue skirt and blue jacket, symbolic of warrior spirits, over her turquoise outfit. She also donned a full-length scarlet coat with long draping white sleeves, symbolic of the most regal spirits (Fig. 5). This garment, open in the front, was brought together and held by a wide waist sash beautifully embroidered with cranes, flowers, and bamboo. The shamaness also wore a black hat typical of Confucian officials of the Korean Yi dynasty (1392–1910). The hat had a broad brim and a flat conical headpiece with two feather pieces on which the invoked spirits were said to perch during the shamaness's dances. The clients were instructed to light incense on the main altar. An apprentice suddenly struck the brass cymbals together and the second *kŏri* began.

Taking up the bells, a length of yellow material, and a large fan picturing the mountain and heavenly spirits, Woo-mansin gently rocked on the balls of her feet as she invoked these spirit powers. Occasionally she turned a tight circle, pacing with her feet in rhythm to the drum and *p'iri*

player. As the shamaness became enraptured by the presence of the invoked spirits, she whirled about the dance area with various ritual instruments after setting aside the fan, yellow cloth, and bells. First she danced holding the two wands with white paper cuttings (*nŏk'chong* 魂竿), then two swords, followed by a trident and a broad blade and, finally, two tridents. She recited the names and ranks of the spirits who were possessing her and who were ordering her to dance with the various ritual instruments. The spirits began to speak through the shamaness, initially scolding the clients and then extolling their devotion. While chanting the spirit's approval, the shamaness performed rice grain divination. She set the bells that she had dug from the shaman's grave on the platter of uncooked rice grains on the side altar. Then, taking the bells to one of the clients, she shook rice grains onto his lap. An even number would indicate approval of the *kut*'s goal, an odd number disapproval. Later, one of the apprentices said that the spirits had approved because the number of rice grains corresponded to the age of one of the clients.

The speech of the shamaness was so rapid and jovial that the interpreter was unable to understand many of the more personal comments. At the time, however, the interpreter indicated that the shamaness used archaic terms in describing the place of origin and the life history of the attending spirits. The narrations of the possessed shamaness continued for approximately thirty minutes. At one point Woo-mansin came to the clients as the deceased uncle whose resentment had caused him to trouble his nephew's business. Acting as a go-between, the shamaness and her guardian spirits mediated a settlement for the disappointed uncle so that he would receive more ritual attention in the future in return for his promise of noninterference in the nephew's business. When this matter was settled, the shamaness began a boisterous chant to which the drummer and *p'iri* player responded.

Joined by the chorus of apprentices with the musicians, Woo-mansin sang exuberantly until she ceased singing to execute a series of dance steps with whirling movements, sudden knee bends, and full body extensions by rising on the balls of her feet. Performed for the delight (*nolda,* "play") of the spirits, this elaborate dance and its accompanying music are singularly identified with Hwanghae Province in North Korea. This sequence of structured and spontaneous dance steps is a final culmination in the sequence of invocation, possession, entertainment (*nolda*), narration, prognostication, recreation (*nolda*), and divination.

Having performed the final *t'aryong* (songs and dances) of *san ch'on*

kŏri, the shamaness now divined the will of the spirits through flag divination. Woo-mansin took up five flags about half a meter square, colored respectively red, white, blue, yellow, and green. Rolling them together so that the colors were indistinguishable she held out the wooden staffs as she paraded around the altar room. Meanwhile the drum, *p'iri,* and cymbal heightened the dramatic intensity by playing progressively louder as the shamaness asked a person in the audience to choose a staff. He chose a yellow flag, whereupon the shamaness eyed him suspiciously, rerolled the flags and, reciting a chant to nullify the adverse effects of the ill-chosen yellow flag, she repeated the dance pattern in the altar room. Approaching the interpreter she gestured for him to choose. He also picked out a yellow flag. Turning to me, the interpreter said that yellow was not an auspicious color and that the shamaness was countering the inauspicious choices by means of her "magical" chants. The shamaness then returned to the interpreter for another selection of a flag, whereupon he pulled out a white flag, which augured well for the continuation of the *kut*. With this choice the *san ch'on kŏri* was concluded. Thus the second part of the *chaesu kut* ended without any clear demarcation, as would most of the other ritual stages.

The third part of this *kut* was called *kamang* 感應, or "responding to the spirits." It was performed by the female apprentice, Kim Sun Due, who was initiated at the age of seven by Woo-mansin. She was now sixteen years old, attractive, and the foremost wage earner in her family. Her talented performance of the *t'aryong* pattern of songs and dances was done with such youthful vigor that it changed the tempo of the *kut*.

The young shamaness set aside the blue dress and jacket and put on the rose-colored skirt of the *kamang*-disease spirits. She then put over this skirt a pleated blue skirt of the military spirits and, finally, the scarlet coat of the regal spirits. Also, her basic ceremonial dress was a light pink rather than light turquoise. Two features distinguished her *t'aryong* sequence, which, otherwise was remarkably similar to that of her teacher, namely her splendid whirling dance and her chanting with the voice of the deceased uncle. While Kim Sun Due's whirling was a typical procedure during the *kŏri,* her youthful grace gave the dance a special character (Fig. 6). Moreover, it appeared that her whirling might be a special mode of divining the approval of the spirits. This apprentice shaman did not do rice grain divination, and at those points in the *kŏri* where rice divination would normally be conducted she entered into her whirling dance. When the deceased uncle was said to have appropriated

her body to speak to his nephew, her chanting in the altered state of possession was vigorous and jovial. Her lively, humorous demeanor was in contrast to the intensity of the uncle's resentment over his blindness in life and his family's neglect of his spirit in afterlife, which had driven him to spiteful attack. At times her joking with the clients caused loud and prolonged laughter.

As this third ritual step concluded with flag divination, an interlude occurred in which the clients were encouraged to put on the costume of the shamaness and dance before the altar. This hiatus in the *kut* is called *mugan* 巫冠 *ssuda*. Woo-mansin encouraged both clients and the members of the audience to dance but only one client actually did so. He used the white coat of the *ch'ilsŏng* 七星 spirit (Fig. 7). This client imitated the basic dance step rocking up on the balls of his feet. The drum and *p'iri* players encouraged his entry into an altered state by playing at an increasing crescendo. One interpretation of *mugan ssuda* is that one's own body spirit rises up in this dance to join the assembled spirits. Thus, the possibly troublesome inner spirit is assuaged by this ritual dancing (KENDALL 1977). The client who danced said that he felt very good after having danced in the shamaness's clothes.

During this *mugan ssuda* Woo-mansin received three regular patrons (*tan'gol* 丹骨) for a brief divination session (*chom* 占) wholly unrelated to the *chaesu kut* in progress. Although the interpreter and I did not join this divining session, the shamaness called to tell me that I might photograph the patrons and herself (Fig. 8). Holding the spirit-divining fan open before her, Woo-mansin acted in the same distinctive manner as she had during the *kut,* that is, alternately humorous and serious. It appeared obvious that these patrons had purposely come at this time because they knew that she would be possessed by the spirits. The interpreter also concurred that the strange archaic terms that she used in this brief exchange indicated that she had maintained her state of possession between the stages of the *kut* performance. The break between the third and fourth stages of the *kut* was further extended by a light meal so that two hours passed before the ceremony began again.

Woo-mansin returned to the altar room and put on a scarlet dress, symbolic of the regal spirits, over her turquoise outfit. On top of that she wore a white coat with long draping sleeves and a monk-like hood. Over this white coat she crossed long strands of Buddhist prayer beads as well as red and green sashes held in front by a lovely embroidered waistband with flowers, fruit, and two cranes centered around a peony. This cos-

tume was said to represent the *ch'ilsŏng* spirit. But the iconography also accommodates the seven-stars spirit in the Big Dipper, the Buddhist monks associated with that constellation, and the personal "Birth Grandmother" (*Samsin halmŏni*) spirit of the shamaness. The levels of symbolic meaning evoked by this costume gave increased meaning to the prior interlude of *mugan ssuda,* for the client was allowed to call up his own body's troubled spirit for "play" (*nolda*). Thus, while he was dressed in the clothes of the spirit presences to whom the shamaness felt a special relationship, the client's body spirit was associated with these auspicious cosmic spirits.

Having moved the clients from the east side of the altar room and the drum, *p'iri,* and cymbal players to the west side, Woo-mansin invoked the spirits for the next ritual stage, *ch'ilsŏng kŏri* (七星巨里). Seated on the floor she initially chanted verses to which the apprentices responded in a chorus. At times she gathered the ends of the sleeves in her hands and raised her arms as if in flight (Fig. 9). She then stood and gently danced about the altar room invoking the *ch'ilsŏng* spirits with this waving motion of her arms as well as with paper cuttings on a wand. The shamaness took up a Buddhist monk's staff as her ritual instrument while being possessed by the *ch'ilsŏng* spirit and narrating the spirit's mythic story. She moved in a circular pattern, stopping several times and thumping the staff, which had brass rings and a small brass figure of the Buddha at the top. Standing before the two clients, she chanted the spirits' greetings and appreciation for the gifts of the *kut* celebration. The *ch'ilsŏng* spirit then forecast business success as an outcome of this correct ritual practice.

After the dances with the Buddhist monk's staff, the shamaness and her apprentices handed out rice cakes and fruit to all the guests. Woo-mansin then sprinkled water from a brass bowl on these foods. Then she took a platter fifty centimeters in diameter, heaped with a mound of powdered rice cakes, and proceeded to balance it on a drumstick perpendicular to the edge of the *changgu*-drum. Meanwhile the drummer continued playing the drum in accompaniment to the shamaness's chant. After several unsuccessful attempts and after the clients had placed *won* currency notes on the platter to placate the unruly spirits, the shamaness finally managed to balance the platter (Fig. 10). She then took the iron drumstick and rapped the drum sharply as if to dismiss any doubts of her spirits' abilities. Walking away, she muttered that someone must have touched the rice cakes earlier to cause the spirits' lack of initial cooperation.

A young male apprentice who had earlier joined the audience now asked the shamaness if he could perform the next *k̆ŏri,* saying that he felt "half-spirited." He put on a rose-colored skirt and a bright-green jacket symbolic of the *k̆amang*-disease spirits. Over these clothes he put on a blue coat with white draping sleeves and a black hat with a white plume dangling from the top. This outer costume was symbolic of the troublesome *taegam* spirits. He took up the shamaness's bells and opened one of her ritual fans to invoke the spirits of the *taegam k̆ŏri* 大監巨里. He read from a printed list that was on top of the drum and called the *taegam* spirits from their resting places in the boulders, trees, rivers, and other natural phenomena of Korea. The *taegam* spirits are believed to be the troublesome presences of former petty bureaucratic officials of the Yi dynasty. Invoking these petulant spirits into himself was no simple task for the young apprentice. He stopped chanting and began to dance vigorously with wands topped with paper cuttings. Gradually his pace quickened and the musicians had to move back to the west side to avoid his increasingly chaotic movements. A grimace spread over his otherwise handsome countenance and the blood seemed to drain from his face as the *taegam* spirits possessed him.

The shaman began a series of whirling, undirected dance movements. He seized various ritual instruments, danced with them all in his hands and arms and then threw them down and seized others. All this frenetic movement was performed for the delight of the *taegam* and, seemingly, at their instigation. He then danced alternately with the wands with paper cuttings, pairs of swords, tridents, broad blades, and finally knives. As he whirled with the knives the apprentice slashed the air. Suddenly he stood still, faced the audience, and charged toward them. Raising one knife high in the air he stabbed violently into the pig's head. Moving backwards he stared glassy-eyed and charged again at the pig's head. He then stabbed his other knife into it and pulled the pig's head off the smaller altar. The apprentice shaman now danced with the pig's head, occasionally tearing at it with his teeth (Fig. 11). Meanwhile, an apprentice beating her cymbal continued a near-deafening din, keeping a safe distance from the whirling shaman.

After several minutes of frenetic dancing the male apprentice seemed to calm down. He stuck the pig's head onto a one-meter forked trident. He then took a rice cake and put it in a bowl. He proceeded to divine the approval of the *taegam* spirits by attempting to balance the trident mounted with the pig's head on the rice cake. The clients came forward

and placed paper currency in the pig's mouth to encourage the spirits to cooperate. When the point of balance seemed near, Woo-mansin joined her apprentice (Fig. 12). They both chanted as the trident balanced. Then they stood up and stepped back with their open arms crossing one another.

The apprentice returned to the ritual instruments and took up the bells. After moving through several graceful circular movements with sudden knee bends, he placed the bells in the platter of uncooked rice grains. Taking the bells to one of the clients he shook them, allowing rice grains to fall into the client's lap.

At the conclusion of the apprentice's *ḳŏri,* Woo-mansin sat with the two clients at the west side of the altar room. Here she continued to talk with them and consider their future prospects. Meanwhile the musicians had moved back to their original position and were preparing the female apprentice, Kim Sun Due, for *youngjŏn ḳŏri* 靈殿巨里. The young shamaness dressed herself in a blue dress and blue coat with a red embroidered waistband and red hat of an official's travel garb. This *youngjŏn ḳŏri* was the "farewell to the spirits." The apprentice performed an abbreviated ritual sequence that was subdued and confined to the area immediately before the drum. Woo-mansin and her clients, meanwhile, were less than two meters away and engaged in earnest conversation.

In the same costume and with a continued restraint the apprentice shamaness performed *sŏngju ḳŏri* 城主巨里. The final stage of this *chaesu ḳut* was directed toward the spirits of the house under whose initial auspices the entire *ḳut* had transpired. With the conclusion of this abbreviated sequence of invocation, narration, and dance the *chaesu ḳut* ended. Woo-mansin said good night to her clients and guests and retired, visibly exhausted, to the inner family room. The apprentices prepared a table with food and bottles of rice wine, insisting that we all stay and continue the celebration while they cleaned the altar room.

CONCLUSION

The symbolic richness of the *chaesu ḳut* is quite apparent even from this descriptive overview. Such symbolic elements as the wall hangings, offerings on the altars, costumes, chants, dances, and other ritual items derive from a complex thought tradition that suggests a variety of influences. For example, the folk religious practices of East Asia are evident in the Korean shamanistic concept of illness and misfortune as caused by ancestral spirits. Influences of Siberian shamanistic cosmologies may be

present in the multilayered worldview of the Korean shamaness. Moreover, Buddhist soteriological figures, such as the compassionate bodhisattvas, have been accommodated into the Korean shamanistic pantheon. So also Confucian influences can be seen in the appearance of bureaucratic figures in the *kut* performances as well as in the ritual propitiation of lineage ancestors. Finally, Taoist practices are evident in the delineation of the spirit pantheon as well as in the use of magic charms and incantations to alleviate calamities. Although a discussion of these complex influences cannot be attempted here, it is helpful to note their presence as a means of interpreting the historical influences on the development of Korean shamanism.

While an understanding of historical influences is important for an adequate appreciation of this religious phenomenon, such an understanding alone cannot elucidate the contemporary meaning of Korean shamanism. In the *chaesu kut* just described, for example, the particular motivations and values of the clients are determined by more personal, social, and economic factors. All these factors and the historical influences already mentioned can best be seen in a wider context of shamanistic phenomena in a variety of cultures. A comparative treatment would not necessarily describe or fully explain such a particular expression as the *chaesu kut* performed by Woo-mansin, but it would help explain the endurance of shamanic expressions into the contemporary period. Thus, a comparative approach may be helpful in providing an explanation of the religious meaning of these ritual activities. The material presented in this article, then, can be discussed in terms of three comparative patterns of shamanic experience, namely, the formation of the shamaness, her techniques of ritual performance, and the goals that motivate both the practitioner and the participants to engage in these activities.

The literature on Korean shamanism indicates that the formation of the shaman among northern practitioners often arises from an experience of *sinbyŏng,* or "shamanic sickness." Comparative research shows that similar formative experiences occurred among Siberian shamans (Michael 1963), but not as frequently among the shamans of the Central Asian Mongols (Heissig 1980). Among North American Native Peoples "shamanic sickness" as an expected formative experience is not widely documented. However, an illness prior to a shamanic vocation or extensive periods of isolation and other forms of sensory deprivation are not uncommon in North America (Grim 1983). What appears in comparative studies of shamanism is a simultaneous occurrence of a

call from the spirits and a liminal status in the society. The shamanic personality is initiated into his or her vocation by a personal experience of the traditional world of spirits, which is articulated in oral narratives or cosmologies. An intimate experience of spirits makes of the shaman a liminal or marginal person believed to be capable of communication with the sphere of cosmic power. The personal psychic disturbances that result from the call and the social reaction to the signs of such a call also prompt the liminal stage of formation that entails both unique privileges and responsibilities.

A person who matures in this marginal state may escape some social norms and restrictions but will also enter into vocational responsibilities. For example, Woo-mansin as a woman may have given expression to intellectual and creative talents not ordinarily open to Korean women. This significant aspect of Korean shamanism must not be overlooked, but it is also important to emphasize the personal, social, and ritual responsibilities that arise from her formative experiences and subsequent training for the career of a shamaness. She nurtures a self-image that is liminal to that of Korean society; consequently, her vocation may adversely affect both her own social status and that of her family. She seeks to maintain a steady clientele whose ritual focus is the *mansin* herself. Finally, as long as the shamaness functions as a spiritual guide and healer she is in relationship with psychic-spiritual entities whose caprice and capabilities are constantly being manifested in ceremonial *k̬ut*. The entertainment (verb, *nolda;* verbal, *nolk̬i*) of the *taegam* spirits, for example, is a demanding ritual stage whose trance privileges also exact arduous duties of propitiation.

Comparative studies in shamanism consistently describe the trance states and ritual arts as techniques of the shaman for evoking and channeling spirit power. The type of altered states associated with shamanic trances are quite varied. While possession states are evident in the *chaesu k̬ut* discussed here, the trance states of Siberian shamans are likened to soul journeys to the place of power (MICHAEL 1963). Among Native Americans the mediumistic trance meditations are more predominant (GRIM 1983). Japanese blind shamans, or *itak̬o,* also used mediumistic states to communicate with the dead (HORI 1975). An amazing differentiation of such shamanic trance states is revealed by even cursory comparative study, but the technique consistently functions to establish contact with the believed sources of efficacious power needed to deal with a specific malady. Moreover, the trance states are at the core of the

shaman's therapeutic activity and they often authenticate the shamanic performance among the participants much more than the hoped-for cure.

The ritual arts so widely linked with shamanism are often part of the shaman's technique for inducing the trance as well as for evoking the cooperation of the spirit. Rhythmic drumming, ritual instrumental patterns, and repetitive chants all aided Woo-mansin in her skillful performance of the *t'aryong* song and dance sequences. In ceremonies among northwest coast shamans and Navajo initiations in North America (GILL 1982), looking through the holes of the mask was tantamount to imagistic participation in the spirit presence just as "wearing the shaman's clothes" (*mugan ssuda*) in the *chaesu kut* enabled the client to participate in the spirit presence of his own body. A great variety of shamanic arts are evident in the Korean context that are primarily directed towards evocation of spirit presences and entry into sensory and imagistic experience of the spirits and their machinations.

The goals of the shamanic practitioners and participants are everywhere distinguished by the specific requests that are conveyed to the spirits by the shaman. Just as the clients in the *chaesu kut* solicited Woo-mansin's services to benefit their flagging business, so also the participants at an Okinawan *yuta*'s ritual performance solicit that shamaness's ritual art for their specific needs (LEBRA 1966). Comparative research in shamanism emphasizes the role of spirits in its investigations of the purpose of shamanic performances. No other concept of primal traditions is so widespread and variously articulated as the spirits who may be sacred or demonic in their activities while numinous and personal in their manifestations. The shamanistic ethos finds its basic religious style in participation with spirits and evocation of their efficacious power. No description of spirits can be considered adequate for any one shamanistic tradition, but some comparative explanation can be attempted that helps to interpret the concept of spirits as a method of expressing the interaction of various elements in the cosmos.

The Korean shamaness personally integrates the spirit presences that are pictured on her wall hangings and she ritually evokes their power for healing and divination. For example, in Woo-mansin's pantheon the presence of cosmic deities such as the seven-stars spirit should be seen in relation to the historical, military generals. Most of these generals died young with unfulfilled ambitions, a fact that drives them and their spirit armies to inflict either benefit or harm on humans. Alongside these fig-

ures in Woo-mansin's wall hangings are mountain deities and *taegam* spirits believed to reside in the Korean landscape. All of these spirits are evoked at appropriate stages of the *kut* and are believed to bring a participant and his or her specific problems into the presence of cosmic powers.

Such relations between the shamaness and her society's worldview provide insight into the last comparative pattern of shamanic experience, namely, restored balance. In the *chaesu kut* the failing business was interpreted as due to the spirit machinations of a deceased uncle who was envious of his nephews and antagonized by sacrificial neglect. Success could be restored by ritual participation at the *kut* and by promised ritual care in the future. Resentment and imbalance, then, cause problems to humans, and restoration of proper relationships and psychic harmonies effect healing. Even in areas with different worldviews the shamanic personality often contacts the spirit world to restore lost harmonies. Thus, the Ojibway *tcisaki* or shaking-tent shaman of North America contacts a host of *manitou* spirits and channels their power in a specific ritual manner to remedy situations that have become detrimental to the individual and social goal of long life and happiness (GRIM 1983). This pattern of shamanic experience provides insight into the means whereby the shaman restores the participants to a right relationship with themselves and their environment. In summary, then, the comparative patterns of formation, techniques, and goals demonstrate the particular characteristics of Korean shamanism as well as the cross-cultural similarities of these religious practices.

Appendix: DIAGRAM OF WOO-MANSIN'S ALTAR

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
			19	20	21	22	23	

1. Im Kyŏng'ŏp Changgun 林慶業將軍, a Korean general who died a tragic death at a young age.
2. Pyŏngma Changgun 病魔將軍, a mythic general of sickness.
3. P'alman Sinjang 八萬神長, warrior spirit who leads the 80,000 spirit army.

4. Taesin 大神, a dead shaman who has become both a pantheon deity and the spirit who inspires the shamaness. Thus, it is the shamaness herself.
5. Yongt'ae Puin 龍太夫人, grand madame of dragons.
6. Sŏsan Taesa 西山大師, historical monk who led an army against the Japanese invasion of 1592. Now immortalized as the great western mountain teacher.
7. Yaksa Sinjang 薬士神長, a healing master in the retinue of Yaksa bodhisattva. There is possibly a connection to Baisajya Guru.
8. Pu'gun 父君 or Hanabang, polite reference to father and grandfather.
9. Kim Kibaek 金基白, mentor of Woo-mansin and possibly her special personal deity, Momju.
10. Pyŏlsang Mama, a messenger god and spirit.
11. Sŏrin Changgun 瑞麟將軍, another auspicious mythic general.
12. Kach'isan Pyŏngma Changgun, general of Magpie Mountain in Hwanghae Province.
13. Howi-pyŏng 護衛兵 and Waryong Sŏnsaeng臥龍先生, the auspicious tactician, Kung-min, of the Romance of the Three Kingdoms.
14. P'al Sŏnnyŏ 八仙女, a fairy maiden leading 8,000 hosts.
15. Sambul Chaesok 三仏釋帝, the three buddhas and Indra or, more probably, the Birth Spirit in Buddhist form.
16. Ch'ilsŏng 七星, the seven stars of the Big Dipper, which spirit helps raise children.
17. Sansin 山神, the mountain spirit.
18. Toryong and Aegissi, young boys and girls who died as virgins and have become powerful spirits.
19. Yaksa Yŏrae 薬士如来, statue of the healing bodhisattva.
20. Kwan'ŭm Posal 観音菩薩, statue of the compassionate bodhisattva.
21. Puchŏ 佛, statue of the historical Buddha.
22. Yaksa Yŏrae (same as #19).
23. San Sillyŏn Nim 山神霊, statue of the mountain spirit on his mount, the tiger.

NOTES

I would like to take this opportunity to thank several individuals for their generous assistance during my stay in Seoul, in particular Reverend Justin C. P. and his community, Reverend Daniel Kister S. J., and Professor Kim Yul-gyu. I am also grateful to my interpreters, Woo Jong-sup and Koh Sei-chang. Finally, I am indebted to Woo-mansin and

her husband, Park Dong Shin, for their willingness to assist my entry into Korean shamanism.

1. For a discussion of the special relationship between Korean shamanism and women see HARVEY 1976 and 1979, and KENDALL 1979 and 1983.
2. For *mudang* see LEE 1973a; while some researchers continue to use the term *mudang* when speaking of these practitioners, I have followed the preference of Woo Oek Ju and use *mansin*. Laurel Kendall has repeatedly made this point in her work and in her presentation to the Korean section at the American Academy of Religion (Dec. 1982).
3. This polite term is used largely in north and central Korea (see KENDALL 1979, 307).
4. An overview of the variety in Korean *kut* can be found in LEE 1973b and 1981.
5. The Korean Conflict caused many northern shamanesses and shamans to move south, especially into the Seoul area. Thus the northern style has become more available for researchers. For the Seoul performance, see KIM T'ae-gon 1978; for a description of a northern performance see HARVEY 1979, 85–128.
6. In my interviews with Woo-mansin she repeatedly used the term *han* or resentment to explain the attack of malign spirit forces. In a later discussion with Professor Kim Yul-gyu at Sogang University during May of 1982 he pointed out the central characteristic of Korean shamanism as dealing with this resentment (see KIM Yul-gyu 1975). Professor Kim Yul-gyu also indicated that such "lost spirits" were the most dreaded spirits and associated only with the most powerful shamanesses.
7. Woo-mansin said that unlike most shamanesses, who have only twelve *kŏri* in their full *kut,* she has twenty-eight *kŏri*. When I later spoke with Professor Kim Yul-gyu, he indicated that the number of *kŏri* is not set but, like so many aspects of Korean shamanistic ceremonies, determined by the shamaness herself. For arrangement of altar offerings, see HALLA 1980, 34.
8. This biographical information was obtained through interviews with Woo-mansin and personal correspondence with Susan Martin at Indiana University and with the apprentice, Yang Jongsung.
9. The opening stage seems to have included the initial evocation of the client's ancestors, which is customarily associated with *chosang kŏri* 祖上巨里 (see KENDALL 1983).

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Miyako Theology

Shamans' Interpretation of Traditional Beliefs

TAKIGUCHI Naoko

THE MIYAKO ARCHIPELAGO consists of one central island, Miyako, and seven smaller islands: Ikema, Irabu, Kurima, Minna, Ogami, Shimoji, and Tarama. These constitute the Ryūkyūs together with three other island complexes: Amami, Okinawa, and Yaeyama.[1] The Miyako archipelago covers an area of 227.04 square kilometers, located halfway between Okinawa and Yaeyama. Its population totals 62,629 inhabitants, eighty percent of whom live on the largest island, Miyako.[2]

Miyako is a flat, triangular coral island. The highest point measures only 114.6 meters. The island is thus exposed directly to summer typhoons. Otherwise it enjoys a subtropical climate throughout the year. Even in the coldest season the temperature averages from 10° to 15° C. Rain falls heavily from the middle of May through June. During the hottest season (July through September) ocean breezes provide some relief from the intense heat. In early fall, typhoons often strike the island. They cause serious damage to crops, houses, livestock, and so on; however, the rain that accompanies them is always welcome. There is abundant rainfall (2,247.2 mm) in Miyako, but the porous soil does not retain water, which seeps underground and eventually flows into the ocean. Thus the island tends to experience drought.

The Miyako archipelago forms one administrative unit, Miyako County, which is divided into five subunits: one city (Hirara), three towns (Gusukube, Irabu, and Shimoji), and two villages (Ueno and Tarama). Hirara includes the northern half of Miyako Island and two islands offshore near the northern tip, Ikema and Ogami. Gusukube covers the southeastern quarter. The southwestern quarter is divided between Ueno and Shimoji. Kurima Island is affiliated with Shimoji. Two adjacent islands, Irabu, and Shimoji, form one town, Irabu. Two isolated islands, Minna and Tarama, located halfway between Miyako and Yaeyama, belong to Miyako County as Tarama Village. Administrative offices are located in Hirara, which is also the business and commercial center.

Forty percent of the population (24,613 out of 62,629) were active in the labor force in 1980. Among them, thirty-five percent (of the total labor force) engaged in agriculture, about one thousand persons were full-time or part-time fishermen, and others were engaged in manufacturing, construction, commerce, financial and insurance firms, transportation and communication, and public service. In Hirara commerce and service industries have greater significance than agriculture; but in other areas of Miyako agriculture is the backbone industry, absorbing more than half of the work force.

Transportation within and outside the islands is provided by automobiles, ships, and airplanes. Miyako and Kurima, Ikema, Irabu, and Ogami islands are connected by ships. Jet airplanes fly between Okinawa and Miyako (45-minute flight), and Tarama and Miyako are connected by both airplanes and ships. As described above, present-day Miyako is an increasingly modern, technological society, characterized, for example, by such electrical appliances as refrigerators, TVs, vacuum cleaners, washers, and video recorders.

Various foreign religions (Christianity, Tenrikyō, and Sōka Gakkai, for example) coexist, and indigenous religion still plays a dominant role in people's daily lives. Indigenous religion operates on various levels, such as the community, family, individual, and so on. At the community's sacred sites, often called *utaki* or *mutu*[3] (see below), priestesses officiate at numerous rituals, praying to gods for a good harvest, successful fishing, the health and safety of community members, successful academic achievement by students, and so forth.[4]

There is also another kind of religious specialist who mainly engages in domestic (family and individual) rituals. They are called *kamkakarya, munus,* or *kamnuptu* and have the ability to make direct and voluntary

contact with gods and ancestors. They utilize their divine power for the sake of clients, engaging in rituals and divination to solve the problems brought before them (e.g., marital crisis, business and school failures, prolonged disease). On the basis of these characteristics, I identify them as shamans,[5] and the focus of this article is the theology of shamans, particularly their interpretation and organization of traditional beliefs.

SHAMANS AND PRIESTESSES: SIBLING INFORMANTS

Shamans have been distinguished from priests/priestesses in academic publications (LOWIE 1965; PARK 1938, 10; SASAKI 1983, 88–95, etc.); the former are inspirational individuals, the latter institutional functionaries in some kind of religious hierarchy. However, this demarcation is not very clear in Miyako. In many communities, priestesses are selected by divine lottery[6] from among the community's women of a certain age span (e.g., above 40, between 40–60). Some, not all, have the ability to make direct contact with the supernatural to some extent and do engage in domestic rituals, e.g., *upuradasi* and *mazirumma* priestesses of Oura community (KAMATA 1965a, 181) and the *ɬakaryamma* priestess of Sarahama community, Irabu Island (SAKURAI 1979, 127–34). Among my informants, HS, a *yuzas* priestess who officiates at rituals together with a *tsɬasa* priestess at Atsumama Utaki in Hirara, has been well known as a shaman for more than thirty years. Furthermore, sometimes Miyako shamans exercise influence over community religious matters. Before selecting community priestesses, people often go to several shamans to have them divine for suitable candidates, or community priestesses several times a year visit shamans to certify whether or not the gods are satisfied with the rituals they have conducted. When something extraordinary happens, they go to shamans on behalf of the community for divination and rituals. For instance, in the K community, people destroyed the residence of the well goddess to construct a road. Afterwards, accidents frequently occurred on the spot, and they employed a shaman to reconstruct the residence of the goddess. In present-day Miyako shamans are regarded as experts in things related to the supernatural, and their influence is pervasive in people's daily lives.[7]

I interviewed approximately ten shamans and noticed that religious knowledge was unevenly distributed among them. They attempt to interpret and verbalize their religious experiences on the basis of Miyako tradition. Talented shamans develop elaborate theologies; others can only give sketchy theologies that largely follow cultural precedents (cf.

SAKURAI 1973, 324). Differences among them can be attributed to many factors: levels of education and intelligence, locality, creativity, eagerness to organize their religious experiences, willingness to learn from old people, and so on.

Among the shamans, I worked intensively with two shamans who are siblings: NT (male, born in 1952) and TS (female, born in 1947). The siblings are unique in many aspects: education, age, and experiences outside Miyako. Most of the Miyako shamans are females of rather advanced age.[8] Although they are articulate and their intelligence level is well above average, most of them received only a limited education; some are illiterate. Their experience of life is limited to Miyako. On the other hand, TS finished high school and NT went to high school and college in Okinawa. NT has also traveled to Kyushu, Kansai, and Tokyo. Both of them are very active as shamans, drawing clients from many communities (sometimes other islands, like Minami Daitō Island or Tarama Island) and diverse social strata (see TAKIGUCHI 1986b).

The theology of the siblings is by far the most elaborate among the shamans I encountered. Their theology should not be considered to be "the" Miyako theology, but their version is significant because of its sophistication, elaboration, and comprehensiveness. Except where noted, the description of the belief system presented below is drawn from these siblings. When I use information from other sources (other shamans, lay people, the pool of general beliefs shared by most Miyako islanders, etc.), I indicate its source. The uniqueness of the siblings' version in Miyako tradition (the extent to which their version is different from others' and is not traditional) is discussed in the concluding section.

POTENTIAL TENSION AMONG PROTAGONISTS IN THE MIYAKO COSMOS

The siblings consider the potentially tense relationships among the three protagonists (gods, ancestors, and humans) of the Miyako cosmos to be a dominant theme or an organizing principle of indigenous religion. Gods reside by nature in the heavens (*ting*), the earth, the sea (*ryuguu*), and the afterworld (*niija* or *gusoo*). Humans live on the earth; once they die, they go to the afterworld. The shamans I encountered emphasized the benign nature of the gods. NT learned from his protector (*tsdz*) that

> Gods are all loving and almighty. Gods are shining lights, radiating affection and compassion. The sun god throws light equally on the

poor, the rich, sad people, joyful people, wild flowers, birds, plants, and trees.

However, not all people are grateful to the gods, and some of them even threaten their existence. For example, Hirara City planned to convert the site of a sacred well, Funasukugaa, into a parking lot fifteen years ago. A businessman had his restaurant built on an *utaki* (sacred site) that enshrines the *ting* god who judges right and wrong. A Japanese corporation purchased Yunapa beach, which encompasses sacred entrances to the sea, and constructed a resort hotel. The gods sent sickness to these "aggressors." People who abandon the *ukamagam* (the kitchen gods) may develop eye diseases.[9] Those who fill up sacred wells tend to have eye and abdominal ailments. A blind child may be born into a family that destroyed an *utaki,* or the child may suffer from polio. The gods also ask shamans to prevent destruction. The goddess of Funasukugaa used TS as her messenger to warn the people that the goddess would cause drought or let tidal waves strike the island. That year (1971), rain indeed did not fall for almost three months and the city gave up its plan to turn the sacred well into a parking lot.[10] The *ting* god of the *utaki* possessed HS, who implored the businessman to stop building on the site of the *utaki.* However, HS's effort was unsuccessful, and this god's residence (*ibi*) is now under the building's restroom. A popular belief says that no business that occupies this building will succeed, and some have already failed.

The siblings think that humans are free to decide whether or not they will interact with, and solicit support from, the Miyako gods. The household protecting gods, such as the *ukamagam* (kitchen gods), the *tukurugam* (household protector), and the *yu nu kam* (the gods of wealth), do not by nature dwell in houses. Humans ask the gods to settle in their homes. An individual is not endowed with *mau* (individual protecting gods) when he or she is born. A person may ask a shaman to conduct rituals that enable an individual to receive *mau.*[11] Both NT and TS emphasize a client's voluntary intention to believe in the gods. A young woman consulted NT because her relatives exerted pressure on her to worship the *ukamagam.* He replied to her, "If you don't feel like venerating the *ukamagam,* wait until you really feel you want to worship it at home." It appears that the people of Miyako do not want to trouble themselves much about the gods unless they need divine aid. As one civil servant said to me, "Forget about the gods unless you need them."

However, when people face hardships, they beseech the gods to help them. They go to shamans and ask them to identify the causes of their difficulties and to conduct problem-solving rituals, expecting immediate results. It is principally ancestors who drive people into circumstances requiring them to seek divine aid.

It is a deeply rooted belief among Ryūkyūans[12] that ancestors who have not received enough pacification (*ḳuyoo*) send misfortunes such as disease, divorce, accident, business failure, etc. to their offspring (FUJII 1976, 342; 1978, 144; SAKURAI 1973, 119; TAKEDA 1976, 172). In the afterworld, the rich, the poor, the famous, and the miserable are all judged equally on the basis of their lifetime conduct and are punished by the gods. If they are to be forgiven by the gods and to turn into protecting ancestors, their souls must be appeased by their descendants. Therefore, ancestors notify their descendants of their sufferings and demand pacifying rituals (*ḳuyoo*). They do this by sending misfortunes to their offspring, forcing their descendants to resort to the gods.

The relationship among the gods, ancestors, and humans can be characterized as follows. The gods are transcendental, benevolent, and impartial. Humans are this-world oriented. They do not wish to have dealings with the gods and are not obliged by the gods to have them. Suffering ancestors exercise corrective forces to pull their descendants to the religious sphere. The ancestors make their descendants realize their vulnerability and the necessity for divine support by sending them misfortune.

THE HEAVENS (*TING*)

A traditional expression, *uting nanasou* (seven layers of the heavens), suggests that the heavens have seven layers. NT conceptualizes them as corresponding to the sun, the moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn. It is vaguely believed that gods reside on twelve axes of each layer (cf. SAKURAI 1973, 126). TS did not know what kinds of gods dwell on each of the twelve axes of the seven layers, but she was certain that the four gods who confer the blessings of the heavens on the fate of a newborn baby dwell on the four principal axes of the top layer. The four gods (Fuu Nu Nusu) are basically identical and are assimilated into one concept, the creator god, the sun. The sun (*tida*) throws light on all things on earth and rules the heavens. The north star (*ninupabusu*) points out directions. Shamans I encountered (the siblings and others) do not seem to know much about the gods of the heavens. HS said, "I do not know about the

heavens. I have never ascended into the heavens." An old shaman, MY, said, "The heavens? Who knows?"

GODS

TS told me that in ancient days the god Kuitsunu and the goddess Kuitama descended from the heavens to create humans on Miyako Island. Other deities also descended to protect the island. The original couple produced everything on the island and begot a male deity and a female deity. When these deities grew up, a male deity and a female deity appeared from the earth. The original couple arranged a marriage between their children and the deities born from the earth. Each couple begot a child, one male and one female, who became husband and wife. From the original couple, all the people of Miyako were descended.[13]

People soon inhabited the entire island, and the gods who descended from the heavens lived together with humans. The cohabitation of deities and humans, however, did not last very long. Humans became greedy and started to persecute the gods. Ninupa Mma Tida (the Mother Goddess of the North Axis) served a wealthy family as a maid servant. She worked hard and was not allowed to rest, even for a minute. One day, she went to the fields and gave birth to twelve eggs. In a few days all the eggs hatched, and twelve deities were born. With these deities, the Mother Goddess retreated deep into the mountains of Karimata. Later, she distributed her twelve children to twelve sacred points of the island and told them to protect the island.

The deities who descended to the earth did not like living with selfish and greedy humans. Many of them departed from the earth to their original home, the heavens. The world of the gods was cut off from the world of humans. Since then, humans have had to resort to mediators (shamans) to know about the gods and to ask them to fulfill their wishes.

It is generally believed that the gods reside in the seven layers of the heavens, as well as the earth, the sea, and the afterworld. Although there is no clear hierarchy among the gods, major gods can be differentiated from minor ones. NT cited as the major gods the sun (*tida*), the moon (*aro tida*), the north star (*ninupabusu*), the eight gods who reside on the eight principal axes of the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the afterworld, as well as the goddesses of sacred wells, the rain god, the goddess of fecundity, and so on. In addition to these major gods, a number of minor gods (e.g., the dragon god, the sacred lion, the god of incense sticks, the gods of light and mirror) constitute the pantheon of the Miyako cosmos.

Gods who represent new concepts have also gained their places in the pantheon. They are the gods of, for example, the sewing machine and motor (NOGUCHI 1973, 64), pipes, and radio waves.

Although most Miyako shamans, as well as lay people, do not conceive the existence of omniscient gods, the siblings are unique in conceptualizing an omnipotent god, a creator god. As mentioned above, the four gods who endow humans with the fate of the heavens are essentially identical and are absorbed into one concept, the sun, the almighty. The sun illuminates and reigns over all the heavens, the earth, and the sea, and is essentially equated with the moon (*aro tida*), who reigns over the afterworld.

The deities usually appear to shamans in the form of humans – an old man with a long beard in a white robe, a dark-skinned man in a kimono, a beautiful woman with long hair in a multicolored kimono. Shamans told me that the deities do not show themselves very often to shamans. For instance, NT frequently sees the souls of ancestors and living people. However, he has seen gods and goddesses only a few times, even though he hears the voices of gods, senses their presence, dreams about them, and sings their revelations.

Names of the Miyako gods are in many cases indicative of their roles. For instance, the god of the Tsunuji Utaki is called Mmanupa Nu Yu Nu Nusu, which is translated as the God of Wealth of the South Axis. The god who dwells in the Bissi Utaki is named Mamts Nusu, which means the Master of the Right Path. The names of the gods for whom the Akanaguu Utaki is dedicated are Uika Nusu (the Master of Success in Life) and Ftsukata Kuikata Nu Nusu (the Master of Appetite). This naming method seems to me to reflect the pragmatic concerns of the Miyako people. If they are interested in obtaining assistance from the gods, it is very important for them to know what kinds of gods can give what kinds of help to them.

THE EARTH

The siblings and other shamans know much more about the names and roles of the *utaki* gods and their locations than they do about *ting* gods. This may be attributed to the concreteness of the gods of *utaki,* which are located on "this" earth. The shamans can and do visit *utaki* and confirm the residences of the gods by themselves. Such knowledge is required for them to solicit divine aid for their clients.

Many gods, repulsed by the selfishness of humans, returned to the heavens. Some of the gods, however, remained on earth. The residences of these gods, as well as the places where the gods once resided, are defined as sacred sites (*utaki*) and people go there to ask for divine support.

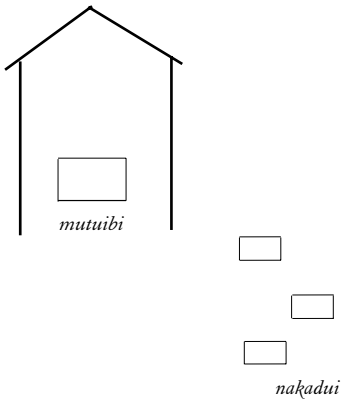

FIGURE 1. Basic structure of an *utaki*.

Many *utaki* share a basic structure (see Figure 1). There is a small, simple building in which people can find several stone (or concrete) objects. They look like "planters" that are filled with ashes. People place burning incense sticks into the ashes and pray to the gods, or offer unlit incense sticks to the gods of the sea and goddesses of sacred wells. One of the "planters" is *mutuibi,* the residence of the gods to whom the *utaki* is dedicated.[14] The others, sometimes located outside the building, are *nakadui* (or *utuusi*) and considered to be a kind of "transmitter." Some people cannot go to distant *utaki.* They can, however, send their prayers to the gods who may reside on the opposite side of the island or in Japan through each god's *nakadui.*

Although being communally supported, the *utaki* is not exclusively reserved for people of the community. Except for a few exceptional *utaki,* anyone can enter them at any time and offer prayers to the gods.[15] When community rituals are held at major *utaki,* many people (shamans and lay people) from outside the community come to pay respects to the gods and to receive their blessings.

MAJOR SACRED SITES: *UTAKI*

The siblings locate major *utaki* on the eight principal (*yaching*) axes of the island as well as on their crossing point. The concept of axes is unique to the siblings (as we shall see below), but there is a general consensus among Miyako people concerning who are important gods residing in major *utaki.* An *utaki* is inhabited by numerous gods; here I present only the major ones.

The North Axis. Major deities on the north axis are Ninupa Mma Tida (the Mother Goddess of the North Axis) who bore twelve deities and her

eldest son Upaaruz on Ikema Island. The Upaaruz god is responsible for differentiating lost souls of living people from the souls of the dead. If the person, together with the shaman, comes to the god to retrieve his or her soul, the god returns it to him or her. Otherwise the god sends it to the afterworld.[16] No one can enter his *utaki* without the priestess's permission. HS told me how serious it was to violate this rule, citing what happened to her son. The son once visited a friend on Ikema Island. During his visit, the son heard from his friend about the greatness of the god Upaaruz. He then wanted to pay his respects to the god. HS's son entered the *utaki* without knowing about the restriction and walked toward the residence of the god. All of a sudden, a raven flew down and perched on the pavement. The raven became bigger and bigger in front of him, and he was frightened and fled. In a few days, the shaman was told in a dream that the god of Ikema Island had captured her horse. Thinking something had happened to her horse, she went to the stable but found nothing unusual. She then visited another shaman for divination. The second shaman said that her dream signified that the god of Ikema Island had been keeping the soul of her son who was born in the year of the horse. HS had to conduct a ritual to apologize to the god Upaaruz and to regain her son's soul.

The Northeast Axis. Bissi Utaki exists on the northeast axis. The *utaki* is dedicated to one main deity and five lesser ones. The main deity is named Mamts Nusu, who supposedly directs ships in the right direction. Other deities whose *nakadui* were established here are Masabi Nusu, who determines right and wrong; Fuzi Nu Nusu, who is the god of the offshore reef; Yabisi Nusu, the God of Yabisi, a great reef off Ikema Island; the sea deity on the northeast axis; and Mmanupa Nu Yu Nu Nusu, the God of Wealth on the south axis. The last four deities also have their own residences in other *utaki*.

However, people who cannot go to those *utaki* can offer prayers to the gods at Bissi Utaki; their prayers are transmitted from Bissi Utaki to the permanent residences of the gods through the *nakadui*.

The East Axis. People of Bora on the east axis consider Utachiyaa Mutu (in which the community-protecting god resides) and Takinaka Mutu, (which is dedicated to the god of fate) to be very important, though the former is more significant than the latter (KAMATA 1965b, 402; KOJIMA 1978, 461–63). The siblings' idea was slightly different: the god who dwells on Takinaka Mutu is a navigation god.

The Southeast Axis. Two of the *utaki* in Uruka and Tomori stand on the southeast axis. They are Amaripa Utaki and Uruka Utaki. The goddess who protects the people and the island from tidal waves is worshiped at Amaripa Utaki. Together with the nature deities, two divine sisters who accompanied a divine hero, Nakazuni Tuyumshuu,[17] in his expedition to Yaeyama Archipelago, are venerated at Uruka Utaki.

The South Axis. There are two major sacred sites on the south axis. They are Akazak Utaki and Akanaguu Utaki. The second son of the Mother Goddess resides in Akazak Utaki. He is called Akazak Nu Akaruting Akamamiganusu Mamts Mazo Nusu (the God who Enlightens the World, Blesses People with Abundance, Orients People to the Right Path, and Protects the Gate). This *utaki* was established by a divine hero, Yunapasiidzu Tuyumshuu. The Tuyumshuu, on his way back from Okinawa, drifted to the shore of Akazak. When he landed on the shore, the sun rose from the east and illuminated the entire place. He was grateful to the god of the place for having protected him, and he established this *utaki*. No one is allowed to enter the *utaki* without permission of the priestess. People, therefore, go to Tsunuji Utaki, which is dedicated to Mmanupa Nu Yu Nu Nusu (the God of Wealth on the South Axis) and is also *nakadui* to the Akazak Utaki. Uika Nusu, who is the third son of the Mother Goddess and is in charge of one's advancement in life, and Ftsukata Kuikata Nu Nusu, who stimulates one's appetite, are worshiped at Akanaguu Utaki.

The Southwest Axis. Kaaniza Utaki falls on the southwest axis. Kaani Mma Tida (the Mother Goddess of Kaaniza Utaki) is worshiped there.

The West Axis. Tskasayaa Utaki stands on the west axis. This is the place to which the progenitor couple, Kuitsunu and Kuitama, descended. The *utaki* is dedicated to the eldest daughter of the Mother Goddess, as well as the first couple. In addition, six residences were established as *nakadui* for Kinko Nusu Kura Nu Nusu (the God of the Granary), the Mother Goddess of the North Axis, the god Upaaruz, Mapaiting Skama Nusu (the God of Occupation of the South Axis of the Heavens), the sea god on the west axis, and the god of navigation.

The Northwest Axis. Two deities, a couple (Ting nu Kanidunu and Matsumiga), are worshiped at Madama Utaki in Ngkyadura. They are in charge of longevity, health, and happy marriage.

The Crossing Point. At Nabarudake, the crossing point of the axes, the god Fudzuamiganusu, who controls rain, has his dwelling.

A great many *utaki* fall between these axes. Some of them are as significant as the ones on the axes. Bankuyama Utaki was founded by a very well-known shaman, YM, who died in the late 1970s.[18] This *utaki* is located between those of Madama and Upaaruz, and is the place where lost souls of living people are kept temporarily. If a person whose soul is lost does not come to Bankuyama Utaki to retrieve his or her soul, the god sends it to Upaaruz Utaki. The god of the feast table, the god who receives offerings, and the god of the ritual plate reside in between the axes of the southeast and the south. The goddess Bzumaruting occupies a large cave in Yunangdaki, which falls between Bora and Uruka. From the ceiling hangs a huge stalactite, which signifies the male sexual organ. She is the goddess of fecundity and enables women to conceive and bear children. Atsumama Utaki (Hirara) is also important. This *utaki* is dedicated to Niija Mumuchooganusu (the God Who Passes Judgment on Dead People on the Basis of Their Lifetime Conduct), Choo Nu Nusu (the God Who Determines Right and Wrong), and others. There, people can also pray to the god of Tsunuji Utaki, Akanaguu Utaki, the god of education, Japanese deities, and the goddess of the sacred well, Funasukugaa, through each god's *nakadui*. Kamamamine (Hirara) is a small hill to which the dragon god is said to have descended. The god Kuitsu in Kagamihara (Hirara) is supposed to be as important as the progenitor couple, even though no building is dedicated to this god.

In the vicinity of an *utaki,* people can find a sacred well, or *kaa* (when tacked onto a proper noun it often becomes *gaa*) from which fresh water springs out. On a coral island such as Miyako, it was critical for people to have a reliable water supply; thus deities who protect these wells were endowed with great significance. When a child was born, his or her family used to draw water from a nearby sacred well and wash the baby with the water. There is a sacred well, Muttomaigaa, near Upaaruz Utaki on Ikema Island. Bissi Utaki has its sacred well on its eastern side. Abundant water still springs from Boragaa on the east axis. In Tomori, there are two large grotto caves, Amakaa and Kinsukyagaa, which are filled with water. Nukagaa and Sakdagaa are sacred wells at Akazak Utaki and Akanaguu Utaki. At present, people pump water up from Sakdagaa and use it for farming. On the southwestern axis, near the sea, there is a place where fresh water comes out. Ingaa is located adjacent to Tskasayaa Utaki. Several times NT saw the dragon god, radiating white light, descend to Ingaa. There are many sacred wells in Ngkyadura, where Madama Utaki is located. The sacred well Funasukugaa is found a short distance

from Atsumama Utaki. *Utaki* and *kaa* are considered complementary pairs, like husband and wife.

THE SEA *(RYUGUU)*

Traditionally it is conceived that the sea is seven or nine layers deep. NT generalized sea deities as follows:

> The sea deities protect the island from outside evil; for instance, from epidemics. They are benign and patient. However, when they lose patience, they show their rage by bringing about tornadoes, tidal waves, and typhoons. The sea deities are nature itself.

I could not obtain much information about individual sea deities. The concept of a paradise beyond the sea, which has been a subject of discussion by scholars for many years (HIGA 1983, 141–47; ITO 1973; KREINER 1977; MABUCHI 1974, 228–41; ORIGUCHI 1923; YANAGITA 1950) does not appear in the siblings' theology.

NT sees the dragon god in a huge cave at the bottom of the sea. It looks around with glaring eyes. Sometimes it sends up a spray, soars to the sky in a bright light, and descends to the sacred well Ingaa. When people want to offer prayers to the sea gods, they go to one of the entrances to the sea. The major entrances to the sea are found on eight sacred points that are distributed around the coast of Miyako Island. In the vicinity of an entrance, there are a *kaa* and an *utaki*. The three sacred places – an *utaki,* a *kaa,* and an entrance to the sea – form a sacred triad.

THE AFTERWORLD *(NIIJA* OR *GUSOO)*

The afterworld is the world of the dead, but the siblings think it is also the place where new life is created. The siblings cite the following as major deities in the afterworld: Niija Asa Tida (Father Moon), Niija Mma Tida (Mother Moon), and eight Kang-nung deities who protect families.[19] Father Moon passes judgment on the dead and punishes them for improper conduct. Mother Moon is responsible for procreating new lives from the dead souls. NT describes the afterworld as follows:

> The afterworld exists at the bottom of a deep, deep hole. Many dead are squirming. They are afflicted with punishment and moaning with pain. The dead are always looking for a chance to escape from the afterworld.

Another shaman, HS, saw the world of the dead like this:

> I stepped down a stair and came to the bottom of a hole. I saw glittering golden deities. They held sticks in their hands and were striking dead people.

ANCESTORS[20]

When a person dies, NT said, his or her souls are supposed to leave the body. The one that represents the bones goes to the grave, which is the entrance to the afterworld (cf. SAKURAI 1973, 130, 132–33). Gods stand at both sides of the entrance, protecting the gate to the afterworld. The god of the left side opens the gate and that of the right side closes it. The other souls (the seven souls that sustain human life during one's lifetime)[21] lodge on the *ipai* (ancestral tablet), which represents the physical appearance of the human body.

However, it is a general belief throughout the Ryūkyūs that the soul of the dead[22] is not aware for a while that its owner has died and wants to remain in the world, calling on his or her family, relatives, and friends. This is particularly true of the soul of a person who had many things to look back on with regret (see SAKURAI for a similar belief in Okinawa [1973, 43] and YAMASHITA [1977, 259] for a similar belief in Amami). As the recently deceased soul moves back and forth between the afterworld and this world, other souls of the dead try to sneak into the world of the living. This is a very dangerous, polluted state called *busoozu*.[23] This contaminated state traditionally lasts for forty-nine (or sometimes 100) days after one's death. The pollution is believed to be contagious, affecting not only the attendants at one's funeral but also neighboring families. People who are susceptible to this pollution (e.g., shamans, pregnant women) must avoid this contaminated state. They try not to go to the funerals and memorial services of their relatives and friends.[24] If they do, they may become ill with such ailments as headache, nausea, and fever.

During the mourning period, the family of the deceased (and people who are visited by the soul of the dead) must conduct a ritual (*ḳamptu baḳyaadzu* or *mizubaḳi mtsbaḳi*) that tells the dead person, "You cannot come back to this world. You are not a member of my family any longer. Do not call on me. Go to the world of the dead" (see also SAKURAI 1973, 99–100; TAKEDA 1976, 165).

When people die at places other than their home, their souls may linger at that spot (e.g., the hospital, a friend's house, a battlefield). Their

families ask *sungam kakarya* (or *gusoo zas*) to draw the souls from the site to the grave and the *ipai*[25] (see SAKURAI 1973: 139–40; NAOE 1983, 133).

In the afterworld, souls of the dead are judged on the conduct of each person during his or her lifetime and are punished accordingly. Those who committed suicide and crimes are severely tortured. The only way the dead can be released from these punishments is through the performance of pacifying rituals (*kuyoo*) by his or her descendants. In the rituals, his or her descendants implore the gods to forgive the dead. Therefore, souls of the dead always look for opportunities to sneak into this world to tell their families, relatives, and friends about their suffering. Severely tortured souls and those who do not have offspring stand on the streets and call out to anyone, begging for rituals. If no one performs the *kuyoo* rituals for them, these souls eventually turn into evil spirits (*mazumung*) and spread various misfortunes among people.

When an ancestor asks his or her descendants to perform a pacifying ritual (*kuyoo*), TS said, the ancestor chooses one of his or her descendants and sends misfortunes (e.g., sickness, accidents, marital problems, failure in school) to the descendant. Even lay people are very familiar with the idea that ancestors, when not pacified enough, send misfortunes to their descendants.

However, when a misfortune falls on a particular person, he or she tends to ask why his or her ancestors, who should protect offspring, send hardships their way. According to the shamans, the descendant must realize that the misfortune is a message from his or her suffering ancestor and that he or she is responsible for appeasing the ancestor's soul. (It is his or her *bang* to pacify that particular ancestor.) If the descendant ignores the ancestor's request, the latter will send more and more misfortunes. The former may continue to ignore the request. In that case, the ancestor must ask another descendant who is seemingly willing to hold a pacifying ritual. The siblings say that the descendant of second choice may decline the ancestor's solicitation, indicating that he or she is not responsible for that particular ancestor (i.e., it is not his or her *bang* to pacify that ancestor), for once he or she satisfies that ancestor's wish, other ancestors will rush to this generous descendant, who is eventually overburdened. The siblings think it is very important to discern who among the descendants is responsible for appeasing whom among ancestors, and they call this process of discernment *irobaki dangbaki* (differentiating colors and steps).

Descendants usually conduct *kuyoo* until the thirty-third year after one's death. After that, it is generally believed, the individual soul of the dead is absorbed into the ancestral spirit group, losing its unique individuality (see FUJII 1978, 177; GAMŌ and ŌGO 1976, 389; ŌGO 1973, 179; TAKEDA 1976, 165–66). The siblings had different ideas. Unless ancestors are pacified enough and forgiven by the gods, they cannot turn into beneficent ones even after thirty-three years, and NT thinks that ancestors maintain their individual identity forever.

Divine ancestors (or legendary figures of great achievement) are deified and honored at *utaki,* although the siblings distinguish them from the gods. They are warrior-heroes, inventors, or persons who brought something useful from outside.

The three most famous heroes – Yunapasiidzu Tuyumshuu, Migurimudzu Tuyumshuu, and Nakazuni Tuyumshuu – are venerated as the three pillar gods of Miyako at the Miyako Shrine. Pigitarya Yu Nu Nusu, a great farmer who cultivated the wasteland, is worshiped all over Miyako Island as an agricultural deity, and Inaishi, who refined the means to weave Miyako *jofu,*[26] is worshiped at Inaishi Utaki.

BIRTH AND TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS

The siblings say a human is born in order to achieve what his/her ancestors failed to do. Most humans die without achieving what they wanted to do in their lifetimes. In the afterworld, the ancestor hopes one of his/her descendants will achieve what he/she has left unfinished. The ancestor asks the sun god of the heavens and the moon goddess of the afterworld to create new life into which his/her soul will transmigrate. If the ancestor's wish is granted, many ancestors come together and create a human body. In the third month, they mold a prototype form of a human being. By the seventh month, their creating process is almost complete. The gods of the heavens bless the *waaifuu* (the fate from the heavens) of the fetus. In the eighth month, the ancestors give the ancestors' destiny (*staifuu*) to the child. This destiny includes the ancestor's wish (1) that the child accomplish what the ancestor could not do during his/her lifetime and (2) that the child pacify certain ancestors.

In the ninth month, the path of the heavens opens. Through the path, the child comes into this world. At the time of birth, the god of childbirth covers the maternity room with veils and guards the house from evils. The *ukamagam* (kitchen gods) and the *tukurugam* (household protector) protect the lives of the mother and her child. When the child

is delivered, the goddess of Ingaa cuts the umbilical cord. The baby is washed in water from a nearby sacred well.

Sometimes a baby is born with defects. I asked NT how this happened if the gods examine the baby. He said that the defects were messages from ancestors; some ancestors have been suffering so much that they have had to resort to drastic means to tell their offspring about their sufferings.

Birth, like death, is a dangerous or taboo (*busoozu*) state. The ancestor's soul transmigrates to become the soul of a baby. When that soul moves from the afterworld to this world, other souls become restless, and they try to penetrate this world. When a child is delivered, people attach a cross made of bamboo (*azi*) to each of the four corners of the maternity room. The cross protects the room from evil.

On the fourth, eighth, and tenth day, people conduct a traditional ritual to clear away all the pollutions (*soozubari*). On the tenth day, they give the baby a divine name. They choose one out of several names (those of ancestors, gods of *utaki,* and *ukamagam*) by divine lottery. This naming custom is still practiced, though the name given thus is usually used neither in everyday nor in official contexts. Parents are also supposed to offer incense sticks (and offerings) to the *utaki* god (from whom the baby received the name) on the first and fifteenth days of every month. Once grown up, the person is expected to offer incense sticks when the community ritual is held at the *utaki*. Parents also offer *ngk* (libation) and incense sticks, when the fifteenth of August comes for the first time, to the *utaki* gods of the *mmarizatu* (the community in which one was born), so that the baby is recognized as a community member and receives divine protection.

Once born, the human is protected by souls (*tamas*), which are life-sustaining sources.

Although variations exist on the number and location of *tamas* (NAOE 1983; SUMIYA and KREINER 1977, 266; YAMASHITA 1977, 276–80; YOHENA 1970), seven seems to be the most prevalent number in Miyako. According to NAOE (1983, 129), one lodges on the fontanel area of the skull, one on the forehead, one on each shoulder, one on the chest, one on the back, and one on the legs. The one on the forehead is the most important; its loss is believed to be fatal. NT had a slightly different opinion about locations: one on the head, one on each shoulder, one on each side, one on the chest, and the last one on the back. A *tamas* easily dislodges itself when its owner is frightened (e.g., being almost drowned, hit by a

car, verbally threatened). The owner must conduct a ritual to retrieve a lost soul (*tamas uki* or *tamas ukabi*). Otherwise, his/her fate declines and he/she is likely to face misfortunes (see NAOE 1983; SAKURAI 1973, 275–319; SUMIYA and KREINER 1977, 266; YAMASHITA 1977, 276–280; YOHENA 1970).

In the siblings' explanation of the origin of new life, we see a continuum from the dead to the living (or rebirth of the dead). From the concept of one's destiny, we learn that an individual is bound to the past, especially the past conduct of his or her ancestors.

TS says the child's fate is linked with that of his or her parents until the child is eighteen years old. After that, the child lives life according to the fate blessed by the gods of the heavens and assigned by his/her ancestors. The gods of the heavens always wish a person to live a long, happy life. However, the person is also bound by *staifuu* (the destiny assigned from his/her ancestors). For this reason, the person faces many difficulties.

Because each person's soul is the transmigration of an ancestor, the person tends to repeat the same mistakes the ancestor made. This concept is known to the people as *tsdz uri* (see ŌHASHI 1980, 19; TAKEDA 1976, 172). For instance, if the ancestor failed in school, his/her *mmarikaadzu* (a descendant into whom the ancestor's soul transmigrates) is likely to fail in school. To prevent the same mistake again, the siblings explain, the descendant must find out whose *mmarikaadzu* he/she is, how the ancestor lived his/her life, how the descendant can pacify the ancestor and convert the ancestor to a protecting one, and who the other ancestors are to whom the descendant is responsible for conducting pacifying rituals.

Unfortunately, people do not start to search for their ancestors until they encounter misfortune, such as divorce, sickness, barrenness, or accidents. When people face difficulties, they seek protection from the gods. People ask shamans to perform rituals that enable them to establish relationships with, and to receive support from, the divine, as described below.

SHAMANS

NT thinks that the concept of the transmigration of an ancestor's soul can be applied to the birth of shamans. His own great-grandfather was a well-known shaman named Toganishuu. He was mainly concerned with religious activities related to the gods of the heavens and the sea. He did not seem to be interested in distant ancestral matters, such as

appeasing the souls of divine heroes and sending them to the heavens. Toganishuu left what he did not do, i.e., ancestral matters, to his great-grandson, NT.[27]

TS states that male shamans tend to be *mmarikaadzu* of ancestor shamans and that female shamans are born to redeem society and humans from sin. During his initiation days, NT was mainly possessed by his distant ancestors who were divine heroes. One of them became his *tsdz* (protector) and took him to many sacred sites and gods. TS was chosen by an ancient shaman, "who was also the messenger of the creator god," to fulfill the same duty; there may or may not be a blood relationship between TS and this shaman. TS's mission is to "save" everyone impartially, to spread the teachings of the gods, and to "give birth to" new shamans rather than to achieve what her ancestor shamans failed to accomplish.

Throughout the Ryūkyūs, a shaman's initiation process shares a basic pattern: innate tendencies, calling (appearance of initiation symptoms), declining of calling, deteriorating of initiation symptoms represented in psychosomatic disorders, involvement in (therapeutic) rituals such as visiting many *utaki* and appeasing ancestors, becoming a shaman by opening a path to the gods.[28]

Shamans are by nature spiritually oriented (i.e., *kamdaka mmari*) and are likely to have idiosyncratic childhoods. For instance, NT saw a spinning snake biting its tail; beside it stood a male figure. At that time, he was four or five years old. TS often had religious and prophetic dreams in her childhood. A female shaman, TH, often experienced sudden loss of consciousness. Before the doctor examined her, TH saw some deities descend from the heavens. One god carried a medicine kit in his hand, and he asked her, "Do you promise me?" Then he shook hands with her and gave her an injection. However, potential shamans are not aware of their mission until gods and divine ancestors tell them they are destined to be shamans. Their message is manifested in *kamdaari,* which involves such symptoms as audio-visual hallucination, violent body shaking and jumping, insomnia, loss of appetite, loss of consciousness, singing, and screaming. A series of serious organic diseases, domestic troubles, and business failures may substitute for, or add to, these disorders. *Kamdaari* victims visit many shamans and are told that they have to open the path to the gods. However, in many cases, the potential shaman tries to escape from his/her destiny by defying these messages or asking the

gods to wait for a while. This attempted escape leads to aggravation of *ḳamdaari*.

Not all *ḳamdaari* victims choose to accept the mission. Some who experience only minor *ḳamdaari* symptoms resume normal lives after they are treated by accomplished shamans. For others, their symptoms are of much greater magnitude. The family of such a victim may choose to place the victim in a mental hospital; however, such hospitalization is said to lead to further deterioration of the victim's condition. Still others decide to accept the mission and proceed to select a mother shaman, who will help the apprentice receive *mau* (individual protecting gods) and orients him/her into shamanhood.[29]

There are variations in the process of receiving *mau;* here I cite the siblings' example.[30] The apprentice, under the mother shaman's guidance, must first identify his/her *mmariḳaadzu* and *tsdz,* a distant ancestor who will fulfill the role of protector. It is the *tsdz* who asks the gods to give various divine powers to the apprentice. Second, the apprentice must find out what kinds of gods gave support to his/her *tsdz* during the *tsdz'*s lifetime. Then the apprentice and the mother shaman visit the sacred sites of the gods who protected his/her *tsdz,* and the apprentice assimilates divine powers from the gods.

The apprentice starts from the gods of the *utaki,* sacred well, and entrance to the sea of the *mmarizatu* (the community in which he or she was born), then moves up to major sacred places. As mentioned above, the major sacred places of the *utaki,* entrances to the sea, and sacred wells lie on the eight axes of the island. Other sacred places lie between the axes. Using the power of incense sticks, the mother shaman incorporates divine energy from the sacred places between the axes into each of the sacred places on the eight axes. Interactions of the divine energy from various sacred sites produce much greater power than their sum. This ritual manipulation is called the process of "multiplication." Next, the mother shaman constructs a path between the crossing point of the axes and each of the major sacred places on the eight axes; the power is transmitted from those sacred places to the crossing point. This procedure is called *musubi*. Then paths are built between the crossing point and the apprentice's *mau ḳooru* (a vessel in which incense sticks are burned). Through the path, the multiplied energy is transferred into the apprentice's *ḳooru*. If the apprentice's *tsdz* (protector) worshiped gods of Okinawa as well as those of Miyako, the apprentice must make a visit to the sacred sites of Okinawa as well.

In the process of receiving his/her *mau,* the apprentice learns from the mother shaman the names of the gods to whom each *utaki* is dedicated and what kinds of roles the gods of each *utaki* fulfill.

The apprentice also conducts *kuyoo* for ancestors, tracing them back as far as possible (in the siblings' case, tracing ancestors back for thirteen generations). The apprentice also offers gratitude to the gods who protected the ancestors. If his/her *tsdz* is still suffering in the afterworld, the apprentice must appease the *tsdz* and send it to the heavens.

Ideologically, NT says, a shaman's power can be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria: how much divine energy the shaman has incorporated into himself/herself and the number of gods from whom the shaman can solicit support for himself/herself and for his/her clients' sake. Thus, knowledge of the names and roles of gods becomes very important for shamans. The process of assimilating divine energy (*musubi*) is essential to the determination of the shaman's maximum potential. However, a shaman can absorb energy only from the gods his or her *tsdz* once venerated. Therefore, the potential of a shaman depends on the power his/her *tsdz* possessed. If the shaman's *tsdz* was a minor shaman who was concerned only with village gods, the shaman can assimilate powers only from village gods. If the shaman's *tsdz* was a divine hero who was given protection not only by the gods of Miyako but also by those of Okinawa, the shaman can utilize divine powers from various gods of Okinawa as well as those of Miyako.

The apprentice becomes a shaman after opening the path to the gods (*mtsaki*). The apprentice may have a dream in which he/she is given qualifications (*choobo*) from his/her *tsdz.* In the dream, the *tsdz* may tell the apprentice that the path to the gods is open. His/her mother shaman may determine whether or not the apprentice has opened the path. In NT's case, he had a dream in which he was given a book, *Miyakojima shomin shi* (The History of Ordinary People on Miyako Island, written by INAMURA Kenpu [1972]), by an old man, and after that his mother shaman, TS, judged that he had opened the path.

SOLICITING DIVINE SUPPORT

When the Miyako people face difficulties, they seek divine aid: (1) by receiving household protecting gods, such as the *ukamagam* (kitchen gods), the *tukurugam* (household protector), and the *yu nu kam* (gods of wealth); (2) by receiving individual protecting gods, *mau;* and (3) by means of *hanji* (divination) and *nigadzu* (problem-solving rituals).

The ukamagam (kitchen gods). A female and two child deities constitute one concept: the *ukamagam*.[31] The *ukamagam* do not, by nature, dwell in one's kitchen. A shaman, on behalf of his or her client, conducts a ritual so that the *ukamagam* settle in the kitchen and insure peaceful domestic life. The *ukamagam* are messengers to the gods of the heavens. People can petition the gods of the heavens through the *ukamagam,* who also observe domestic life and become well aware of family problems. NT said he could discern domestic problems of a client by communicating with the client's *ukamagam*.

A family's *ukamagam* is passed on from parents to the eldest son, whose wife is in charge of the *ukamagam*. When younger sons set up branch houses, they receive the *ukamagam* anew, making a connection between that of the origin house and of the branch house by using the power of incense sticks. This ritual act (*bunke bung*) reflects people's wish that offspring will spread and flourish forever.

As for the relationship between the *ukamagam* and ancestors goes, some scholars say ancestral spirits (which have passed the thirty-third anniversary) are worshiped as the *ukamagam* (ŌGO 1973, 179–180; TAKEDA 1976, 165–66). But NAKAHARA does not see any relation between the two (1959, 168). Even among Okinawans, contradictory views exist, as FURUIE indicates (1983). NT explained the relation as follows: The *ukamagam* and ancestors are different entities. However, *musubi* (connection) was to be made between the two by using the power of incense sticks. The *ukamagam,* which the family continues to worship through generations, have protected the peaceful and happy domestic life in the past and are asked to do so in the future. This explains why *musubi* between the two is required.

The tukurugam (household protector). When a person has a new house built, he or she asks a shaman to perform a ritual during which the shaman asks the *tukurugam* to settle down in the house and to protect the household from outside evils (e.g., robbers, unwelcome guests, thieves, animals). The *tukurugam* also functions as *nakadui* to the gods of *utaki*, sacred wells, the afterworld, and the sea. TS noted that the *ukamagam* sends human prayers vertically to the gods of the heavens and the *tukurugam* horizontally to the gods on the earth and below to those in the afterworld and sea.

The yu nu kam (the gods of wealth). The *yu nu kam* are a group of gods that insure abundance to the family. When a person wishes to receive the *yu nu kam,* the person asks a shaman to take him/her to sacred sites

in which the gods related to abundance reside (e.g., Tsunuji Utaki or Akanaguu Utaki), as well as those of the person's and parents' *mmarixatu*. The eldest son of a family inherits the *yu nu ḳam,* who insure the family's wealth through generations.

Receiving individual protecting gods, mau. People receive *mau* as personal protecting gods (*mau o ḳamiru* or *mau o tomosuru*). An individual may hope to receive his or her *mau,* although no *ḳamdaari* symptoms appear. For instance, in such communities of Gusukube as Uruka, Bora, Higa, and Aragusuku, the community members seem to become affiliated by birth with one (or some) of the community *utaki* when they reach a certain age (e.g., birth, seven, thirteen, twenty, thirty-five). People worship the god(s) of the affiliated *utaki* as their *mau* (see KAMATA 1976; KOJIMA 1978, 465–66). For others (people of Matsubara and Oura in Hirara, Yonaha in Shimoji, etc.), experiences of misfortunes, especially minor *ḳamdaari* (e.g., occasional body-shaking, frequent dreams, restlessness), motivate people to receive *mau* (see KAMATA 1976; HIGA 1983, 164; SAKURAI 1976, 323–25; USHIJIMA 1969, 93).

After the *mau* is received, the *ḳamdaari* symptoms are said to disappear (or subside). I do not have statistical data concerning the rate of those who receive *mau,* those who experience *ḳamdaari,* or those who become shamans from among *ḳamdaari* victims. Shamans say that they can differentiate between those who will and others who will not become shamans. The differentiating criterion appears to be the degree of severity of symptoms.

As indicated above, there are minor variations among shamans in the procedures of receiving *mau*. The siblings usually take their client to the *utaki* and the sacred well of the client's *mmarizatu,* then to the *utaki* and the sacred wells of the client's parents' *mmarizatu,* and finally to major sacred sites and wells of the island. By using the power of incense sticks, the shamans establish a path between the sacred sites and wells and the client's *ḳooru,* which serves as the path through which divine energy from the sacred places flows into the *ḳooru*. Then the shaman prays to the gods so that the absorbed divine energy will be harmoniously integrated and rooted in the *ḳooru*.

Hanji (divination) and nigadzu (problem-solving rituals). Even if the household is regularly protected by the *ukamagam,* the *tukurugam,* and the *yu nu ḳam,* and an individual is under the protection of his or her *mau,* people still encounter misfortunes. When the Miyako people face inexplicable misfortunes (e.g., prolonged or incurable disease, accidents,

marital problems, business failures), they, like other people in the world, call on shamans to discover the causes and have shamans conduct problem-solving rituals.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: THE UNIQUENESS OF TRADITION

To what extent is the siblings' theology unique among Miyako shamans? I propose that their uniqueness is in their ability to verbalize and organize traditional beliefs. For instance, there is a general consensus among Miyako people that gods reside in twelve directions; the central point is in Nobarudake. Although people are not familiar with all the gods, some of them (e.g., the gods of north and south directions) and their roles are very well known even to lay people. The siblings identify and organize major deities in eight directions. They also utilize the concept of principal axes in the process of absorbing divine energy from *utaki* gods. They conceive a multiplication of divine powers by bringing about interactions of divine energy incorporated from each *utaki*, then transferring multiplied divine energy into the *utaki* of each principal axis, and finally to an individual's *kooru*.

In another case, the concept of *mmarikaadzu* is known to other shamans as well. However, they simply know that the soul of a newborn baby is a transmigration of the ancestor's. They cannot explain why the ancestor's soul transmigrates or in what process new life is created. This is true also of the concept of destiny *waaifuu* and *staifuu*. People are familiar with these traditional expressions but do not explore how these two kinds of fate work to influence one's life.

The siblings' most significant contribution is seen in their integration of seemingly separate religions: beliefs in gods and ancestor worship. People recognize that beliefs in gods (*utaki,* well, sea) and ancestor worship are two pillars of Miyako religion. But, for most of them, these two religions simply coexist. They are not interested in conceptualizing, for instance, how these two are interrelated with each other. The siblings locate the two kinds of supernatural beings in relation to humans and perceive potential tension among these three to be an organizing principle. The Miyako gods are benevolent, impartial, and transcendent. However, the Miyako people are predominantly secularly oriented. They are not concerned with the gods as long as their lives are happy. It is their ancestors who pull people into the religious sphere. Ancestors suffering from punishment in the afterworld ask their descendants to hold rituals to pacify their souls. The ancestors send misfortunes to communicate their wishes

and the descendants are driven into circumstances in which the only salvation is to ask for divine aid.

By identifying the principle in this way, I would like to suggest that the siblings' theology justifies and asserts their own (or shamans') existence in this world. The theology, answering the question of why humans need gods, and therefore shamans as divine messengers, becomes in a neo-functionalist sense (e.g., FIRTH 1968; LEACH 1968) an "instrument of argument" or "validation of the significance of shamans" in Miyako society.

As for the motivational basis of the siblings' attempt to organize beliefs, there seems to exist a sense of crisis in the face of rapid social changes. As indicated above, Miyako society has been changing rapidly: the changes are not limited to the material. Foreign religions (Christianity, Tenrikyō, Sōka Gakkai, etc.), equipped with more organized theology, have been introduced and do engage in missionary activities. Even among shamans on Okinawa Island, there are a few attempts to gather devotees and to develop religious organizations (e.g., Seitenkōkyō 生天光教 introduced in SAKURAI 1973, 323–416) around a very charismatic shaman. Furthermore, many young people leave the island looking for better job and educational opportunities. It seems to me that the shamanism that is flourishing in present Miyako society is responding to various social and domestic problems (e.g., divorce, child delinquency, business failure; see TAKIGUCHI 1986b). The siblings, however, keenly sense the need to organize traditional beliefs, perhaps because they fear they might disappear in the process of ongoing sociocultural changes. The siblings' organization of beliefs presented above reflects, in short, their attempt to adjust to and survive recent social and cultural changes on Miyako Island.[32]

NOTES

Acknowledgements: This paper is based on field research conducted in the Miyako archipelago, Okinawa, from November 1982 through November 1983. The research was partially supported by grants from the University of California, Los Angeles, to which I am most grateful. I also express my thanks to NT and TS for sharing their knowledge with me and to Professor R. A. Georges, Professor J. G. Kennedy, Ms. Marcia Gaston, and the editor of *Asian Folklore Studies* for their constructive suggestions.

1. As an administrative unit, Okinawa Prefecture includes three island complexes: Okinawa, Miyako, and Yaeyama. The term "Okinawa" in this article refers to only the Okinawa islands and not to Okinawa Prefecture.

2. My source for the statistical data presented in this article is the 1982 version of *Miyako gaikan* 宮古概観 (An Outline of Miyako), published by the county office.
3. Indigenous terms (terms used by my informants) are transliterated as I heard them. Japanization of the Miyako dialect has been in progress in Miyako. Younger generations tend to use Japanese or Japanized forms of the Miyako dialect. Although some of the terms designated as indigenous are in fact Japanized Miyako words (e.g., *choobo, musubi*), I follow my informants' usage. For some terms, we can find appropriate ideographs; for others there are no such ideographs. Thus, for the sake of consistency, no Chinese characters are provided for indigenous terms.
4. As is well known, the religion of the Ryūkyū Islands is dominated by women (see, e.g., KAMATA 1965b, SAKURAI 1979, 108).
5. To distinguish shamans from other kinds of religious personnel and lay people, Miyako people use two criteria: 1) the ability to make regular and direct contact with the supernatural, and 2) the active engagement in divination and ritual for clients. These emic criteria are comparable to the ones used in other societies to define shamans (see PETERS and PRICE-WILLIAMS 1980).
6. Divine lottery (*kam fux, fux,* or *fux urus*) is a standard method to select community priestesses, divine a name for a baby, etc. To choose community priestesses, people write the name of each candidate on a separate piece of paper and place the pieces on a tray. They then shake the tray. If a piece drops out of the tray, for instance, two out of three times, that person is supposed to be selected by the gods to become the community priestess. (If more than one person's name drops out several times this way, they all are selected.) The divine name of a newborn baby is chosen in the same way.
7. The present dominance of the shaman seems to reflect recent social changes (e.g., restructuring [or disintegrating] of traditional social units such as kin groups and communities) that are leading to the weakening of the community priestess's authority (see LEBRA 1964, 97–98; SAKURAI 1979, 139–46; also note 32 below).
8. There are a few male shamans in Miyako. Although LEBRA (1964, 94) indicates physical defects as the general characteristic of male shamans in Okinawa, those in Miyako are physically normal. They are not homosexual (or transvestite), either. Miyako people do not consider male shamans to be abnormal.
9. *Ukamagam* is also called *finukam*. For the sake of consistency, in this article I use the word *ukamagam*.
10. The year 1971 had the lowest rainfall on record. It rained only 162.0 mm over the period of 185 days (from March 15 through September 16).
11. In some communities (e.g., Uruka), community members are by birth affiliated with one (or some) of the community *utaki* and receive the god(s) of the affiliated *utaki* as their *mau* (KAMATA 1976). I will discuss local variations in the section on "Soliciting Divine Support."
12. This paper discusses beliefs in the Miyako area, but occasional references are made to those held in other areas of the Ryūkyūs to illustrate that some beliefs are common properties of Ryūkyūan culture.
13. TS's version of the origin myth is very similar to the official version that appears in *Miyakojima kiji shitsugi* 宮古島記事仕次 [Documents on the Miyako islands]

compiled in 1748. Most of the Miyako people are familiar with the motif of the progenitor couple.

14. Even if more than two major gods are worshiped at an *utaki,* there is only one *mutuibi;* others are *nakadui.* For instance, the progenitor couple, Kuitsunu and Kuitama, and their eldest daughter reside in one *mutuibi* at Tskasayaa Utaki.
15. However, there are several *utaki* that require the priestesses' permission before one enters (e.g., Upaaruz Utaki of Ikema Island, Akazak Utaki of Shimoji).
16. It is believed that people lose their souls when they are frightened and that those who have lost their souls tend to face misfortunes. Prolonged states of soul loss may lead to one's death. See discussion later in the text.
17. *Tuyumshuu* (or *tuyumya*) is a title referring to Miyako chiefs during the forteenth and fifteenth centuries.
18. For more detailed information on YM, see SASAKI 1983, 8–9, 118.
19. NT identifies the moon with the descending sun (*uri tida*).
20. The same term, *kam,* is used to refer to both gods and ancestors. But the siblings clearly make a distinction between the two. Ancestors are much less powerful and lower in rank than gods.
21. See the discussion concerning the concept of soul in the text.
22. Here I use the single form, soul, to designate all the souls of a deceased.
23. According to NT, death causes pollution and endangers people because the boundary between this world and the afterworld becomes weak and souls of the dead try to penetrate this world. It is interesting that his explanation shows similarities to that of Mary DOUGLAS (1966): something that falls in between categories is regarded by people as dangerous or polluting.
24. This contradicts social obligation and sometimes causes friction among people; shamans do not attend funerals of even their close friends and relatives. However, in general, the concept of *busooxu* is a good excuse for absence from funerals and memorial services.
25. *Sungam kakarya* (or *gusoo xas*) is a kind of shaman who specializes in death-related rituals. SAKURAI's (1973, 191–92) interpretation is that the soul of the dead is divided into portions indefinitely. The portions remain in all the many places the dead person once visited or lived in (e.g., *utaki* the dead person frequently visited during his/her lifetime, the place in which the dead person met a fatal accident, the hospital room in which the dead person died, the gravel on which the corpse is laid in the tomb). Therefore, the dead person's family must (theoretically) send all the portions of the soul of the dead to the afterworld. NT's explanation is different. For instance, when a person had hardships in some places, his or her sense/feeling of regret remains in these places. To describe this state, such an expression is used as "One's soul is confined to those places." The family of the deceased must conduct rituals to clear away his/her resentment. However, NT thinks this is different from the division of the soul.
26. *Jofu* is a high-quality textile made of hemp.
27. When NT states that he is a *mmarikaadzu* of Toganishuu, his great-grandfather, or that the great-grandfather's soul transmigrated into him, NT intends to say that he is responsible for compensating for Toganishuu's neglect of distant ancestral matters rather than to say that he is the latter's reincarnation.

28. Here I am concerned with ideological aspects of a shaman's initiation process. As for actual experiences of Ryūkyūan shamans, see YAMASHITA (1977, 109–260) for an Amami case; see LEBRA (1964, 94–96), ŌHASHI (1980), SAKURAI (1973, 213–33), and SASAKI (1978, 413–22; 1983, 14–17) for Okinawa; and SASAKI (1978, 422–30, 432–34; 1983, 89, 12–13) and TAKIGUCHI (1986a) for Miyako. In the Amami case, the rituals involve such activities as identifying an ancestor shaman's relics and searching an apprentice's protecting god (YAMASHITA 1977, 255). In Okinawa, an apprentice engages in visiting many sacred sites, pacifying ancestors, identifying the "correct" genealogy by tracing ancestors back as far as possible, and so on (ŌHASHI 1980, 27–35).
29. Not all the apprentices are lucky enough to receive a mother shaman's help. Some mother shamans may help an apprentice receive *mau,* but do not do more than that. Some may even belittle the apprentice, saying that the latter's symptom is an ordinary insanity. Shamans, in Miyako as well as in Okinawa, tend to emphasize that they are self-initiated (see LEBRA 1964, 95; ŌHASHI 1980, 29). In Miyako, the term "mother shaman" refers to either a male or female accomplished shaman vis-à-vis an apprentice. This may be related to the fact that most of the Miyako shamans are female.
30. Variations are seen mainly in the process of absorbing divine power from sacred sites. Some shamans, especially those in rural areas, do not visit many sacred sites. Their pilgrimages are limited to those in their own communities.
31. The word *ukamagam* is literally translated as hearth gods. I used the word "kitchen gods" rather than its literal translation for the following reason: in earlier days, a primitive hearth made of three stones was believed to represent the *ukamagam*. The primitive hearth has already disappeared. Nowadays, each house being equipped with a gas oven, the *ukamagam* is symbolized by the *kooru*. The term "kitchen gods" becomes appropriate when we look at the roles of the *ukamagam*. The most important one is to function as the messengers to higher *ting* gods. The *ukamagam* also take care of a family's food so that the family does not face food shortages. This is why I translate the *ukamagam* as the kitchen gods – the gods who reside in and rule the kitchen.
32. HANDELMAN (1968) and LANDY (1974) emphasize the shamans' adaptive ability to new situations. According to Handelman, "[T]he shaman may not simply adjust to a new set of situational determinants but can actively adopt, modify, and synthesize new ideas and conceptions" (1968, 354). Landy characterizes traditional curers as "cultural brokers" who can adapt themselves to "changes accompanying acculturation threats and opportunities" (1974, 103). For Okinawan shamans too, scholars stress their adaptive ability. LEBRA states that "shamans have displayed a greater adaptability than other traditional religious functionaries" (1964, 93) to recent modernization and industrialization. Shamans satisfy societal needs, operating as folk therapists and "interpret(ing) and reformulat(ing) (traditional beliefs) in such a way as to make sense in terms of the contemporary cultural milieu" (1964, 98). SAKURAI's observation, similar to Lebra's, is that shamans are very sensitive to newly arising societal needs and eager to absorb novel elements (1979, 140). NT and TS seem to be shamans of this type who exercise their adaptive ability to integrate traditional beliefs.

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Liminal Experiences of Miyako Shamans

Reading a Shaman's Diary

TAKIGUCHI Naoko

BY DEFINITION THE shaman is a liminal being. He[1] is a mediator between this and the other world; his presence is betwixt and between the human and supernatural. In a trance, possessed by a divine force, he becomes the focus of the fervent attention of his client and séance audience. Manifesting the power of the gods, the shaman indicates what is causing the extravagant behavior of a usually frugal and submissive housewife, or he ensures the success of the enterprise that an ambitious businessman has just undertaken. Incarnating the ancestor suffering from severe punishments in the afterworld, he moans with pain, asking for pacifying rituals.

Off-duty, however, the shaman's charisma fades away. He tends to be socially peripheral and morally ambiguous, his life full of traumatic incidents such as illness, divorce, and poverty (ŌHASHI 1980; PETERS 1981; SAKURAI 1973; SASAKI 1984; SHARON 1976). Miyako 宮古 *kamkakarya,*[2] who are believed capable of interacting voluntarily with the gods and ancestors and utilizing their power for the sake of clients' welfare, also show these characteristics, which TURNER (1977) calls "liminal."

The role the people of Miyako assign to their shamans roughly corresponds to that of "folk therapist" – religious figures who find out causes

of domestic and personal troubles and solicit divine support to solve them through ritual and divination. As lifestyles rapidly modernized, 50,000 residents of the formerly isolated Miyako Island, 326 km south of Okinawa, now enjoy, like the rest of the Japanese, modern public facilities such as schools and hospitals. They also benefit from electric appliances such as VCRs for diversion, and can take a 45-minute flight to Okinawa to shop or visit friends and relatives.

When they catch the flu, people will go to the hospital; when deciding to have a divorce, they go to court; and when their businesses fail, they might bother their acquaintances for financial aid. When modern medicine fails, when marital conflict persists, or when business problems continue, however, the Miyako people have turned, and do turn, to their shamans as a last resort.

The shaman's clientele come from various social strata: a divorced mother of three children working at a bar, a store clerk whose husband is a compulsive gambler, a hard-working carpenter whose wife ran deeply into debt, a middleclass couple whose only worry is that they are not blessed with a child, a company owner who wishes for more success, a doctor who returned from a large city, and so on. The issues the shaman deals with are also numerous (e.g., success in business or in academic entrance examinations, child delinquency, debt, psychosomatic disorder, conflict between mother and daughter-in-law).

Successful shamans are very perceptive in grasping the personal relationships in a family and becoming acquainted with its secrets or even those of its ancestors (illicit sexual relations, rape and assault, a curse uttered on a son by his father, abortion by an unmarried daughter, etc.), which would otherwise never be revealed to people outside the household. They confidently sing in divine voices and show signs of divine favor (see, for instance, Ōhashi 1978; Sakurai 1973; Takiguchi 1986).

Clients' satisfaction might be psychological but sometimes their situations are indeed improved; for instance, when a barren couple is blessed with a child, the shaman whom they hired to help them is heartily appreciated. Shamans, however, despite their pervasive influence over the islanders' domestic lives, tend to be looked down on with vague suspicion as socially marginal, morally ambiguous, glib-tongued, jealous, or loose in sexual and financial matters. Some shamans are targets of gossip for reprehensible behavior such as extramarital relations, failure to pay debts, and involvement in gambling;[3] at the very least, they are looked upon as innately different.

Laypeople believe shamans are innately *ḳamdaḳa* or *sādaḳa* (spiritually highborn). Shamans hold more specific ideas of the rebirth of an ancestor shaman's soul: they are born to achieve what their ancestor shamans failed to do and, more importantly, to save people and the world.[4] For instance, one shaman is destined to pacify divine ancestors, compensating for the neglect of his great grandfather, whose religious activities were directed to the gods of the universe and sea.

Certain general characteristics are observable in their life histories. They tend to be born in poor and illiterate families, undergoing lonely and often difficult childhoods because of ill health or poverty, and they display mystical powers (dreams, prophecies, convulsions, etc.). Although destined to be shamans, they are struck by divine punishment (*ḳamdāri*) because they either defy their destiny or are not aware of their divine calling. This involves auditory and visual hallucination, insomnia, loss of consciousness, lack of appetite, physical pains, and domestic and financial misfortunes. During this painful initiation period, novices are exposed to divine teachings and receive various qualifications (*chōbo* 帳簿 or *chō* 帳) from the supernatural, such as the ability to pacify recent ancestors, to sing in divine voices, and to interpret dreams directly. At the same time, they go to many accomplished shamans for divination and choose one of them as their "mother" shaman. Under their guidance neophytes visit the gods of many sacred sites (*utaḳi*) to absorb divine energy, which is to be "integrated as their *mau*" (individual protecting gods) (see LEBRA 1964; ŌHASHI 1980; SAKURAI 1973; SASAKI 1978; YAMASHITA 1977 for Ryūkyūan shamans' initiation processes).

Having overcome these traumatic experiences, shamans open the path to the gods (*mts aḳi*). Yet after initiation their lives as well as their divine abilities exhibit a great number of vicissitudes (intensive involvement in rituals, escapes from the gods into gambling, extramarital relations, indebtedness, etc.); their secular lives and religious activities are far from peaceful and restful. Therefore, liminality seems to be an essential feature of being a shaman.

In this paper I would like to deal with this fundamental nature of shamans by focusing on one male shaman, NT (born in 1952). The question I want to address is this: How does the shaman relate and react to the supernatural and explain troubles and trials in his life?

I study NT's case because it strongly exhibits the salient features of liminality. He has an excellent reputation as a powerful shaman. He is a social, open, and affectionate man with charismatic charm. He seems

to be blessed with an innate talent to gain the instant trust of his clients. His sincere concern, his insightful, appropriate, and practical suggestions, and his energetic performances of rituals have fascinated his clients as well as me.

However, off-duty he has failed to solve his own problems in many critical ways. He has failed at marriage twice already, the first one lasting only a few months, the second one a few years. In both cases his wives left him. What is more, he is indecisive. In difficulties he literally runs away from rather than stands up to problems, which are thus aggravated until his family and friends intervene at the last moment and clear up whatever mess he has created. This leads to a vicious circle that worsens his personal relationships and alienates him from his family and close friends.

Since I began my research on Miyako Island in 1982, NT has been one of my major shaman informants and I am very familiar with his religious activities and personal problems. Most importantly, during his initiation and for a few years after it, he kept a diary. In it he reveals in detail how his gods encouraged him to open the path to the gods, scolded him for his wrongdoings, gave him practical suggestions, imposed tasks upon him, and blessed him with knowledge and qualifications. He also tells how he responded to and reflected on the divine teachings. Following a general discussion on the nature of the Miyako supernatural and the means by which shamans communicate with it, I shall let him talk about his interactions with the gods. At the end I shall also incorporate other shamans' experiences to explain some factors that might cause various difficulties in their lives.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE SUPERNATURAL

Since shamans are distinguished from ordinary people by their direct and voluntary communication with the supernatural (LEWIS 1983; SASAKI 1984), it is appropriate to give a brief explanation of how the supernatural is understood on Miyako. The Miyako people recognize two kinds of supernatural entities in the entire cosmos: the gods and ancestors. Numerous gods (the gods of fate, the ritual plate, incense sticks, the North Star, childbirth, etc.) dwell in the heavens, the sea, and the afterworld, and on the earth. Although there is no rigid hierarchy among them, major gods can be distinguished from minor ones; among the former are the sun, the moon, the North Star, the gods who reside on the eight axes of the universe, and so on. NT and some other shamans conceptualize the cre-

ator, though not in the absolute sense. They believe that the father sun (*asa tida*) and the mother sun (*m'ma tida*) are manifestations of the only sun, which can be identified with the descending sun (i.e., moon) and also with the gods of fate. These gods dwell on the four axes of the universe and design and control everything in this world. They are by nature benevolent unless offended seriously by humans (by destroying sacred sites, for example).

Humans, once dead, go to the afterworld, where they are punished according to their conduct during their lifetime. Ancestors inform their descendants of their sufferings, asking for pacifying rituals; their requests are manifested in misfortunes the offspring suddenly face (e.g., failure in business, divorce, child delinquency, disease). Well-appeased ancestors obtain power to protect their offspring; those who died a miserable death or who have no one to conduct pacifying rituals could turn into evil spirits. Certain distant ancestors are deified and enshrined at sacred sites, but they are differentiated from the gods. They are figures who contributed to shaping Miyako society by cultivating the wasteland, unifying the people, inventing something useful, and so on. These divine ancestors, especially divine heroes (*tuyumshu*) who ruled the island from the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, often become shamans' *tsdz,* the protectors through whom accomplished shamans interact with various gods and ancestors.

It is through their *tsdz* that shamans solicit help from numerous gods, ask the gods for relief for ancestors afflicted in the afterworld, expel evil spirits, eliminate pollution, and so on. During initiation, however, novices' relations with the supernatural are undifferentiated; they are directly possessed by various gods or divine heroes and sometimes go astray, tempted by suffering ancestors and evil spirits.

Shamans hear, see, smell, touch, taste, dream, and sense physically and intuitively. For instance, just above or inside his head NT hears his *tsdz* say, "Take the path to the gods. Stand firm . . . ," and sees a beautiful goddess with long hair in a colorful kimono accompanied by a girl and a boy, or an old woman bent with age in a yellow coat who is a jealous neighbor of a client, or a man holding a pinwheel who looks like an official in the Ryūkyūan period – an ancestor of another client. He may smell the odor of powder from a courtesan who met a miserable death many years ago, or dream a dream in which his *tsdz* scolds him for his idleness or teaches him procedures to clear away pollution for a certain ritual. He touches an incense burner for the *ukamagam* (household-pro-

tecting kitchen gods) and instantly perceives domestic problems of a client, or he senses an acute pain in his eye that reveals that the father in one family had been struck by his son-in-law and had his eye hurt. He feels nausea, and this informs him of pollution caused by death or birth, or he senses intuitively the strength of the power a certain shaman or sacred site possesses. Polluted food tastes rotten to him even if ordinary people relish it.

Messages communicated in this way contain any of a variety of meanings, such as encouragement for the shaman's mission, blessing of power, and revelations of knowledge concerning the problems of his clients and their ancestors.

NT'S INTERACTIONS WITH THE SUPERNATURAL AND HIS REFLECTION ON THEM

Since it is impossible to present all of NT's lengthy diary, some kind of selection was necessary. Here I shall explain how I edited it. NT's diary from June 1974 (figure 1) through March 1981 consists of two parts: one contains divine messages, the other contains descriptions of daily incidents and his thoughts. During the initiation period (1974–1976) the divine messages were communicated to him auditorily, that is, he heard divine voices. After initiation, dreams became more common. One characteristic of the revelations is redundancy both in style and contents. We find the same messages expressed in stereotyped phrases over and over, for instance to save the world or realize the gods. To satisfy the conflicting demands of rendering the revelations readable and presenting them as faithfully as possible, I chose more or less typical and coherent ones and translated them verbatim. To provide general contexts in which his religious experiences took place, I will describe his life history briefly. To offer more specific contexts in which he received particular messages, I summarize his descriptions of critical incidents and thought. All the divine messages presented below were given to him by his *tsdz,* unless specified otherwise. My comments on the shaman's experiences will be identified as "Commentary" and indented.

THE DIARY: INITIATION PERIOD (1974–1976)

In his initiation days, NT lived in Okinawa, attended college, and worked as a waiter at night to supplement the allowance his parents sent him. He visited many shamans and numerous sacred sites to soothe his *ḳamdāri* (initiation symptoms), which had troubled him since the pre-

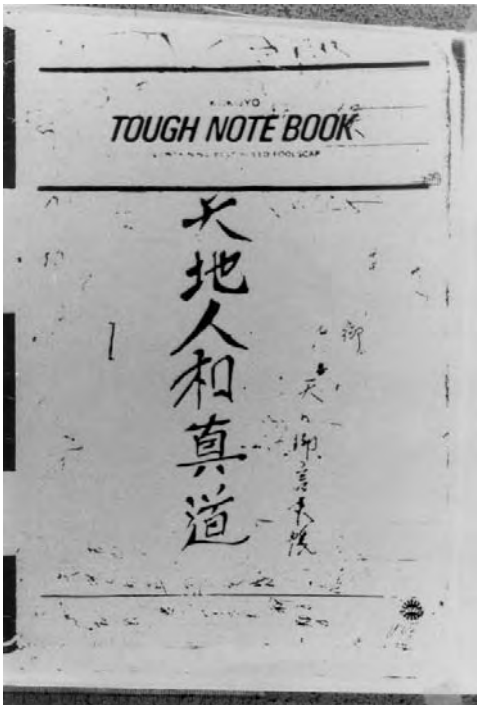

FIGURE 1. The title page of NT's diary.

vious year (1973). Around June of 1974 he met a female shaman, MI, who initiated him into the path of the gods and helped him receive *mau* (individual protecting gods). Although the encounter with this "wonderful" shaman first impressed and excited him very much, this initial rapport did not last long. An unfortunate incident that turned out to be disastrous to NT was that MI's daughter, KY, had fallen in love with him and MI arranged their marriage, stating that the gods wished NT and KY to be husband and wife. He was not, however, psychologically ready for a "happy" marriage. Moreover, being a student, he did not have the financial resources to support a married life. He also doubted his "love" for KY, being apprehensive about her childishness. Feeling his lack of affection, KY often threatened to break up with him, and took tranquilizers in the fifth month of her pregnancy (November 1975). Despite all these troubles, NT and KY celebrated their marriage in December 1975, which was dissolved two months later as a result of discord and intense med-

dling by MI. In March 1976 NT left Okinawa for Miyako to be a shaman there. His son, KA, born in April, has been raised by MI.

Around June 1974, NT was anxiously awaiting divine visits every day. He was euphoric because he was communicating with his *tsdz* (protector) and was determined to "follow the teachings of the divine hero Yunapasiidz 与那覇勢頭, [his] *tsdz*… devote [himself] to people and the world, love the gods,[5] and attain satori on the true path." However, occasionally anxiety struck him. He felt sick and miserable and repented that he had betrayed the gods. In summer he returned home. His sister, also a shaman, could understand his difficulties and took him to many sacred sites. His parents, on the other hand, expected him to complete school and to obtain an ordinary job. One day, having quarreled with his father in a drunken state, he jumped into the sea. The following day his *tsdz* spoke to him as follows.

8 August 1974

Haisa yōi![6] My holy! *Irayoi!* My holy! The path of the gods is the path of the universe. *Haiyoira!* The path of the determined mind. The gods take hold of your life. So that there will be no injustice on this earth, be honest, open the path. *Haisa yoira!* The golden child born in the year of the dragon, you! Do not think your life is an ordinary one. The divine hero![7] The lords of the universe, the luminously shining gods! Be bright! Be radiant! The gods! The lords of the universe lead you to the path of the gods, to the presence of the gods. You are infused with power and will be glorious. Rise, rise, rise! You will be led to the path and bring prosperity to your family…. One's path is different from another's…. Think of your parents; respect them. This is the mind the gods love. Happiness is a link between parents and children.

…The month of the boar. Your sister, born in the year of the boar, represents the gods. Become her right hand; help her with her endeavors, devote yourself to her. The gods will help your sister establish herself on the path. You, born in the dragon year, must open the path. Your path and your sister's will lead to the farthest end of the world and will blossom and bear fruit. The paths will lead to peace and harmony. Worship the gods! Worship the gods! You are my precious child born in the year of the dragon. Do not lose your temper so quickly. Do not drink so much. Be resolute. It concerns your body and yourself, my dear child.

Haisayu! The Master of Niima![8] *Sāsāyoi!* (figure 2) *Hai!* The golden child born in the year of the dragon! *Sāsāyoi!* Do not be idle on your path.

Take a path to Kunigami 国頭, Hentona 辺土名, even to Peking 北京, Tō 唐, and Yamato 大和.[9] Take the path of the gods. Your parents expect a great deal from you. You must know why your incense sticks did not burn well. In the presence of the gods, bad words were uttered.[10] Your parents think you are too young, but you know about yourself. Do not quarrel with your parents. Talk to them and persuade them, my dear child. You are my precious golden child. If you feel depressed and sad, I [*tsdz*] feel the same way. I know about you. I take hold of you and let you set out in the world. Inform your parents that you are not an ordinary man. At present on the path of the gods, you are a chick just hatched; just now you popped your head out. Do not betray the gods. You shall learn; let my teachings soak deeply into your mind but do not reveal them to anyone. Talk to your parents, brothers, and sisters so that they understand you. You will undergo hardships. You might think you are still young, but now, now, you must decide to take the path. "Someday" will be too late. You need your parents' help; be prudent.

You did not know about yourself yesterday, did you? Do you know that evil and good are always waging war against each other? You must

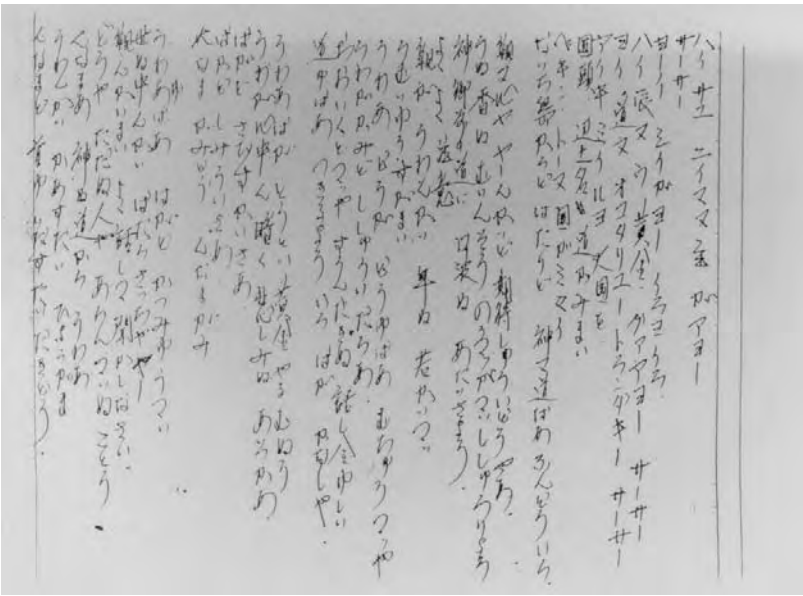

FIGURE 2. NT's diary. Entry of 8 August 1974. Third Page.

not be tempted by evil spirits…. You dove into the sea; I made you do this. You purified yourself. Gushing water, water of life; pure and beautiful child! You must not go astray. The divine hero Yunapasiidz is always with you. You went into the sea. The moon was shining. Did you see it? Do you know why? Did you look up and see my face?[11] Be a shining man. Do not be idle….

Commentary: In shamanistic beliefs the Kannon 観音 goddess is conceptualized to protect the entire family. In Okinawa Kannon worship became popular around the seventeenth century and a Kannon temple was founded in Miyako in 1699. However, NT believes that his *tsdz,* who in 1388 sailed for Okinawa for the first time as a Miyako chief, brought back and spread that worship. On 11 August together with his sister, NT visited the site of the Miyako Kannon temple and had the following dialogue with his tsdz and the Kannon deity.

11 August 1974

[*Tsdz*] *Hai!* You did not keep in mind what I had taught you. You caused your own great distress. On this Miyako Island, you have learned many things. Because of your idleness you are in difficulties. On this auspicious day, go forward, take the path of the gods, the path of the universe. Be careful in using your words. Today you will learn from the goddess here at the Kannon temple (Kannon-do 観音堂). On this beautiful Miyako Island, on this gem of the gods where you were born, you take the path that is destined.

[The goddess of the Kannon temple] I am the goddess of the Kannon temple. Believe in the gem of the gods, gem of the universe, child born in the year of the dragon! You must know about your path and attain satori. Dragon-year-child! How do you think of your path and yourself? Answer me.

[NT] Yes, I am the child born in the year of the dragon. The gods blessed me with my very life. I was born to pray for the peace of the world and to attain satori on the path of the gods. I will be faithful to the teachings of the gods. I will take the path of honesty, integrity, and truth. I will be patient and as hard as iron. I promise to cultivate myself.

[The goddess] What do you think of yourself? Why did you speak so rudely to your mother and to your *tsdz*? Answer me.

[NT] I apologize for my wrongdoings. I did not mean what I had said. I was weak, pitiable, and arrogant. I expected *amae* 甘え (indulgence)

from my mother. Evil spirits possessed me and made me miserable. I regret my imprudence. Please pardon me.

[The goddess] From now on never neglect your duty. Amend, endure hardships, and guard yourself; you must save people. You told me you would be determined, sincere, and noble-minded. At no time must you indulge yourself. Your path will be found in your learning. Many people will approach you and many difficulties will you face. Pray to the gods and attain satori. People hold various ideas and take various paths. You must listen to the gods and conduct yourself as the gods teach you. Promise me.

[NT] Yes, I am the dragon-year-child, I promise. I am happy to go out into the world guided by the gods.

[*Tsdz*] You shall learn many things from now on. Vanity, greed, and *amae,* these things you must not bear in mind. Do not forget your *tsdz* is always with you. Realize that your vanity would destroy you. When knowledge is revealed to you, you must not become greedy. Anywhere, anytime, behave yourself on the guidance of the gods. Nor should you expect *amae.* You must work hard and learn. Only when your effort is acknowledged by divine grace will you attain satori. Endure hardships, stand firm, learn many things.... On this fully blooming day, dragon child, reflect on these words, read them carefully. On this path of words, do not think your knowledge enables you to write these things. From now on, I [*tsdz*] will have you hold a pen and take the path of the gods. You are just a baby. Today what I show you is yourself: you are lying on the bed, drinking milk with your eyes still closed. From today on, compose yourself and walk the path. Now you have just opened your eyes. Do not forget the image of the baby. I will close today's teachings.

> *Commentary:* NT went back to his apartment in Okinawa. Communion with the gods brought him happiness, but he was uncertain about his future and frustrated with his inability to live up to the gods' expectations. He did not like to study. He liked to go out and have fun; his mind was restless and weak. He felt as if he was living in a dream.

19 August 1974

Dragon child! You must determine your path. I [*tsdz*] will bless you with my power.... The path of the gods is the only one....

[Another deity] *Sari sari,* auspicious, auspicious. Today you shall attain satori, child born in the dragon year! I am Ototachibanahime 弟橘媛.[12] Realize the gem of the universe, the gem of the gods, the dragon-year child. Do not act against the path of the gods, go wherever your mind takes you. The path is in *chūdō* 中道 (the golden mean), which leads to redemption of the world.

[*Tsdz*] My compassion, the path of the divine hero, the divine hero Yunapasiidz is with you. I will lead you to satori. First, when you look and listen, rely on me. Second, you shall have *nibishi* [root rocks that symbolize the souls of the gods], your family treasure…. Tenth, build *musubi*[13] (relationships) between numerous lands and islands, absorb power and step forward, my child. Do not be idle on the path of the gods, *chōdō,* the path of truth. Keep this in mind and move on; you shall have my glory. Do not disobey your parents or your children will break your heart. Happiness is a link between parents and children…. [I know the] hardships you have undergone, your agony. I know all about you. Be tolerant and blossom. From today on in your broad-mindedness lies my compassion. My power is yours too. But do not be boastful, never become conceited, dragon child, never. When you were born, on the day of your birth, I predestined it to be so, my child. Rouse yourself; the world will be reformed. This is the power of the gods and of the path. People in the world are so numerous. Do not be taken in by their glib talk; be careful, be resolute. Rely on me, you shall be infused with power. Rise, realize the path of the gods, the path of the universe. Until now you have taken various paths, you have seen various minds. Learning is what you are supposed to do. Sometimes you were disturbed by evil spirits. Purify yourself and receive power. Rise up over people.

The saw, the saw you were given, the power of this saw in the future must be gained by you; the power to expel evil dreams and epidemics. You were given a hammer at Kanikuhama Beach, the sacred site of the divine hero Yunapasiidz on Yoron 与論 Island; a hammer (*tsuchi* 槌), to cultivate (*tsuchiķau* 培う), to make wishes come true (*tsuchiķanau* つち叶う): it will be a hammer of luck.[14]

2 October 1974 (in Oķinawa)

Auspicious, auspicious, auspicious! Today, the day of the rat, from the sacred day, take a step…. The sun throws light on this great world, and all the islands are illuminated…. You lack firmness. Know that you need to cultivate your mind. Take the path of learning. You must undertake the reform of the world with right conduct of your own: "to reform"

means to indicate wrongdoings of people and lead them to the right path. Men always look for immediate success, only seeking their own interest. Revere the gods, believe in the root, realize the origin, spread the teachings of the father god, never shake your faith. Whatever hardships might befall you, think of the father god. Keep in mind that you represent the gods…. I will watch you.

Never indulge yourself, always act on the divine teachings, praise others rather than yourself, do not speak well of yourself. I tell you that the island of Miyako will not be saved unless you rise up. But keep this secret. Strengthen your mind.

Today, offer prayer from the bottom of your heart. If you want to go to Miyako, go without worries. Go and receive divine teachings. Work, study, and have fun. But at no moment, in no circumstances must you be off guard. Be as hard as iron, take the path. You will meet with happy affairs in your trip to Miyako…. The path of learning is accompanied by hardships. I understand you very well, I guide you…. I am compassionate. You must let divine compassion infiltrate people's minds. Now the divine hero is beside you. Talk! Talk! Talk to me [the divine hero]!

> *Commentary:* NT had been engaged to MI's daughter but was not sure that he loved her. He wanted to believe in MI's word that the gods designed their marriage. "Anyway, it is too late to cancel our engagement." He was also insecure about himself. He regretted his indecisiveness and lack of patience. However, he was still on good terms with MI and tried to remind himself of his mission.

21 April 1975 (in Okinawa)

Dragon child! Develop ability to perceive things intuitively…. I will let you hold a pen; develop ability to write down divine teachings. This ability I have already bestowed on you. From the path of sincerity, from the path of divine writings, realize the gods.

13 May 1975 (in Okinawa)

Holiness of the young master of the universe; you must be the young master on this earth…. Be youthful, save people; the divine hero expects a great deal from you. Embody the gods…. Consolidate yourself; whatever hardships might befall you, stand firm and set out into the world. Cultivate patience, your path is a long way; wait for chance . . . , the divine hero has been raising you from truth and honesty, immaculate dragon

child! Be youthful, be brave; in this world I will make you rise up as the child of the gods.

> *Commentary:* On 26 May NT returned to Miyako, where he no longer worried about his fiancée. He felt relaxed, assured, and peaceful. He was euphoric with divine blessing and admired the beauty of nature and the god who created that beauty. He was confident that he could sing in divine voices loudly. He identified himself with his *tsdz* and even the gods themselves, "I am the child of the gods. I am the divine hero Yunapasiidz. My voice is the voice of the gods and of the divine hero…. I will spread my wings and soar up into the universe…. I will become the rock deeply rooted on this earth and spread my branches forever." On 30 May he revisited the Kannon temple in Miyako.

30 May 1975

[The goddess] *Sayisari,* I will rise. The dragon-year! I, the goddess Kannon, have been waiting for your birth. From today, from this auspicious day on, keep my words in mind, build *musubi* between the universe and earth, child of the gods. Do you know how long I have been waiting for you? Worship me. Build *musubi* between the heavens and earth, take the path of the gods. From the Kannon goddess, from the gods of the universe, on 24 June in the year of the tiger (1974), on the path you had taken, you were a baby who just opened its eyes. Since then you have relied on me, you have been saved by me. From now on revere the path of the Kannon goddess and of the divine hero. You are to be granted virtue, success, and prosperity. Realize this and go forward. On this auspicious day, on this day of the rat, on the path to which you were brought, you have received much knowledge. Accept it gratefully, pray….

The divine hero, the lords of the universe, I am the goddess Kannon. Build *musubi* between the path of the gods and Buddha; both are closely interrelated. Realize this. The Kannon goddess am I, who enlightens the world and saves the divine hero. Seek me, dragon child…. Rise, move on, receive the power to save people; be a living god. I will entrust you with worldly affairs. I have been waiting for this day…. The divine hero sailed for Okinawa to save this beautiful island, Miyako.[15] This path, on which the divine hero had gone through many hardships, on this path of Buddha, build *musubi* between the Kannon temple in Okinawa and that in Miyako. Pacify the soul of the divine hero. I will ask you to

accomplish this. Together with the one born in the snake year (NT's fiancée) take the path. Dragon-year child, you have grown up so fast… a blessed path. Go forward, go forward on the beauty of the path. Unless you take this path, you will go astray to this person, that person, to this god and that god. You shall learn the true path, which will bring peace to the world. Pray to the gods, attain satori. Your path is straight open and becomes wider and wider. You will find only good things on it. You will be the person to save the world. The goddess of Kannon will watch you. Stand firm, fulfill my expectations. People will come to realize your power when you speak and sing in the gods' voices. Show compassion, do not lose your temper, be prudent. Tolerate people's rude words. Embody divine teachings and spread them to the world…. My child, the sutra you recite represents the truth. The Kannon goddess will endow you with this power, this sutra. Be confident, expel evil spirits, disease, pollution, and illusion. Purify the path, which leads to the *musubi* between the universe and earth. I have been waiting for your birth, your growth. Only few people recite this sutra, *kiyomikyō.* I grant this to you and your sister. The Kannon goddess wishes to inform you of these words. From now on, never go astray. Personify the gods and take this path. With your sincerity you will soon open your path; identify yourself with the universe, earth, and the gods.

Commentary: On 7 July NT returned to Okinawa, where his problem woman was awaiting. "One year has passed since I met my fiancée, but I have never felt satisfied with our relationship. I always have some doubt in my mind." On 18 July, with MI's help, he received his *mau,* or individual protecting gods. He was ecstatic. He felt as if he were ascending to the heavens and to the presence of the gods. However, insecurity soon came back. "I want to be a shaman even if I face many hardships. This is my calling. I wish I could love her. I wish she could love my father, mother, brothers, and sisters. Otherwise please find for her a wonderful husband." On 22 August he returned home without notifying MI and his fiancée. There he could compose himself and became intensively involved in religious activities. He and his sister visited many sacred sites on Miyako Island as well as Tarama 多良間 Island.

26 August 1975

Haiyo hai! (figure 3) Worship the gods, rise up…. The father god, the path of the gods of the holy Tarama Island… go forward, go forward,

dragon child. You were begotten by the young master of the universe, the child who illuminates the world; rise above the world, above people; assimilate divine energy, energy of the universe. Rise up. The gods of the universe, the master of *tsdz*, be sensitive, the master of this world. Together with your boar-year sister, in Miyako, Okinawa, Yaeyama 八重山, Yamato, Peking, and Tō, rise up, be prosperous. The true god, the holy spirit dwells in you. Raise the east pillar, the center pillar, and the pillar of the mind.

The truth will resound as far as thousands and tens of thousands of miles. Holy Tarama Island, the prosperity of the world, *hai!* On the path you have come to rise up, on which you were granted to hold the *chō* (qualification) to sing in divine voices, from now on flourish in the world; on the path you were begotten, be successful. The holiness of the divine hero Mtabaru 土原, the holiness of the divine hero Nakasuni 仲宗根, the divine hero Migurumudz目黒盛, the divine heroes Kinskyā Nagitatsu 金志川那喜太知 and Kanimudz 金盛,[16] the holy master of Niima, the holy divine hero Yunapasiidz, the god of the true *tsdz*, the

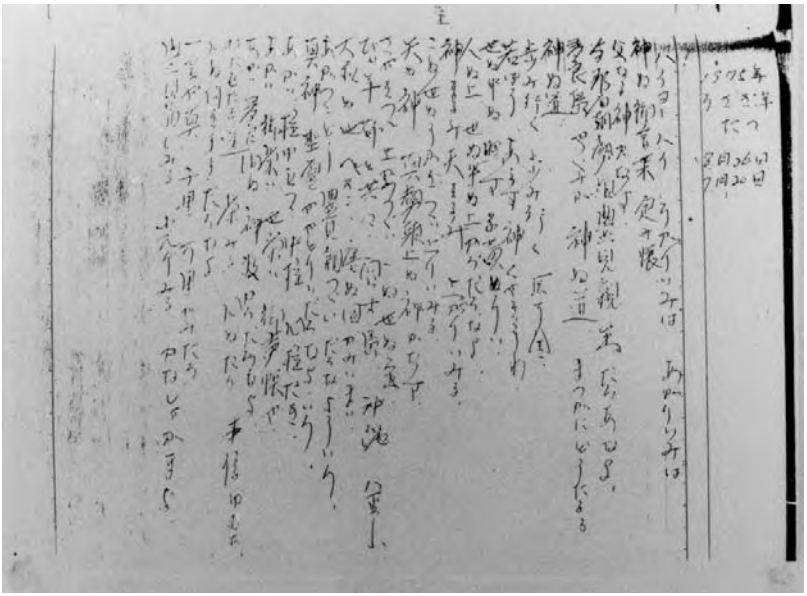

FIGURE 3. NT's diary. Beginning of the entry of 26 August 1975 (20 July in lunar calendar).

holy god of examination, the sun god; rise up. Seven layers of the sea, the holiness of the young master of the universe, the master of *chō* of heavenly virtue, the holy ability to interpret dreams, to write down divine teachings, to perceive matters intuitively and to think clearly, the holiness of practice. You shall be rooted on the true path.

Open the path and go out into the world…. In September, in the month of the gods, on holy days receive what is determined, absorb it, thereupon go forward. Carry through your tasks. Your wishes will come true one by one, shining and beautiful, thanks to your sister born in the year of the boar. Her name will be renowned for her virtue. Be resolute, rise up, truly you are fortunate. Make your name in the world, see into people's minds. The master of divine voices rises up. You! The path of the golden child must rise up and advance forward from now on. Study to obtain the certificate of the *gūji* 宮司 (Shinto priest), as the gods direct you, as the universe directs you. The basis of a loving marriage, the root of a strong bond is based on caring between husband, wife, and children. As the gods please, as the universe pleases, go through; child begotten by the gods….

Hai! the dragon year, your path as the gods guide you, as the universe guides you; do not entertain illusion. From the truth, from the straight path, as the gods orient you, do not harbor shallow ideas. Establish your mind, your body, and the gods. Your sister's path will rise up. You, dragon child, together with your sister, think, consolidate your mind and body as the gods take you; rise up. The wonder, the marvelous sister and brother, the family line that inherited the miraculous power. People will wonder at you in admiration. Look at the divine sign, the North Star, child born in the year of the dragon, rise up, be courageous, do not worry about trivialities, be confident. Oh! I expect much of you, child of the gods. The savior was born in this world, the child of the universe was born, the living god! (figure 4).

29 August 1975

…September, open the path of the gods. Granted to you is the *chō* of divine voices, granted to you is the *chō* to prescribe things, granted to you is the *chō* of success in the world, granted to you is the *chō* of heavenly virtue, granted to you is the power of Shingon Mikkyō 真言密教 [esoteric Shingon Buddhism]. From the holiness of Shinkai 心海, the master god of Terayama 寺山, you receive divine *chō*. The holiness of *mikkyō* 密教, *kiyomikyō, Shin-gonkyō* 真言経 [Shingon sutra)] *Nyoraikyō* 如来経 [Tathagata sutra], *Amidabutsu* 阿弥陀仏, *gongensama* 権現様,[17] the Kannon goddess,

the holiness, the beauty. Open divine *chōbo. Hai!* The divine hero, receive his holiness, the master of *tsdz,* the master who bestows on you the true path. From now on, on the root of *tsdz*, rise up. You are blessed with such a holiness. The beauty of the path! Take the path, rise up, fulfill the gods' expectation together with the divine hero as his words guide you.

FIGURE 4. Page of NT's diary, sometime towards the end of August 1975.

Absorb energy from many gods, receive their power, be prosperous. The divine priest(ess) will rise up. Receive the power to save people, receive divine *chōbo,* receive the power from the master of *chō*.... Receive qualifications from the gods. Begin your practice with divination and take a steady path. In three years you will take the path of the *gūji* (Shinto priest). Bring happiness to your marriage; you and your wife, both of you will flourish as the gods lead you, as the universe leads you.

Commentary: NT was filled with divine energy. He was grateful that the gods had cultivated him and blessed him with wisdom. He realized that he was born together with his sister as a part of the divine design to establish harmony between the universe, earth, and humans and to make people know the gods. He decided to conform to the divine law.

However, when he returned to Okinawa, the problem of his prospective marriage distressed him very much. His fiancée was pregnant, and he ardently loved the baby. He was indifferent to his fiancée, however, and his indifference upset her. One day he failed to go to her house and did not call her either, although he knew she had been waiting for him. The following morning, very agitated, she came to him and threw her engagement ring back at him. Returning home, she took tranquilizers. She was in the fifth month

of her pregnancy. He felt disqualified as husband and father. He wanted to save his baby by any means. He drove a car to the sacred site of his *tsdz*, the divine hero Yunapasiidz; there he prayed to his *tsdz* with all his heart and soul. He determined to raise his baby even if it were born with defects.

In December, with much ceremony, NT married KY at the largest shrine in Okinawa. Two months later, his brief and trouble-ridden marriage ended in a very humiliating divorce. Surrounded by all his wife's relatives and with MI shrieking, "Even if I threw you into a ditch, no one would help you climb out," he affixed his stamp to the divorce paper as ordered.

NT went back home. Together with his sister and mother he visited Bankuyama Utaki, one of the most sacred places in Miyako. He described his communion with the god in the following way.

28 February 1976

I felt chilled at the awe-inspiring atmosphere of the sacred site. When I held my incense sticks in my hands, the god penetrated into all parts of my body and mind. I was possessed by the god. I was the god. Many priestesses were watching me. I was myself and not myself. The god came into me. I was grateful for his visit. A priestess said, "The god is very pleased. You must sing and dance. Do not feel shy and ashamed." Her words sounded like permission from the god. The god sang through me. People became excited, danced, and sang. What will be the divine intent? I look forward to my future. If I can be of use to the gods, I will entreat you to use me as a tool.

Commentary: He knew that the divine power indigenous to Miyako had been revealed to him. In March, NT went to Okinawa to vacate his apartment. Alone in his room he reflected on the body and mind, human desires, and love. He sensed that the excellence of mind is found in its ability to love. His *tsdz* consoled him that the child of the gods encounters many ups and downs.

2 March 1976

Today, today's path; tomorrow, tomorrow's path. The gods will test you, the universe will test you. The child of the gods has many ups and downs; you shall rise up; you shall be struck by great waves and high waves; you shall advance in the world. Look through people's minds, perceive them intuitively. You shall encounter chances, you shall recite

the names of many gods. Human paths are numerous; the divine path is absolute. Humans take diverse paths; human minds change in various ways. However, there is no mistake on the divine path; this is the only path the gods determined. On this path you must go forward.

Excel in the path of the gods, excel in the path the gods determined. Do not entertain illusion. Renounce the human mind; acquire the divine mind. Take the path as the child of the gods, my child, my dear child. It is me, your protector, the master of *tsdz*, the master of Niima, the divine hero Yunapasiidz. No matter what may happen, before everything call my name; under my name the universe will descend to you. I am the master of your *tsdz*, I take the path with you as your protector. I think as you think.

From now on, never allow yourself to behave for pleasure. On your path, you have learned many things and have met many people. You have overcome many difficulties. Believe that you will prosper on your path. Learn many things, realize the laws of the world, be sensitive to the miseries of the world, watch the contradictions of the world, reform the world, take the path of the gods. The universe will promise you that the heavenly *chō* will descend to you, your qualification. You will practice as a shaman. Build *musubi* on Miyako Island with your power, the peace of the island depends on you, it is in your hands, in yourself. I tell you – when you were born, the gods had already designated your fate. Move forward, take the path of the gods.

> *Commentary:* NT returned to Miyako on 17 March to establish himself as a shaman there. He imposed on himself the task of seeking the gods and realizing the path of the golden mean (*chūdō* 中道). He became aware of the necessity to integrate ancestor worship and belief in the gods of the universe. In April he was endowed with the power of the sacred lion and the dragon god.

27 April 1976

With its hair bristling up and a red flame gushing from its mouth, sending out a cloud of spray, the dragon god is dancing; rising up. The one who opens the path of justice, reforms the world, protects the sacred, and blows out breaths to purify the world. Soaring up is the sacred lion; the one who purifies and eradicates evil. Everything becomes calm.

Truly look around: certainly thriving island, beautifully thriving people; let yourself receive their prosperity. The path of the true universe, the great sun of the true universe, its virtue is granted. Certainly splen-

did, its virtue is granted to the dragon year. Receive it. Worship the gods, know such a blessing. Radiating stars shine beautifully. Fulfill divine expectation. Excel. Be insightful.

The three pillar gods of Miyako stand up. On the root of the Miyako Shrine stands the divine hero Yunapasiidz; recite his name, receive the true *yū,*[18] the true path.

The holy gods stand up and prescribe things. The task of *tsunagi* with the water deity of the sacred well, Inga, carry this out. The *musubi* with the universe of the boar year, seven layers of the universe, Kuitsunu 古意角 and Kuitama 姑依玉, carry this out.[19] The steps of divine tasks. The holy god of Upāruz at Ikema 池間 Utaki (sacred site), the heavenly *chō* to prescribe things, the master judge, the master of life, the master of fate; build *musubi;* rise up. A truly prosperous world will emerge.

Shine in the holiness of Mdzka Utaki, excel in brilliance, dragon child. Marvelous is the path of the gods. Do not commit wrongdoings, do not make mistakes. Under divine guidance you take the path to which you were brought, child of the gods! Pacify the holy master of Niima, regain his glory. The masters of Madama 真玉, the master and mistress of fate, after whom you were named, the holy Kanidunu, the holy Matsumiga, high deities.[20] The prosperity of the root, the prosperity of the universe, recite the holy father sun, the mother sun of the north. Excel in divine glory. The god of Pazakamin Utaki is invited, the *utaki* founded by Grandfather Tōgani, and the god will rise up.[21] Excel, dragon child!

> *Commentary:* But NT was disappointed with his own weakness and the gap between how he should be and how he was. "I like to go to drinking places. I should not go in them. I must show people the right path, but I am vulnerable to temptations – a pitiful man." He entreated the gods to bestow on him courage and to protect him from evil. "May I be faithful to the path of the gods, gain reputation as the child of the gods, strengthen my body and mind and establish the gods so that I will not stain the path." His *tsdz* instructed him again as follows.

3 August 1976

…[T]ake the path of the golden mean. The universe protects this world, the dawn of Miyako Island. Peace, justice, and fame are granted…. You are blessed with power to advance on the path of the gods, the path that integrates the universe, earth, and humans. The path of the universe (天),

the above line represents the path of the universe, the below represents the earth; humans (人) are placed between the universe and earth. To take this path is your destiny.

6 August 1976
On the root of the path you made a mistake.[22] On this root of the path do not make mistakes again. The path of the gods is a long way; on the root of your mind be faithful and honest. Do not taint your path, advance on the path of the true *tsdz*. Do not taint your mind; keep this in mind. If you are entrapped in greed, you will be struck by misfortunes. What did you do yesterday? You were led to illusion and were possessed by evil spirits. You know about yourself and that you were polluted. From now on you must sense danger when you face illusion; you must not be tempted by evil spirits; you must not spoil yourself by evil doings. Realize that your lack of appetite is a warning from your *tsdz*. Both your body and mind must be healthy. You must not close the path of the gods.

Commentary: On 10 August 1976, NT dreamed that an old man gave him a book, *Miyakojima shominshi* 宮古島庶民史 (The history of ordinary people on Miyako Island). The dream suggested that he was designated to be a shaman in charge of the entire island of Miyako, as well as of various domestic problems of the islanders.

These divine messages, as we have seen so far, have several purposes: to inspire him to become a shaman, save people, and reform the world; to bless him with knowledge and power (qualification); to impose upon him tasks; to inform him of his growth as a shaman; to admonish him for his weak points and wrongdoings; to teach him the ideals of the path of the gods; and to console him for his hardships.

NT'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE SUPERNATURAL AFTER INITIATION (1978–1981)

After a few years of enthusiastic involvement in religious activities, NT seemed to get bored with listening to the grumblings of middle-aged female clients.[23] He wanted to have fun with his friends and to enjoy his youth. He started to visit bars at night, sometimes spending all of his day's earnings on one night of drinking. He began to get up very late in the morning and avoided seeing his clients, often leaving home to escape them. He involved himself in politics and took on the administrative task of

president of the youth association in Miyako between 1978 and 1982. He organized activities such as volleyball games, marathon races, song contests, and drama performances. He was also appointed a member of the city committee for social education.

However, his religious activities dwindled and he faced a flat rejection in his attempt to receive the certificate of a *gūji,* a Shinto priest. His *tsdz* had told NT that he must obtain the *gūji*'s certificate and take charge of the Miyako Shrine (26 and 29 August 1975). Therefore he wanted to take intensive courses given at K University. Recommendation was required to attend the course, but the supporting organization of the shrine, opposed to *kamkakarya* presiding over their rituals, turned down his request.

At the beginning of 1979, NT's first wife returned to him with their three-year-old son. She hoped to try again for the son's sake. However, their living together failed after a three-month trial period, and she went back to Okinawa, leaving the boy in Miyako. Soon her mother came to fetch the boy back. Around September he met a woman at a bar. They fell in love and she became pregnant. NT married her in 1980, although they had many disputes and disagreements even before marriage.

During this period he received divine messages mostly through dreams; some of them suggested tasks he should do, but many others seemed to reflect his anxiety, frustration, and uncertainty.

1978 (date undesignated)
Old [female] shamans are performing rituals at one of the row houses in Okinawa. I visited one. I was told they had been waiting for me. Outside a boy was practicing Japanese fencing. I went out. I saw a different scene. I came to a place like a garden, where there was a pool. I set a toy boat afloat. I went eastward [upward]. I was told to worship the waterfall there.

1978 (date undesignated)
I came from the west to Papillon [a bar NT's brother ran], into which came three men. One of them, who had tried to steal my car, picked a fight with me. The other two took my side. I went outside .... Areas around my house turned to woods. There stood a door, which I opened. In the woods, I went to the north, where I met a man. He held a log and tried to beat me with it. I became frantic and tried to escape, but my legs failed to move. I apologized. He threw stones at my face, but I could not protest.

Commentary: When NT dreamed the following dream, his first wife and their son were living together with him. One night he returned home around two o'clock in the morning. He did not feel good and could not sleep well. He woke up and offered incense sticks to the kitchen gods. Feeling heavy, he went to bed again.

2 January 1979[24]
I was driving on the street around my house; my son KA was in the car. Some evil spirits tried to carry off the car. The door opened and KA fell out….

Commentary: In July he had a significant religious dream, in which he dreamed of the sacred site located at the central point of Miyako Island. He interpreted the telescope in the dream to be one of the island's axes.

July 1979 (date undesignated)
I walked toward the hillside. I came to a narrow lane, on both sides of which were a row of trees. I saw a sacred site on the left. I walked down the lane, where I found what looked like a microphone. It was a retractable type and looked also like a telescope. I picked it up….

Commentary: At this point, NT's life deteriorated. He was drinking almost every day until very late. He felt frustrated because he could not straighten out his life. He heard his *tsdz* scolding him as follows.

12 March 1980 (revelation)
…[Y]ou must know your mind and think of your situation… , dragon child. Your mind is corrupt. You neglect to develop it. You should not be like this. Amend your mind. You must conform to the path of the gods. Watch changes of the world; fulfill my expectation. Disasters from the universe and on the earth might befall you at any moment, you never know. To the path of the gods devote yourself; take the path that is splendid, as the universe guides you, as the gods guide you…. I will make you excel among people. But you are stupid, you changed your mind. You are ignorant of the world, stupid! The gods will let you learn; watch people and the world.

Commentary: Although remarried, frequently he had a dream of his son, who in the previous year had lived with him for a brief period and soon had been taken back to Okinawa.

5 April 1980
I went to KY's house in Okinawa and took my son out, saying I would buy candies for him. But MI as well as KY's sister were watching me. My son and I fled to the airport but I was afraid MI and KY's sister might catch up with us, so I decided to go by ship…

Commentary: NT was low in spirits. He felt his life aimless, although he knew he must start something important. He was disgusted with himself. "I am foolish, miserable. I am wasting my time. I am dirty. I lack beauty. I lie to the gods and don't know myself. Am I a man? Am I human?" He prayed to the gods to pardon his wrongdoings and asked them to spur him on and discipline him. The following are accounts of dreams he had in those days.

23 May 1980
I entered the ancient world. I hid my body and skulked around, trying to escape. I sneaked into a certain house, where I saw a large world map. People there were impressed with it. A man ran after me and attacked me. I fled by the back door.

2 June 1980
There was a committee members' meeting for social education at school, but I could not attend it. For this reason, they decided the vice-president would go to Japan in place of me. I have great potential, but I am not hard-working, nor responsible.

Commentary: In the dream below his *tsdz* seems to have asked NT to correct a mistake committed in the past by a certain shaman.

2 July 1980
It looked like the eastern part of Miyako. I visited a factory in a factory area to talk about a baseball game we were supposed to play with the factory workers. After a while they returned to work. I went out. I looked for certain people and was told they were in the waiting room. I looked inside and found some middle-aged women. I went toward Gusukube 城辺 and came to the seashore. There was a baseball park where people were about to play a game. I was told to join one team. I did. A differ-

ent scene appeared. Near the park, I found a tunnel, a road, and a grotto cave. I went into the cave and found a row of white coral. I walked around. The god said furiously, "It is Mitsuishū who did this." Mitsuishū seemed to have carried away some coral. He returned it in fear of divine punishment but left it on the ground.... There came a bus on which I rode. The bus passed by the airport. I went southwest and walked around. I saw a tomb below the cliff. I felt odd.

> *Commentary:* Around this time NT was working with an old shaman, M, to identify the residence of the god of S'sakadā 白川田, the source of the water supply of Miyako Island. The following dream seems to be related to his work with the old shaman.

25 October 1980

At a craggy seashore in the north of S'sakadā, under the rocks there was a pool from which my friends were drinking. I tried to drink out of my hands, but the water got muddy. I dug up and removed some stones. When I took a large sandy rock away, the water sprang up. I was very pleased. Toward the north, a man in black was reciting a sutra, facing the southwest. I watched his back and left. In the depth of the forest above S'sakadā, people from Tarama Island were cutting down bamboo. [A different scene] At a certain athletic meet people had to arrange numbers; the number 4 was written on a small piece of paper, 8 on a large piece....[25] [A different scene] I was running in the rain toward the market in Okinawa. On the way I found a beautiful bell pepper on the street.

> *Commentary:* NT's second marriage was not a happy one. He and his wife had a great deal of discord. One day he came back home after midnight and quarreled with his wife. She threatened to have an abortion the following day and divorce him. That night he had the following dream.

15 December 1980

On the baseball ground [figures 5 and 6], a black ball was thrown at my head at a furious speed from the west. [A different scene] At a vacant lot, my mother, born in the year of the boar, and U, born in the year of the rat, were there to gather firewood. I arranged for a car. On the eaves of the neighboring house I saw sparrows, at which children were pointing. But the children and sparrows all disappeared while I was absent for a moment. We loaded the wood into the car, which turned out to be bot-

tomless: The wood fell on the ground. I said, "Imagine there is a bottom." Then a narrow line was drawn on the four sides and we could load the wood. [A different scene] The seashore of Bora 保良 [figure 6]: I was walking on a beautiful beach [a foreign island?]. Odd people were pursuing me. I escaped and entered grotto caves [there were two], which were very long and built up by stones. Through the caves I came to an open place, which was a sacred site. I found several stone statues with foreign faces. I wondered whether or not I should hide myself in the tomb….

> *Commentary:* NT felt as if his life energy was weakening because of pollution caused by his relatives' deaths. He was sick and uneasy when he had the following dream.

28 March 1981

I was walking from Hisamatsu 久松. There seemed to have been a quarrel; a man was lying on the road. I passed by and went straight. On the right side, there was a hut, where my friend (the same age as I) told me that there had been a drunken brawl and one man was killed. Around the baseball park, a drunkard born in the year of the horse was driving,

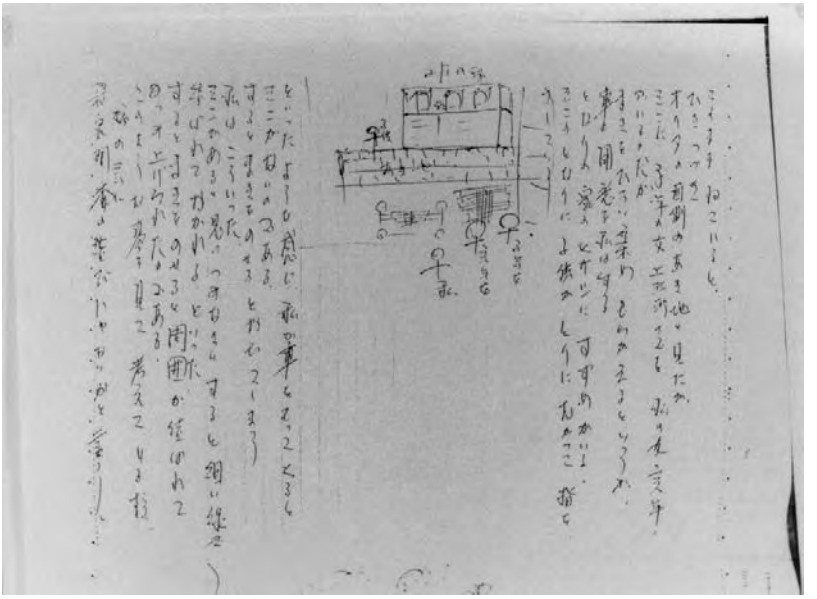

FIGURE 5. NT's diary. Entry of 15 December 1980, first page.

accelerating his speed. I felt uneasy, followed him, and found another man collapsed beside the road.

> *Commentary:* Having dreamed such a "confusing and indescribable dream," he prayed to the gods that no misfortune would befall him.

NT AFTER 1981

NT's second marriage failed in 1983, although they had a girl and a boy successively in 1980 and 1981. Its failure might be attributed first to disagreements between his wife and sister and second to financial difficulties. His wife always felt NT depended too much on his sister, who was dominating him. His wife backbit and slandered the sister, but he took his sister's side. The couple quarreled many times and his wife often returned to her mother's house. He also began to stay away from home, spending nights at bars or gambling. Furthermore, he opened a store that sold Buddhist altar fittings, borrowed money from the bank, and tried to have his wife run it. She refused to, however, and the store was closed all the time. His life deteriorated, both in terms of his family and his shamanic practices.

NT's wife left him in February and they were divorced in September 1983. In the divorce he obtained the custody of his children and started to raise them by himself. However, raising two small children as a single father seemed to be a heavy burden for him. He often stayed away from home, leaving his children in his parents' and siblings' care, forgetting himself in gambling. His parents, siblings, and friends considered him a failure with no hope of getting back on the right track. His relationship with his family worsened and he isolated himself, often not joining family gatherings.

Recently he has begun to straighten his life out, accepting many clients from other islands such as Tarama, Ishigaki 石垣, and Okinawa as well as from Miyako. Furthermore, having received a book from the god of the afterworld in a dream, he expanded his specialization. He now performs pacifying rituals for the recently deceased, in addition to the ones for the gods and distant ancestors that were his previous specialties.[26]

Once I asked him, "Why? Everybody has a high opinion of your shamanistic activities, so why is it that you do such stupid things to defeat yourself? Don't the gods say anything when you gamble?" He answered, "The gods scold me a lot, and I apologize each time. My poor *tsdz* always tries

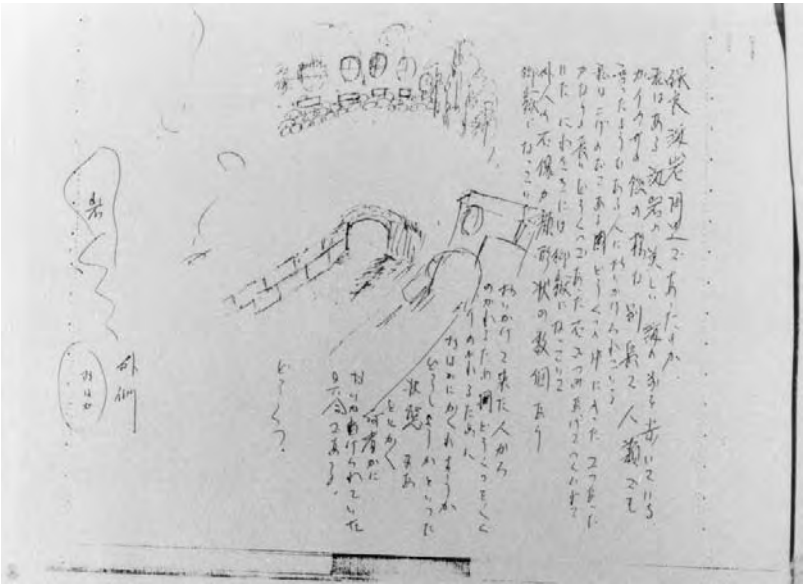

FIGURE 6. NT's diary. Entry of 15 December 1980, second page.

to protect me. But the gods said, 'We are fed up with your apologies. We will not accept your words. Show your sincerity with your conduct. Next time it will be a matter of your very life.' When I am scolded I feel very scared. Everything around me becomes threatening. All of my power is gone and I feel like a mere shadow. I am miserable and weak, I know…."

ANALYSIS

Why does NT behave so destructively? As LEWIS (1971) pointed out so well, trance-involved religious phenomena tend to represent marginality. An NT-like shaman is also reported by PETERS (1978) among the Tamang in Nepal. His major informant, Bhirendra, was a powerful shaman but could not manage financial matters. He was heavily indebted to his brother-in-law. Despite the fact that he was paid by Peters and was a very good patron at local taverns, he did not repay his brother in-law at all.

Personality

The shamans I met in Miyako are in general unstable and vulnerable in personal relationships and crisis situations. NT is one of them. He is fun-loving, dependent, and indecisive, having been spoiled as the long-

awaited eldest son among seven siblings. He once said, "The gods made a mistake in choosing me as a shaman." He cannot endure difficulties and escapes into drinking and gambling in order to forget about them and to ignore the divine voices that keep watch on his behavior and scold him for his wrongdoings. The best way to solve a problem is to ignore the problem itself! NT's sexual relationships do not last long, since he is always looking for a mother-substitute who will nurture him and allow him to behave naughtily.

Shamans experience trance almost every day and rely on altered states of consciousness such as dreams, visions, and voices as the basis for their judgment; therefore they might be less pragmatic in dealing with daily matters. They might feel empty when they are not possessed and need to fill an emptiness by depending on god-substitutes (drinking, sex, gambling, etc.).

Ability to communicate with the supernatural

This ability makes certain persons shamans, setting them apart from ordinary people. It is their identity, the means by which they draw clients, and a source of their therapeutic self-healing energy (TAKIGUCHI 1987a). This ability, from a layman's viewpoint, is utilized by shamans to solve clients' everyday problems; however, shamans think it is also to be used to achieve loftier and nobler aims, such as accomplishing tasks imposed by the gods. This leads to protecting the path of the gods, redeeming the world, and strengthening their own power. The divine tasks involve the following: identification of the residences, names, and roles of gods unknown (for instance, the gods in China) or forgotten by people; reconstruction of ruined sacred sites and prevention of their destruction; pacification of the divine heroes who built and ruled Miyako from the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries; and protection of the entire island by holding a religious office at important sacred sites. These are difficult or "painful" to achieve and provoke strong anxiety in the shaman. For instance, as ordered by his *tsdz* (see 30 May 1975), NT pacified the divine hero and reinforced *musubi* (relations) between the temple of the Kannon goddess (who protected his *tsdz*) in Okinawa and that in Miyako. He has, however, hesitated to respond to the calls from the warrior gods of Yamato (Japan proper). If he correctly identifies the gods, he can become more powerful, by establishing relations (*musubi*) with mightier gods and absorbing more divine energy. However, if he wrongly identifies them, misfortunes will strike not only him but also his family.

Sometimes society does not allow shamans to undertake their tasks, as is seen in the following cases. The beach encompasses sacred entrances to the sea, and it has to be protected; but it also provides an excellent site to build hotels, and shamans with little political influence cannot prevent their construction. A luxury hotel is already in operation on Yonaha 与那覇 beach, a sacred site related to a divine hero, and more are planned. NT was told to obtain the license of the Shinto priest and to protect the Miyako Shrine, which enshrines the three pillar gods – three divine heroes who founded Miyako. But the supporting organization of the shrine stoutly rejects "backward" *kamkakarya*. A female shaman had a dream in which she was sitting naked in the most significant sacred site, Tskasayā Utaki. She felt ashamed, looked for clothes, and found a white robe for shamans hanging from the ceiling. She interprets this to mean that she should accept the role of the *utaki* priestess, but her claim has not been acknowledged yet. It is said that young and powerful shamans are more often visited by the gods and assigned difficult tasks. Those who retreat from their tasks (like NT) must worry about resultant divine punishments (e.g., misfortunes, deprivation of power).

Shamans believe that their power can be accumulated by strengthening relations (*musubi*) with more powerful gods and absorbing more divine power. However, lay people evaluate shamans' powers by whether or not their divinations are realized and their rituals produce good results. Unfortunately, not hard work, nor honesty, nor accomplishing divine tasks ensures the enhancement of their shamanic ability, and shamans are not insensitive to laymen's evaluations. Sometimes unfortunate incidents occur after shamans conduct rituals. In a certain ritual NT warned the client that grave misfortunes might befall the family unless they conducted more rituals for the gods. Several days later, a child of the family was killed in an accident. NT was in a panic, gnawed by painful feelings. I said to him, "You were right. You are not responsible for the child's death. You had already warned them. You should not worry about this." However, he seemed to have associated this incident directly with the decline of his power. Why did he not forewarn the client of the accident with more precise details? Why did the worst misfortune strike the family after he had conducted the ritual, which was supposed to have produced good things?

Several years ago, one famous shaman who used to attract many clients became frantic because she could not sense anything anymore.

This shaman now spends her time visiting other shamans, backbiting and complaining that she has been cursed.

Clients

Clients are sources of shamans' income and are probably required to help maintain their self-esteem (see ŌHASHI 1980). Rituals conducted at clients' homes engender (at least for a few days immediately after the rituals) joyous optimism, in which shamans can feel satisfied by their best efforts and enjoy the greatest gratitude of their clients; but clients can also burden them and cause frustration. NT, like other shamans, complains of this:

> Even before clients show up at my house – from the moment they think of visiting my gods for divination – I start to carry their burdens. For instance, when a client has an ancestor who died in pain of stomach cancer, my body reacts in the same way. Problems that are deeply rooted in the ancestor especially distress and drain me. I tell clients what my gods clarify; the gods always reveal the truth, so clients may think my divination nonsense, but it is their ignorance that keeps their eyes off the truth. Even if the wishes shamans make on their behalf are accepted by the gods, rituals may not yield immediate effects; however, as it is said, "the path of the gods is a long way," they must believe in the gods. Some clients are very stubborn and dependent, neither listening to divine advice nor making any effort to improve their situations. They just want a divine miracle.

While I was in Miyako, one client wanted the recovery of her schizophrenic brother and a delinquent son who had already fathered two children but was always drinking and fighting. She had been separated from her husband for twenty years (she has not consented to a divorce) and has been taking care of her bedridden parents-in-law. NT always told her not to carry too many burdens: first to work out her own and her immediate family's problems, then to take care of her brother's problem. However, she did not comply with his advice, wishing all the problems could be settled at once and complaining that none of them yet saw a solution.

To the regret of many shamans, most clients regard them as easily available human resources for problem-solving and want to get what they pay

for. In reality, however, shamans do worry about the consequences of rituals and their reputation among clients. It is also believed that the gods send the client to them, thus their avoiding a client is tantamount to refusing (or at least evading) divine duties. This also results in a poor reputation with the client and a decrease in clientele.

Since shamans are not protected by an institution, they must maintain their identity and make a living by means of divine ability and clients, both of which are unstable and sources of anxiety. Deprivation of their powers results in the denial of their identity as shamans, and it does not lead to a safe return to ordinary society. Heavy burdens are carried by their sensitive personalities. The more powerful the gods who possess them, the heavier their burdens are. By accepting and integrating the burdens into themselves, as in the process of psychotherapeutic individuation, they can develop their potential as shamans and humans.

Curses

I am least acquainted with this aspect of Miyako religion and have never thought this to be significant in explaining shamans' downfalls. Most laypeople are not preoccupied with curses either, but shamans place importance on this element as a cause of the decline of a person's fortune. Anyone can curse his or her victim. However, if the victim becomes aware of the curse, he or she can send it back to the aggressor, who in turn will suffer from its consequence. One old shaman, whenever she saw me, complained how she lost all her flesh, having seen in a dream that her rival shaman, M, had performed a cursing ritual at the pier; the following day she went there and found evidence of the curse. NT attributed his involvement in gambling and consequent debt to a curse M uttered upon him at the four important sacred sites. NT once worked with M, known as powerful but aggressive, to identify and establish the residence of the god at the source of the water supply (see dream 25 October 1980). While working together they could not agree on the exact site of the divine residence; consequently, NT left her. Unhappy with his withdrawal, she put a curse on him at the four sacred sites, stating that he had stolen the money from the fund raised to accomplish this task. Recently he discovered this curse and the whereabouts of the four sacred sites. As a result of this discovery, he told me recently, he has be able to return to the right course. He now feels much more reassured.

Intense jealousy among shamans is a well-known fact. Many shamans speak ill of their peers, exaggerating their rivals' lack of competence. It

is not unusual to hear of an unsatisfied shaman placing another under a curse. Although I am still puzzled as to how M's curse exercised adverse effects on his life, NT is happy to have realized the direct cause of his downfall: "I always wanted to right my life, but I repeatedly failed to do so. Now I have regained my confidence and I can concentrate on my calling." If he can refrain from gambling, perhaps the curse that had entrapped him into such ungodlike conduct might indeed be removed from him.

Their vulnerability apart, shamans contribute a great deal to Miyako society as folk therapists, bringing the power of the gods to solve widespread human suffering. The divine energy they embody also allows ordinary people (who are bound by rules, driven by their belief in efficiency, tired, and bored) to experience sacred or "communitas" feelings (TURNER 1977) and to refresh themselves.

NT looks like a typical trickster or sacred clown. Absorbed in the role of the divine messenger, he embodies divine compassion, dignity, and wisdom. Returning repeatedly to sensual pursuits, he loses himself in pleasure, displaying human weakness and stupidity. Probably because he is always weak, silly, and hurt, he can understand and sympathize with clients whose problems might be caused by their own weakness and stupidity. The moneyless and familyless state is one ideal of religious figures, as is evident in the case of St. Francis, who embraced his Lady Poverty, and in Saigyō 西行, who is said to have kicked down his small daughter when she clung to him at the time he renounced the world. NT is made to be so not by his will but by his weakness and, perhaps, by divine intent.

NOTES

Portions of this paper were presented at the 25th meeting of Nihon Minzoku Gakkai [The Japanese Society of Ethnology], Chūbu University, Kasugai (14 May 1988) and in a short article (TAKIGUCHI 1989). I wish to thank those who gave me helpful suggestions on my earlier draft, especially my friend, Kati Nagy, and the editor of *Asian Folklore Studies*. I am also very grateful to the Miyako shamans who not only imparted religious knowledge to me but also showed me their vulnerability, anxiety, and hardships. I offer my special gratitude to NT, who generously allowed me to use his diary for my research.

1. To avoid the inconvenience of such expressions as "he or she," or "his or her," I use "he" and other forms of this personal pronoun to signify a shaman – either female or male – when the sex of the shaman in the text is irrelevant.
2. I have transliterated indigenous terms as my informants pronounced them. The Japanization of the Miyako dialect is progressing and the younger generation

prefers using Japanese or a Japanized dialect. Some of the terms in this paper are Japanized ones or Japanese (e.g., *chōbo, musubi, nyorai*). For some terms there are no corresponding Chinese characters, therefore Chinese characters are provided only when appropriate.

3. Prior to World War II, at a time when there was limited freedom of religion, Ryūkyūan shamans had repeatedly experienced severe persecution, on the grounds that their "sorcery deluded the populace." (Ōhashi discusses the history of persecution in ŌHASHI 1982.) As for current public reactions, see TOMOYOSE 1981 and *Aoiumi* 1980.
4. I describe Miyako shamans' beliefs briefly in the text; however, a comprehensive discussion is beyond the scope of this paper. For details see TAKIGUCHI 1987b.
5. The term *ɬam* 神 (god or gods) is used here. In this language the singular takes the same form as the plural. NT told me that in his diary the term represented the Miyako gods in general. Another term *nus* 主 (lord or master), is often used to refer to an individual god, for instance, *yū nu nus* (the master of *yū,* wealth), *uiɬa nus* (the master of *uiɬa,* worldly success), and so on. In principle I use the word "god" to translate *ɬam* and "master" or "lord" for *nus.* Both *ɬam* and *nus* are also used to signify ancestors, especially deified ones (e.g., the master of Niima 根間主, Niima nu shū). Shamans draw a line between the gods and ancestors even though the same terms are used.
6. Indigenous terms left untranslated are all taken from ritual chants.
7. Although there are several renowned *tuyumshu* (divine heroes), here the term *tuyumshu* refers to his *tsdz*, the divine hero Yunapasiidz.
8. The master of Niima is an ancient shaman believed to have originally come from Japan proper. At the beginning stage of his initiation, NT could not distinguish the master of Niima from his *tsdz*.
9. All these places symbolize "places far away." Kunigami and Hentona are located in the northernmost part of Okinawa, Tō refers to China, and Yamato to Japan proper.
10. When incense sticks do not burn well, it signifies something bad (for instance, that the gods are not happy with the person who offered the incense sticks).
11. NT's *tsdz*, Yunapasiidz, worshiped the moon; the message therefore can be interpreted to mean that the *tsdz*'s face is reflected in the moon.
12. NT cannot explain why Ototachibanahime, a consort to Yamato Takeru no Mikoto 日本武尊, possessed him.
13. *Musubi* is a ritual act, by which relations between different entities (e.g., the gods and various sites, the gods and shamans) are consolidated and interactions of divine energy are facilitated.
14. Once NT made a trip to Yoron Island, where he found a hammer at the bottom of the sea. Around the same time he picked up a saw on the street of Naha 那覇, the capital of Okinawa.
15. This part refers to the historical fact that NT's *tsdz*, the divine hero Yunapasiidz, opened the trade route with Okinawa and paid tribute to the king there (in 1388).
16. The divine heroes Nakasuni (who ruled Miyako around the fifteenth century) and Migurumudz (who unified war-torn Miyako around the fourteenth century) together with Yunapasiidz are deified as the three pillar gods of Miyako and enshrined in the Miyako Shrine. Both Mtabaru and the Kinskyā brothers were

powerful early in the sixteenth century, the former on Tarama Island and the latter in the eastern part of Miyako.

17. Here we see Buddhist and Shinto influences in shamanistic beliefs. In the Ryūkyūs, Buddhism (the Shingon and Zen sects) flourished from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries under royal patronage, but declined greatly after the Shimazu 島津 invasion in 1609; Shimazu prohibited Ryūkyūan priests from studying in Kyoto and disseminating teachings to the public. Shinkai, a famous Shingon priest, was said to have practiced asceticism in Terayama on Tarama Island and to have spread Shingon Buddhism to the islanders. Gongen worship is the most accepted form of Shintoism; seven out of the "eight Ryūkyū shrines" enshrine the gods of Kumano 熊野 Gongen. The Gongen temple was founded in Miyako around 1611. For Buddhist and Shinto influences, see FUJII 1976; MIYAKE 1976 and 1978; SHIMAJIRI 1978.
18. The concept *yū* signifies abundance and fecundity.
19. The concept of *tsunagi* almost overlaps with that of *musubi.* The sacred site, *utaki,* and the sacred well are considered to be husband and wife. The Inga is the well sacred to the Tskasayā Utaki, to which the progenitor couple Kuitsunu and Kuitama descended in ancient times.
20. A child at birth is given a divine name, which is chosen from among several names of the gods and ancestors. NT was named after the couple deities of the Madama Utaki, i.e., Kanidunu and Matsumiga.
21. NT's great grandfather Tōganishu was a famous shaman. He perceived a god descending to Pazakamin, where he founded a *utaki* (sacred site).
22. No explanation of what this "mistake" might be is given in NT's diary.
23. It is usually the senior housewife, representing the household, who comes to the shaman to solve domestic problems.
24. The dates from 2 January 1979 through 28 March 1981 are based on the lunar calendar.
25. In shamans' beliefs the numbers four and eight usually refer to the four and eight axes of Miyako Island on which major sacred sites are located.
26. Shamans have their own specialties. Some are good at performing rituals for the gods and distant ancestors, others specialize in rites connected with ancestors. Shamans who specialize in death-related rituals are called *sungam kakarya* or *gusō zas* and are distinguished from ordinary *kamkakarya,* for whom death is strictly taboo.

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