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China's Dagur Minority: Society, Shamanism, and Folklore

by
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China's DAGUR

***Minority:
Society,
Shamanism, &
Folklore***

Edited by

Kevin Stuart, Li Xuewei, and Shelear

Preface

There are three sections to this material. The first is a general introduction to Dagur society. The second consists of two papers on Dagur Shamanism, and the third presents a number of Dagur folktales. The classification of the latter is my own. Li Xuewei checked the initial translations of the folktales and Shelear, a native Dagur speaker of Ewenki Autonomous Banner in Hulunbuir League, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, checked many of the Chinese transliterations of the Dagur. Material in brackets is by the editors.

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Part I: History and Culture

This material is from: *Nei menggu zizhi qu bianji zu* (1985:3-4, 7-9, 13-28, 227-267, 227-267, 271-287). It was translated by Zhao Weiguang. Meng Zhidong, Associate Researcher and Deputy Director of the Institute of Minority Nationality Studies, Inner Mongolia Social Sciences Academy, and Ta Na, Associate Professor, Department of Chinese Language and Literature, Inner Mongolia University, rendered much help in the course of this translation, which we gratefully acknowledge.

Introduction

The Dagur (Dawoer) are one of China's ethnic minorities. They number 94,000¹ today and are found primarily in Morin Dawaa and Ewenki Autonomous Banners of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, and in the suburbs of Qiqihaer [Qiqihar], Heilongjiang Province. They live with Han, Ewenki, Oroqen, Mongols and other minority groups. Because of transliteration differences, Dagur has been written variously as Dahuer, Daguer [Dahaner, Dawuer, Daur], and so on. Dawoer has been consistently used since the beginning of the People's Republic of China in 1949.²

1.1 Population

Dagur are not numerous. Before establishment of the People's Republic of China, the Dagur population was decentralized and population growth was slow. In 1982, a State census indicated a population of 94,014 Dagur, an increase of 42,014 (18%) over the 24 years from the 52,000 reported in the 1958 census, and a further growth of 46,000 (96%) over 29 years from the 48,000 reported in a 1953 census. In 1888 (the 13th year of Guang Xu's reign), based on *Heilongjiang*, a book by the Commercial Section of the Middle East Railroad Bureau, the Dagur population, including those living in Xinjiang, was 31,000. There obviously has been dramatic population growth, that is, a growth of 50% between 1888 and 1953, and especially after the foundation of the PRC.

1.2 Population Distribution

According to a 1982 State census (Table 1.1), the Dagur mainly live in Inner Mongolia (58,611), Heilongjiang (30,192), and Xinjiang (4,369). That comprises 93,172, excluding the remaining population (842) scattered in 21 other administrative regions. They are primarily local government officials and workers of city and township enterprises and their families.

¹[In 1990, the Dagur population "was a little more than 121,00, most of whom are found in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Heilongjiang Province, with a small number settled in Tacheng Prefecture in Xinjiang," (Zhang and Zeng 1993:37).]

²[Note the use of "Daur" in two officially sanctioned English publications devoted to China's minority populations: Ma Yin (1989) and Zheng and Zeng (1993).]

TABLE 1.1 Population Distribution of Dagur in China

<u>Area</u>	<u>Population</u>
<u>Provinces and Municipalities</u>	
Beijing	214
Liaoning Province	182
Hebei Province	58
Tianjin	54
Sichuan Province	26
Henan Province	25
Shandong Province	23
Shanxi Province	20
Shaanxi Province	20
Anhui Province	18
Shanghai	16
Zhejiang Province	11
Qinghai Province	11
Gansu Province	10
Jiangsu	9
Hubei Province	9
Jiangxi Province	7
Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region	5
Yunnan Province	5
Guangdong Province	1
<u>Counties (banners) and cities having at least 100 Dagur in Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang, and Xinjiang.</u>	
<u>INNER MONGOLIA AUTONOMOUS REGION</u>	
Morin Dawaa	22,603
Ewenki Autonomous Banner	11,710
Oroqen Autonomous Banner	5,915
Buteha	3,751
Hailar	2,747
Xiguita Banner	2,539
Chenbaerhu	1,193
Arong Banner	1,179
Xinbaerhu [Xinbarhu] Left Banner	850
Xinbaerhu Right Banner	615
Erguna Left Banner	674
Erguna Right Banner	263
Manzhouli	275
Wulanhaote [Ulanhot]	241
Zhalaite Banner	253
Kerqin Right Front Banner	167
Tongliao	149
Zhifeng	112
Abahanaer Banner	285
Jining	102
Huhehaote [Hohhot, Guihua]	1,517
Baotou	1,423

HEILONGJIANG PROVINCE

Qiqihaer	16,570
Fuyu County	4,937
Longjiang County	1,536
Tailai County	709
Nehe County	273
Durbot Mongolian Autonomous County	195
Aihui County	1,508
Nenjiang County	1,094
Xunke County	340
Shunwu County	307
Jiagedaqi County	457
Songlin	178
Mohe County	117
Zhaodong County	330
Harbin	210
Daqing	137
Heihe	391

XINJIANG UYGUR AUTONOMOUS REGION

Tacheng County	3,611
Huocheng County	309
Urumqi	150

1.3 Natural Environment

Dagur originated in the area of the Nenjiang River Valley and its tributaries, which form the boundary between Inner Mongolia and Heilongjiang. Ancient Dagur villages are found throughout the area ranging from Nenjiang County and Morin Dawaa in the north, and through Nahe, Gannan, Fuyu, and Longjiang Counties, continuing to the Qiqihar suburbs, as well as along the banks of the Nenjiang River, and on the lower reaches of its tributaries, including the Gan, Nemor, Nuoming, Arong, Yin, and Yalu Rivers. Dagur live in compact communities in Morin Dawaa and in the Qiqihar suburbs.

The Nenjiang River Valley slopes up to the north. Northern Morin Dawaa and Nenjiang County have hilly intrusions of the southern branches of the Great Xingan [Hinggan] Mountains. Elevations range from 300-640 meters. Morin Dawaa's total area is 10,360 square kilometers. Two-thirds is mountainous. Southern Morin Dawaa and Nenjiang County graduate into fertile plains drained by the Nenjiang River.

The Nenjiang River Valley has a continental climate with high temperatures in the south and low temperatures in the north. Morin Dawaa has a high daily summer average temperature of 28 degrees C, a low winter reading of -41 degrees C, and a frost-free period of 120 days. Qiqihar suburbs and Longjiang County have a high summer average temperature of 35 degrees C, a low winter temperature of -35 degrees C, and a frost-free period of 150 days.

North of the Nenjiang River Valley the land is mountainous and rich in natural resources, including forests, valuable medicinal herbs, fur-bearing animals, various precious birds, and fish. Mineral resources are abundant. The upper reaches of the Nenjiang River and its tributaries offer favorable conditions for hydro-electric production with considerable drops in elevation. Lower river areas offer advantageous transportation opportunities. Valley flatlands drained by the river and its tributaries are suitable for farming and animal husbandry. Such multi-featured resource-rich

topography provides Dagur with a natural base for development of a diversified economy based on agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry, and hunting and gathering. The Nenjiang River plain to the south has oil-bearing sands. It is home to soybeans, chinese sorghum, millet, corn, wheat, and vegetables. Small river valleys along the river boast lush pastures in line with animal husbandry. The central reaches teem with fish. Natural features of other areas where Dagur live vary, depending on geography. Aihui Dagur living in the river valley on the south bank of the Heilongjiang River have developed an agricultural and fishing economy including cold-resistant millet and wheat. Sturgeon, which, in the past, was a major tribute item required of Dagur by the imperial government, is harvested in this area. Hailar Dagur in Hulunbuir League are engaged primarily in animal husbandry, as are Xinjiang Dagur living in north Tacheng County.

1.4 Language

Dagur have a spoken language, but no written one.³ During the Qing Dynasty,⁴ the Manchu written system was adopted, and certain Dagur elders have a good command of it. The use of Chinese came with the advent of the Republic of China.⁵ Hailar Dagur use both Chinese and Mongolian. Tacheng Dagur use Kazakh, as well as Chinese, because many are engaged in Chinese and Kazakh translations.

Dagur belongs to the Mongolian Language Group of the Altaic Language Family. In *The Annals of Heilongjiang* (vol. 7), published in October of 1932 in Beijing, a table was appended comparing dialects [words of which were] placed in 20 categories such as astrology, geography, seasons of the year, prominent people, human relations, etiquette, and so on, for a total of 858 words of Manchu, Mongolian, Dagur, Ewenki, and Oroqen extraction. This revealed that, eliminating loanwords and mistranslated words, 466 were Dagur. Of these, 222 (47.6%) were close to Mongolian. One hundred and thirteen (24.5%) were close to Manchu. One hundred and four (27.3%) were different from both Mongolian and Manchu.

In the past few centuries Dagur scattered to several locations. Nevertheless, Dagur shows only minor dialectical variation. Dagur, in terms of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar is widely understandable. Based on local pronunciation peculiarities and vocabulary, Dagur may be divided into three major dialects (Table 1.2).

TABLE 1.2 Dagur Dialects (1958 Census)

<u>Dialect</u>	<u># of Speakers</u>	<u>Location</u>
Buteha	22,000	Morin Dawaa; Ewenki Banner; Nenjiang Nahe, & Gannan Counties.
Qiqihar	25,000	Qiqihar; Longjiang, Fuyu, & Aihui Counties; Buteha; & Arong Banner.
Xinjiang	2,000	Tacheng & Huocheng Counties.

³[Dagur do have a written language, but little effort has been made to popularize it.]

⁴[1644-1911]

⁵[1912-1949]

1.5 Economy

Agriculture was practiced as early as the mid-17th century and, until about 100 years ago, the decision as to how much land to cultivate depended on population and livestock numbers. Dagur seldom stored grain. Owing to the lucrative fur trade, agriculture at this time was often supplemented by hunting. Post-liberation Dagur have made a sustained effort for 30 years to bolster the economy although at times, it has been adversely affected by erroneous policies, especially those of the 10 years of the Cultural Revolution [1966-1976]. Achievements have been realized in confirmation of longterm efforts. Morin Dawaa illustrates this. By 1980, total agricultural output had reached 130 million metric ton or, more than 259 kilograms per capita.

1.6 History

Certain mid-17th century materials specifically mention "Dagur." Thus Dagur have a recorded history of 300 years. Qing Dynasty historical records describe extensive economic and military contact between Dagur and Manchu. According to these chronicles, Dagur acknowledged Manchu rule. They also depict heroic Dagur feats during struggle against Russian expeditions into the Northeast. The Qing imposed the Eight Banner System upon the Dagur for 200 years, which later gave way to the county system of the Nationalist government. Dagur obligations under the Eight Banner System were to: (1) provide army conscripts for military expeditions against the Russians for the second Opium War of 1860, for the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, for the campaign of resistance against the Eight Powers' Army, for other military campaigns, and also for then-current uprisings; (2) garrison the frontier; and (3) regularly patrol the Sino-Russian border. One result of Manchu military duty was widespread population dispersal, explaining the present existence of a number of widely spaced, sparsely populated Dagur communities.

Other obligations included yearly tribute to the Manchu emperor, usually in the form of valuable furs and marten pelts. All male adults were responsible for this tribute. Trade in marten pelts with others was strictly prohibited by the Qing. In addition, marten pelts were extorted by corrupt officials using quasi-legal means such as imposed cheap prices. This resulted in continuous resistance followed by punitive sanctions.

The advent of the 20th century saw the Qing promulgating a new migration policy in the Heilongjiang area for the settling and wider distribution of Han Chinese. The same policy was also pursued by Nationalists. Increasing migration effectively opened up a vast area of arable land inhabited by indigenous Dagur. This profoundly affected Dagur life and the local economy. Advanced farming implements and technology were introduced, which provided impetus to Dagur agricultural development. Conversely, differences between typical Han agriculture life and the semi-agricultural, herding, and hunting Dagur way of life, initiated conflicts. These rose from continuing destruction of Dagur culture, social and economic polarization, racial discrimination expressed in unequal law enforcement, and compulsory military service, and burdensome taxes. This, in turn, led to many years of rebellions against corrupt officials and the government army during the Qing and Nationalist periods. Today, Dagur still commemorate two Dagur heroes, Shaolung and Daifu, who emerged during this period.

The Dagur were liberated from Nationalist rule by the Communist Party of China in 1948. Since that time, more and more Dagur have joined the CPC. An autonomous

county was founded with an autonomous government based in Longjiang County, Heilongjiang Province in 1952. Certain Inner Mongolia Dagur claimed autonomy in 1959. They established an autonomous banner with its government based in Morin Dawaa, an area where independence from old China's racist rule had been attempted as early as the 1930s, when a major uprising was aborted by the Japanese invasion.

Marriage

2.1 General Principles

Dagur were generally monogamous. It was not until the closing years of the Qing Dynasty that concubinage began as a consequence of an absence of male offspring, which threatened the family. Initially, the only possible candidates were daughters of slaves, because Dagur would not allow their own daughters to wed married men. In the family, the first wife was the family manager. Concubines had no rights.

For a long period, intermarriage among Dagur of the same *hal* (those sharing the same family name) was prohibited. A same-generation marriage principle was also observed. Men and women of different *hals*, if they were close relatives, were required to marry those of the same generation. Though New China marriage laws specify the legality of marriage within the same *hal*, some aged Dagur of Buteha object on the grounds that it undermines ancestral traditions. Local customs in Qiqihar have prohibited *mokon* (clan) intermarriage since the 1930s, though marriage within a *hal* has, at times, occasionally been permitted.

Marriage between cousins of different generations was prohibited. Custom did permit marriage between cousins when the mother of one [prospective marriage partner] and the father of the second [prospective marriage partner] were brother and sister (Dagur: *talali*). In most cases, the sister's son married the brother's daughter. Her daughter rarely married his [her brother's] son, because the brother and sister had the same [paternal] blood lineage. To marry one's paternal aunt's daughter was a "reversed marriage" (Chinese: *huitouhun*) and impaired health and intelligence. Marriage between some maternal cousins (*buleli*) was restricted to that of different *hals*. For example, if one's surname was Guobeile, and one's maternal aunt was married to a man of Guobeile Hal, then one was not allowed to marry this aunt's daughter.

If both twins were male, parents married them to another pair of twins when possible. Otherwise, it was believed that the twins would be short-lived. Marriages between brothers and sisters [brothers of one family marrying sisters of another family] were rare.

Generally, if an older brother died, his younger brother was not allowed to marry the widow, nor was the elder brother allowed to marry a younger brother's widow. There were exceptions in the case of marrying a younger brother's wife and, though there might have been community protests, no one interfered directly. Usually older sisters-in-law were respected as mothers. A son-in-law seldom lived with his parents-in-law. This occurred when a wife's parents had no sons and needed the son-in-law's care, and then allowed him to inherit their property. Similarly, if the wife's parents were old and unable to work or, if their sons were quite young, the couple stayed at the wife's parents' home until the young sons became adult.

There were no restrictions on racial intermarriage, though it was infrequent. Following the end of the Qing Dynasty, intermarriage with Oroqen, Manchu, Mongols, Kazakh, and Han Chinese has been frequent in certain areas. Intermarriage with Ewenki was practiced in Buteha, Hailar, Aihui, and Tacheng. In marrying Ewenki, Dagur generally observed the prohibition of intra-*hal* marriage. At the close of the 19th century, for example, a man of Manna Mokon, Guobeile Hal, Nantun, Hailar married Nanken, an Ewenki girl of Dular Hal, and was immediately censured

because marriage between these two *hals* was taboo. Inter-marriage with Oroqen in Buteha was infrequent. Inter-marriage between Dagur and Mongolians was fairly frequent, especially in the 20th century in Hailar where they were in close contact. The same held for Dagur living in Fuyu County. Inter-marriage with Kazakh in Tacheng was exceptional. Beginning from the early years of the Republic of China, Dagur inter-married with Han Chinese in Buteha, Qiqihar, and Aihui. It was uncommon in Buteha and Qiqihar. In Aihui, Dagur have lived with Han Chinese since the Republic of China period. Consequently, inter-marriage has increased and was common in 1949.

2.2 Matchmaking

Engagement was managed by a matchmaker, who was a relative or close friend of the bride's family, and was invited by the groom's parents. When the matchmaker's recommendation was accepted, the engagement was formalized, and then the matchmaker presented liquor to the bride's parents and kowtowed to express thanks and congratulations. If the girl's parents did not agree, they did not permit the matchmaker to kowtow, nor did they invite the matchmaker to stay for a meal. The meal was crucial, for by asking the matchmaker to stay, the engagement was finalized. The matchmaker's success generally came after several visits to the bride's family. The invited matchmaker was not always eloquent, but he was trustworthy. There were no professional matchmakers. The groom was entitled to an annulment if he learned that his betrothed had previously engaged in intercourse.

Marriage engagements before birth were common among certain Dagur who wished to strengthen and protect friendly relations with friends and relatives.⁶ If the engaged children were of the opposite sex, the baby boy's father went to the baby girl's home to present liquor and kowtow to the infant girl's grandparents. This was followed by a discussion concerning the marriage, followed by a traditional meal formalizing the engagement.

2.3 Betrothal Gifts

Presentation of marriage gifts followed engagement. The groom took the gifts to the bride's home in a cart, whose driver was one generation older. Presents consisted of a horse, a cow, nine fat pigs⁷ or, at least five sheep, 45 kilograms of liquor, and cakes made of ground dried cheese, wild fruit, and milk skin. According to Dagur elders, a gift of a reined horse symbolized the union of the two families. The cow was considered compensation for the bride's mother's milk during the bride's infancy, and the pigs, liquor, and cakes were to feed the *mokon*. It was acceptable for an ordinary family to give three to four pigs, and 15-20 kilograms of liquor.

People of the same *mokon* were entitled to the liquor, meat, and cakes just mentioned. Before the *mokonda's* (clan chief) arrival, opening of liquor jars was forbidden. Also, the *mokonda* distributed meat and liquor remaining after the meal among the *mokon* as he saw fit, giving whatever portion to the bride's family he deemed appropriate. The bride's family or *mokonda* were expected to slaughter more swine for the party if the gifts brought by the groom proved inadequate.

⁶The Chinese expression for this is *zhi du ding hun* which translates as "belly-pointing engagement."

⁷One hairless, the other eight with hair, and cooked by the bride's *mokon*.

Before the groom's arrival, the bride's family kept the courtyard door closed, and stationed a guard there. When the groom approached, the guard questioned him. The ensuing debate continued until the guard was satisfied, and then the groom was permitted to enter the yard. At that moment, all the bride's *mokon* were invited to dinner. The groom kowtowed to the bride's parents and aged *mokon* members. He was given money and a shoulder money bag by the parents and *mokon* elders. Some wealthy parents returned the horse to the groom or, they might have given a better one. The dinner began with the opening of liquor jars, and the groom's companion offering a lengthy toast.

*Your lass and our lad,
Living thousands of miles apart are bound together in wedlock,
At some distance apart live two related families,
Whose ties will never be severed,
Will never be hacked apart.
Pine trees have grown tall,
Together with the groom,
We chose this auspicious day,
To visit your beloved parents,
And have brought you this sumptuous feast.
For the forthcoming joyful marriage,
I pour drink with both hands,
Please accept this token of good will and respect.*

After accepting the toast, the bride's father responded, while filling the cup for the one who offered the toast:

*For the sake of the joyful marriage of the two families,
You have made a long journey,
In order not to delay our ongoing dinner till next year,
You brought a consummating dinner on this auspicious day,
And I wish to invite mokon folk to our party,
To enjoy our joyful liquor,
Please introduce your betrothal gifts one by one.*

The groom's side responded:

*Our betrothal gifts include:
A jiroo shuolbur,⁸
When walking at night,
It can see clearly;
It can gallop on stony roads,
With clacking firm feet,
As fast as a roe deer,
As nimbly as a fox.
It can catch a hare in the desert,
And won't stumble over mounds.
Seven pigs in the pen,
Mouth fat two fingers thick.*

⁸[A reined horse.]

Thirty potfuls of urum,⁹
Eight tablefuls of wat,¹⁰
120 pieces of xirgeel utum,¹¹
And a full jar of distilled liquor.

During this time the bride was not where she could be seen by the groom.

2.4 Wedding Ceremonies

One month before the wedding date, the groom took presents (cloth, clothes, money, liquor) to the bride's family again, and further negotiated and confirmed the wedding date. A few days prior to the wedding the groom paid another visit to the bride's family. The bride's parents told the groom to sit with the bride and eat milk gruel (*lali*) or noodles. They ate with a woman who had both male and female children in the hope that the bride and groom would have sons and daughters. Most families allowed the groom and bride to sleep together for the next 2 days, and then the groom returned home. A very few families allowed the bride and groom to eat *lali* and sleep together on his second gift visit.

On the wedding day, the bride's father escorted his daughter and her dowry to the groom's home, accompanied by his relatives and friends. A typical dowry included several suits of clothes, a set of bed clothes, two suitcases, a wooden chest, a wooden comb box, a headdress box, and a number of pairs of shoes, including those for gifts to the groom's parents, brothers and sisters. Dowry value depended on the family's wealth. The gift of a *serunku* (servant girl) was rare.

Of the bride's entourage, the "bestmen" were called *huad*, and the bridesmaids were called *hodwo*. *Huad* included *daahuad* (first *huad*), *jieeg huad* (second *huad*), *gutaar huad* (third *huad*), and *hojoor huad* (minor *huad*). The *hodwo* included *daahodwo*, *jieeg hodwo*, *gutaar hodwo*, and *hojoor hodwo*. All *hodwo* travelled in carts, while the bride and the youngest *hojoor hodwo* rode in a sedan. All the *huad* rode in carts, with the exception of the youngest *hojoor huad* of the groom's party, who rode a horse. The bride's journey to the bridegroom's home was interrupted by stops, regardless of the distance to the groom's home. Bonfires were made, cakes were eaten, and liquor was drunk. On the way, friends and strangers alike were offered liquor and cakes. The groom's family sent two persons to meet the approaching bride. They waited 1-2 kilometers from the groom's home. When the bride's entourage arrived, one offered liquor while the other returned to report their arrival.

Meanwhile, the groom's parents and close relatives waited at the door, holding cups of liquor. After arriving, the bride emerged to the sound of firecrackers. Her face was covered by a red silk veil. Her sisters-in-law pulled her into the house's west room, where she sat cross-legged on the south side of the *kang*¹² facing the windows. She was unveiled by her sisters-in-laws, who combed her hair. Some Dagur were influenced by Han culture and worshipped the gods of heaven and earth at an incense burner before entering the west room. This ritual was followed by a *xireleb*

⁹[Milk cream.]

¹⁰[Cakes made from ground dried fruit and fat.]

¹¹[Fried cake made from fermented sticky millet.]

¹²[A partly hollow bed platform made of adobe bricks which is heatable.]

(banquet). Two tables were placed on the east, west, and north *kangs* of the west room. The bride's relatives were seated in the following order: *hodwo* on the south *kang*, *huad* on the west *kang*, and cart drivers on the north *kang*. People were seated from left to right at the tables in order of generation and age. Those of the groom's *mokon* sat on the *kang* edge. The *daxire* (table of most importance--senior's table) was served with *waaq* (pig back and side meat), and the *jieeqxiree* and *gutaarxiree* (tables of second and third importance) were served with *dala* (pig backbone). When the banquet began, guests invited by the groom to help entertain honored guests offered a toast, expressing a warm welcome to the guests and best wishes for happiness to the newlyweds:

*Hodwo and huad, may I please have your attention,
This couple is joined in wedlock through matchmaking,
Family friendship established by representatives,
From the time of our ancestors,
Doors of the homes have been open to each other,
Having emerged through wasteland after years of walking,
And breaking through piles of snow,
The path has joined the two different family names,
And the two families will live harmoniously hereafter.
We have a boy with a bow,
You have a girl with arrows,
At this wedding banquet,
I offer this toast.
We have chosen this auspicious day,
And laid these tables,
The meat we have,
Is from fat pigs raised with our own hands,
Their mouth fat is two fingers thick;
The full jar of Barhu liquor is homemade.
Respectable hodwo and huad:
Forgive us for our humble banquet preparation,
I invite you to enjoy the fragrant liquor and delicious food.
With this arrow in hand,
I wish you, the new couple,
In your future common life to show filial obedience to elders,
And genuine love for our younger generations;
You should be as neat as arrow ends,
As forthright as shaft feathers,
As straight as arrow shafts,
As close to each other as millstones,
As strong-willed as iron and steel.
Knives will never sever your tie,
Axes will never hack it apart.
The places you walk by will be illuminated,
The things you do will be stainless,
Free from discussion and blame.
You will have one daughter whose marriage you will arrange,
You will have seven sons.
They will take this bow and these arrows to hunt.
They will shoot wild boars on the mountain's sunny side,*

*And flowery stags on the shady side.
They will shoot roe deer by streams and in woods,
They will return to the mokon village laden with game,
They will be widely renowned and enjoy great wealth.*

The next morning the bride's relatives were fed dumplings with soup. As they departed, the groom's family gave *moj* (meat with bones) and one or two pigs to the bride's relatives. They also offered liquor, while the groom's *hojoor huad* secretly took a cup, bowl, or plate as a reminder of the wedding. The groom was expected to escort the bride's entourage out of the village. After the bride's entourage left, she served tobacco and kowtowed to the groom's parents. Three days later, the bride's sisters-in-law took her to visit the groom's *mokon* elders and close relatives. She kowtowed to them and presented toasts of liquor. Within at least 1 month, the bride returned to her former home to briefly visit her parents.

2.5 Divorce and Remarriage

Divorce was rare and considered improper during the Qing Dynasty. As a result of maltreatment by husbands or mothers-in-law, some women returned to their parents' home. Afterwards, the husband's *mokon* was often asked to persuade the wife to return and offer a contract to the wife's *mokon*, which contained a written promise that she would not be maltreated again. If the husband violated the agreement, the wife's *mokon* took her back to her parents' home. Divorce proposed by the husband was subject to approval by the *mokons* of both sides. Women rarely proposed divorce unless they were unable to endure severe abuse. Women returning to their parents were often rejected, scolded, severely beaten if they were found to be the cause of trouble. Once a divorce was agreed to, a childless person was paid by both parties to draft a divorce certificate in the open air. The certificate was signed, and each side took half as evidence. Divorce was unlucky, as exemplified by the saying, "Grass does not grow for 3 years at the place where a divorce certificate was drafted." Men and women were free to remarry after they were divorced. If the spouses they married a second time were deemed less fit than those of the first marriage, they were regarded as unlucky. Children belonged to their father after a divorce.

Widows could not marry during the mourning period for their deceased husbands. If a widow needed care, her parents might take her to their home, but she could not remarry until the end of the mourning period. Otherwise, the deceased husband's *mokon* was entitled to interfere. Widows with children normally did not remarry. Before a second marriage, the widow stayed at her deceased husband's home. If she had an illegitimate child, she was sent back to her parents' home. In the past, the belief was strong that a widow should never remarry. During the Qing Dynasty, Jielang, a daughter of a Suduer Hal family, was betrothed to a man of Mording Hal. After presenting gifts, he died from a sudden illness. When the bride heard this, she willingly donned mourning clothing and moved to his parents' home. Later, she adopted a child and observed widowhood. A monument was erected to commemorate her by the Qing. It can still be seen in Archang Ali, Nantun, Hailar.

Funerals

3.1 Cemetery and Burial Guidelines

Earth burial was common. Originally, every *mokon* had its own burial ground. With later population growth, family cemeteries appeared. Only Nantun Dagur retained *mokon* cemeteries (Dagur: *huaran*). The Dengteke *huaran* was located on a hill near the road between Hailar and Halun Arshan, 5 kilometers south of Hailar. It had two gravestones. One read in Manchu: "Underneath were buried all the gods of heaven, earth, mountains, and rivers." This was the Huaran Obo¹³. Once every summer the entire *mokon* congregated to offer sacrifices. The other [gravestone] read in Mongolian: "Underneath was buried the moved-in ancestor of the Aola family of the Hailar Dagur." It was erected in 1939 when the grave was moved from Xi (West) Mountain of Hailar. Southeast, at the foot of the hill, there were more graves. One grave had granite walls, a gravestone, and a stone tablet engraved with exquisite designs. Local accounts say that Fan Qiabu's great grandson, Changxing, built this grandiose grave for his father while supervising construction of a hot water channel from Halun Arshan in 1853, the third year of the Xianfeng Reign. Manna Huaran was located near Hujier Lake, 2 kilometers west of Nantun. It was the *da huaran* (ancestral graveyard) of Manna Mokon. Manna and Dengteke Mokons living in Mohertu Village also had a graveyard, but it was not called *da huaran*.

Archang Mokon's *da huaran* was west of Hailar, north of the railroad, where all deceased *mokon* members were buried. During social unrest in 1900, Archang Mokon moved to the banks of the Hui River, 100 kilometers south of Hailar. They stayed there for many years. It was not possible to bury those who died in their *da huaran*, consequently, they were buried locally. A Dagur graveyard remains near the Hui River. Archang Mokon's *da menggan* (a *da huaran* where older ancestors were buried) was at Buteha.

Mr. Tigou furnished the following account: During the Nationalist period, Lubsen, from Archang Village in Buteha, sold the *da menggan* to a Han Chinese. Villagers opposed this, but they could not get it back. Finally, they turned to Guifudutong¹⁴ for help. He consulted Wu Junsheng, a Heilongjiang superintendent general and, with his help, the burial place was regained. As a result, Archang Mokon members expelled Lubsen from the *mokon*.

On certain occasions, cremations and wind "burials" [corpses placed in forest trees] were practiced. For example, when a pregnant woman died, she was cremated in fear other women would experience such birthing difficulties as sitting up during birth. Dead *yadgans* were cremated. Their ashes were buried after a few years in a place that the *yadgans* had chosen before death. Children who died from smallpox were tied to a wooden frame and wind buried. The corpses of pregnant women, *yadgans*, smallpox victims, and unmarried females were not buried in *mokon* cemeteries. Other burial practices included: (a) Digging a deep hole beside the grave of a bachelor and burying a piece of wood. (b) When moving graves, millet and a live rooster were

¹³[An *obo* is a mound of stones in a place of higher elevation consecrated to heaven and various deities.]

¹⁴Guifu was from Arhachang Mokon. He was also known as Guianben.

buried in the former grave, because the incense burned and kowtows made at the original burial were tribute given to the local earth god. It had to be taken away with the body. The rooster replaced the original tribute. (c) When someone died outside the home, they were interred in a cemetery, and a live rooster was placed on the coffin. (d) Infants that died from smallpox and measles were placed in baskets and hung on trees at a mountain foot, or hung on a specially made wooden frame. In 100 days the corpses were buried. If preserving the corpse was difficult, the dead infant was put in a bag filled with candies and biscuits, and placed at a crossroads, or in a river.

Different burial locations were assigned in the cemetery. The cemetery was located on a mountain slope with the position of highest elevation reserved for the ancestors. Subsequent generations were interred in positions of lower elevation. [With reference to the slope bottom, facing the top], individuals of the same generation were assigned positions of the older brother being on the left, and the younger on the right. Couples were buried side by side, with the wife to the left of the husband.

3.2 Preparing the Dead

When an old person died, he was washed, dressed in new clothing, and his head was shaved. The body was placed on the floor, feet to the north and head to the south. The face was covered with a white *khadakh*.¹⁵ A table with chicken, fruits, and other food was placed behind the deceased's head. A tobacco pipe was placed to the left of the corpse. The sons of the deceased, and their wives, regularly refilled it. Daughters knelt in front of their dead father while sons, nephews, and daughters-in-law knelt on either side. Elders wept bitterly on the *kang*. While informing *mokon* members of the death, the family also informed in-laws. *Mokon* relatives and the deceased's friends came offering condolences. Before burial, the oldest son and his wife stayed with the corpse day and night, wept several times, and burned paper symbolizing money [paper money]. After 3 days of ceremonies, the body was raised and circumambulated three times about the inside of the house, tracing the movement of the sun from east to west. When the corpse left the house, the oldest son dropped to his knee and broke a bowl, collected the broken parts, and placed them in the coffin. A pot, wooden spade, tobacco bag, and an oar were buried with the coffin. Dagur regarded graveclothes and burial articles as extremely important. Coffins and graveclothes were prepared well before the death of elderly people. For example, in Hailar, a 91-year-old-man had had his graveclothes since the close of the Qing Dynasty.

3.3 Sacrifice Ritual and Burial

Grandiose sacrifice ceremonies were held before a coffin was taken to a cemetery. If people had little money, a later ceremony was planned. Sacrifices consisted of mainly horses and cattle. Before slaughtering the horse, it was tied in front of the coffin. The eldest son knelt in front of it, and poured liquor over its feet before it was slain. Condolences were offered the night before burial. To begin, a *mokon* elder was asked to eulogize the deceased. He stated the deceased's name, age, birthplace, date of becoming sick, date of death, and the number of paper tinsels burned as offerings. He also described offerings made by the deceased's friends. Meanwhile, other

¹⁵[A strip of silk presented as a token of respect.]

attendants knelt by the coffin. If it was a make-up sacrifice ceremony, it was done at the place where the deceased had slept. A table of sacrifices symbolizing the deceased's coffin was prepared. Relatives and friends were entertained with a "farewell dinner" featuring beef and horse flesh. They remained as corpse guards throughout the night. The sacrifice ceremony was a key part of the entire funeral. Those for elders were particularly elaborate. People of the same generation, or, of older generations from the same *mokon*, and relatives of the deceased's wife or husband's parents, offered paper tinsel and money at the ceremony. The deceased's parents' relatives offered something such as a live pig. It was slaughtered during the ceremony.

An auspicious day was chosen for burial. On the way to the gravesite, the oldest son walked before the coffin cart leading the horse, with the reins over his shoulder. The procession followed the coffin cart. Wailing elders rode on horseback or in carts. People living along the way splashed liquor at the procession and burned paper tinsel. Sacrifices were made at streams on the way in order that the deceased could cross safely. Once the gravesite was reached, the coffin was lowered into the grave. The deceased's children or close relatives first filled the grave with dirt, and then were joined by other people. After the grave was filled, dirt was piled into a mound over the grave. After returning from the burial, the deceased's family cooked large chunks of sacrificial meat, and used remaining meat to prepare dishes. This, and large quantities of liquor, were used to entertain friends and relatives. The deceased's eldest son and wife served liquor, and, after the meal, kowtowed to the deceased person's parents' family's elders as a token of thanks for their help and participation in the funeral. At the guests' departure, the hosts saw them to the door, and gave them chunks of meat with bones. During the funeral, those from the deceased's parents' home were the most honored. They were entitled to find fault with anything during the funeral procedures. Elders were treated with great respect.

3.4 Mourning Clothes

After an elder's death, mourning clothing was worn when extending condolences. The length of time it was worn and the style varied, depending on the deceased's status within the family. The deceased's wife, eldest son, and nephews dressed in white. The eldest son wore a loose fitting white robe for 3 months. Afterwards, they wore plain clothes for 3 years. Daughters wore white striped hats and white shoes. The deceased's third generation nephews and nieces wore mourning clothes for 2 months. Fifth-generation relatives wore a white mourning string around the waist for 1 month.

At 1 and 2 month intervals, the deceased's family again made grave offerings. Expiration of the mourning dress period meant another large event called the Mourning Termination Ceremony. This took place on the 99th day of mourning when relatives and friends were asked to attend. Animals were slaughtered at the gravesite.¹⁶ Paper money was burned and mourning clothes were taken off, bound into a bundle, and swung over burning paper before being put away. This was repeated on the second and third anniversaries of the deceased's death. Young women who married on the first anniversary of the death were allowed to remove plain color clothing. Mourning clothes were only for adults. Children less than 10-years-old were not permitted to wear them in fear physical growth would be impaired.

Hair and fingernails were not cut, and women did not wear finger rings or bracelets

¹⁶Hailar Dagur invited lamas to read scriptures.

during the time mourning clothing was worn. Fighting was prohibited, as were sexual relations for married couples. During the Lunar New Year period, there was neither merriment nor decorations. New Year posters and red-colored antithetical couplets written on scrolls were not permitted, with the exception of blue-colored ones. New Year visits were forbidden as were firecrackers.

Festivals

People rose before dawn on the first day of the first moon. Women began preparing breakfast, and men burnt incense and worshipped heaven and the gods. Tables were prepared in the west part of the courtyard where incense was burned. A bundle was burnt for heaven, seven sticks were burned for Ursa Major, nine for Guniangshen (Girl God), one for Zaoshen (Kitchen God), and three for each of various other gods. These offerings beseeched the God of Heaven and other deities to bestow peace and a good harvest. Veneration of deities was followed by toasts and kowtowing to elders in return for *yirele* (blessings). After a breakfast of dumplings, people dressed in new clothes. Close *mokon* relatives grouped together and, led by the senior elder, began visiting families in order of generations. For 3 years after the death of elders, a table was placed on the south side of *kangs* on New Year's Eve to venerate them. Visitors paid tribute to the deceased by offering tobacco and kowtowing [to the table]. Various forms of entertainment followed. On the first or second day of the first moon [first lunar month], people rode on horseback or in sleds to make New Year visits to other villages. On the 15th of the first moon (Kaqin), people dressed in new clothing and ate *waaq*. Some ate dumplings. On the night of the 14th, people kowtowed and burned incense to the gods. The 15th was the last festival day.

The second day of the second moon was a festival for the eating of pig head meat and eat pies. Sewing was forbidden in fear that it would cause body joint diseases.

Dagur celebrated Day of Pure Brightness (Hanshi) by visiting graves, adding soil to burial mounds, paying respect, offering sacrifices, and kowtowing to the dead.

During the early morning of the fifth day of the fifth moon, people rose early and bathed in rivers, or cleaned their faces with dew. A special herb was picked and placed in the ears. This made the body immune from diseases. Dumplings, meat pies, and *hele* (buckwheat noodles) were then eaten.

The 15th of the seventh moon was a Netherworld festival. Graves were swept, new soil was added, and paper money was burned. On the 15th of the eighth moon better food was eaten. Offerings of moon cakes and watermelons were made to the moon.

Dagur celebrated Thousand Lanterns Day on the 25th of the eighth moon when 1,000 lanterns were made and hung at temples. The more lanterns that were hung, the better. Hailar Dagur mainly celebrated this.

The eighth day of the 12th moon was a festival for eating gruel, followed by worshipping the Kitchen God on the 23rd. Butunn was the last festival. It also fell on the 23rd of the 12th moon. Boiled mutton was eaten, offerings were made to the gods, and, at night, incense was burned and all kowtowed. Elders were also kowtowed to, offered toasts, and wished good health and a long life. Firecrackers were set off, and the night became a long party. Some *hals* visited close relatives. At night, some observed the heavenly bodies in order to predict the coming year's fortune. A fire was kindled before each door and kept burning for several days until the beginning of the first moon.

Etiquette

Dagur emphasized etiquette. Central to this was respect for elders. When they wished to leave their homes for a time, younger family members were responsible for packing and cart harnessing. After elders got into their carts, younger people handed over the reins and saw them off. Upon their return, the elders were greeted by young people who wished them good health. Daughters-in-law, who were at their parents home, and therefore absent, even if for only two or three days, were expected to observe this rule. Young people who had returned from a trip that lasted for more than two weeks were expected to greet and wish good health to village elders upon meeting them.

It was customary to offer seats to elders, acquaintances, and strangers. The south *kang* in the east room was for elders. The north *kang* was for the son and his wife, and the west *kang* was for respected visitors. Elders ate on the south *kang* while the sons ate on the north *kang*. When elders finished eating, daughters-in-law offered tobacco, cleared away the meal, and then retired to the outer room [room leading to the entrance of the home] and ate on a small *kang*.

On a visit to a home, acquaintances and strangers alike were expected to pay respect to that family's elders, and then sit on the west *kang* and offer elders tobacco. When seeing visitors to the door, elders went first. The hostess escorted visitors to the house entrance and the host saw them to the courtyard gate. In daily life, young people extended good wishes and kowtowed to elders on New Year's Day, and during weddings and funerals. Paying respect (*sayinhasubei*) was accomplished by extending the left leg, resting both hands on that knee and, at the same time, kneeling on the right knee and looking respectfully at the recipient, and bending the body forward. The extent of the bending forward was a measure of the respect accorded the recipient. A deep bow and standing still afterwards [for a short time] was appropriate for those two-generations older. A slight bow without standing still afterwards for those one generation older was common. A very slight bow for those who were senior, but of the same generation, was customary. When paying respect, women squatted, with their hands on their knees and their heads slightly lowered. Women actually knelt when they kowtowed (*muergubei*). When kowtowing to gods, the palms were first pressed together at the chest and then extended. A prayer was said, and then women knelt and kowtowed.

Taboos

6.1 Production Activity Taboos

It was taboo for hunters on hunting trips to call a bear a "bear" (*bobok*) or call a tiger a "tiger" (*tasiha*). Instead, "old man" (*eterken*) and "king of animals" (*nuoyanguresi*), were used. Women were not allowed to go to fishing grounds, because they were "unclean." This would drive the fish away. [Illustrating this] it was said that, on a winter day at the end of the 19th century, a fisherman cast a net in a river close to Dengteke. Just as he was about to haul in the net, he saw a woman walking along a path near the river. He nervously approached her, and pleaded with her to stop and wait. She did so for an entire day. This resulted in a good catch, and the fisherman offered her a large portion of the fish in gratitude.

Anglers were not to bring whips to the fishing grounds, because they disturbed fish. Those in mourning were not permitted at fishing grounds. Fishing was considered a happy thing while mourning suggested bad luck. Walking with hands clasped behind the back was taboo, as it resulted in the net getting stuck. *Yadgans* were not permitted at the fishing grounds.

Plowing and sowing seeds were not permitted on "Rat Day" and "Fire Day."

A young horse born to a 3-year-old mare was sold¹⁷ and a bundle of its hair kept by the owner as a talisman of good fortune. A *wenguer* horse¹⁸ presented as a gift to a *barken* was not sold or slaughtered.

Trees that had been offered sacrifices (*juldeng*) and under which sacrifices had been made, were not cut. Burning *juldeng* was also prohibited. White birches and elms were not used in home construction. White birches were not used to build rafts. House timbers had to be free of knife marks and iron nails. Striking beams was forbidden.

6.2 Marriage and Mourning Taboos

Women did not marry when at an even-numbered age. A cart transporting a bride or groom should arrive prior to sunset. To avoid bad luck in the case of arrival afterwards, a mirror was placed on the west side of the gate, symbolizing the sun. Horses harnessed to wedding carts were castrated. Births and weddings in other people's homes were taboo.

When someone was dying at home, no one slept until the dying person expired. Otherwise, the dying person took away the sleeping person's soul. If cats approached the corpse, it would rise up. For this reason, they were kept away from coffins. Coffins nailed with metal were taboo. When a person expired in the home of a family with the same surname, his corpse was carried out through a window, not the door. Those who died from infectious diseases, childless people, unmarried women, and children were not buried in *mokon* graveyards.

¹⁷It was considered bad luck to rear it.

¹⁸[A horse that pleased and was chosen by Yanjiyaaq God through religious ritual, and was adorned with red, yellow, green, and white cloth strips on its mane and tail.]

6.3 Daily Life Taboos

Women did not get into a cart from the rear, and they were prohibited from riding in a cart pulled by a *wenguer* horse. Women did not walk on house roofs, sleep on west *kangs*, and sit facing fireplaces. Pregnant women were not allowed to look into fireplaces and did not sleep on bear hides for fear of miscarriage. They also did not eat donkey meat, for this might result in the child being like a donkey. They did not travel by donkey cart, as it might cause delayed births. For 1 month after giving birth, the mother did not pass through the courtyard gate for fear of defiling the door god, and she did not approach wells. The main room's northeast corner was also taboo out of fear of defiling the god of the family shrine. For 3 days after a woman gave birth, donkeys were not allowed to enter the courtyard, stone grinders were not used, and stone jars were not moved in the home. Neither husband nor wife were allowed to approach the chimney base. Visitors were not received during the time a woman gave birth. A cart axle was placed before the door, signalling a birth. If a visitor had to enter for some urgent reason, a spadeful of fire was placed at the door, and visitors were asked to step across. During this period, carts from outside the village and perspiring horses were not allowed to enter the courtyard.

People did not give away grain stored at the top of the [grain storage] bin or barn. After sunset, no grain was taken outside the courtyard.

Children were not allowed to sleep lying along *kang* smoke channels. They were not allowed to sit eating on the threshold, window sills, or while walking or standing. This might cause them to have swollen necks, or the cows to stand up while giving birth.

People did not point at others with knives, scissors, or chopsticks. Pots were not pulled on the ground or horses might lose their strength to pull carts.

In the event of smallpox or typhoid, fire in one stove was not moved to another. No dishes were cooked, no sewing was done, lice were not killed, and no dogs and cats were allowed to be about. When children contracted smallpox, parents did not have sexual relations.

While worshipping, people did not sit with their backs to deity images. Irreverent objects were not placed on the [family] shrine. Feet were not warmed directly on the fire for fear of becoming poor.

Possessions were retrieved from others' homes before Spring Festival. Door and window openings were sealed before the evening of New Year's Eve. People did not call each other by name from outside to inside, otherwise, ghosts learned the names and then attached themselves to the persons, or took away their souls. On New Year's Day, people rose early without being called in fear of being slothful for the entire year. From the first to the fifth day of the New Year, rubbish was not discarded for fear of throwing away good fortune.

Religion

7.1 Introduction

Dagur were fundamentally Shamanistic based on the concept that all things on earth had eternal spirits. These beliefs were manifested in sacrifice rituals. Lacking an understanding of natural elements such as wind, rain, and thunder, Dagur believed that these natural phenomenon were manipulated by various gods; that unusual mountains, caves, and old trees were where gods rested. They also believed that mankind, as well as animals, had spirits which were active and wandered about after death. They could protect or create havoc among younger generations. As a result of a backward economy, and a lack of scientific knowledge, Shamanistic beliefs were deeply rooted. During the mid-1950s, when this social history study group visited various Dagur communities, especially aged Dagur provided much vivid material concerning Dagur religious belief. Material presented here deals with basic Dagur religious belief. Despite the unscientific absurdity of the content, much of it will prove of high academic value if it is studied from the angle of material dialectics.¹⁹

Sacrificial offerings fall into two categories according to scale. During large sacrifices to Holier Barken, for example, a date-colored bull with a white head, and sometimes a yellow horse, were presented. Nine men offered liquor and tobacco, and then nine men and nine women danced. Large scale ceremonies were organized by *yadgans*. Minor ceremonies involved no more than a single sheep.

7.2 Gods

7.2a *Tenger (Heaven)*

Dagur of all areas worshipped heaven. According to chants, they were Father Heaven (Aqaa Tenger), Mother Heaven (Ewe Tenger), Princess Heaven (Dale Keto), Man-Controlling Heaven (Notor Noyin), and so on. There were no images to make sacrifices to while worshipping heaven and it was not called "god" (*barken*). Offerings to heaven were a 2-year-old cow or a pig. Formerly, the offering had been a white cow. A pair of boots was hung on the tightly fastened courtyard gate during the ritual. If the courtyard had no wooden door, a fishing net, or a likeness of the same, was placed over the entrance to keep people from passing. People then climbed over the wall. A bed cover was hung from a pole put across the southeast corner of the main room, forming a screen, and then the offering speech began. Next, a sacrificial cow or pig was slaughtered, skinned, and the internal organs were cooked in the yard, while meat and bones were cooked in the kitchen. When the service concluded, the meat was eaten, bones were placed in a dustpan outside the yard, and the backbone was hung from a pole by the door. In worshipping heaven, there was no trance dancing, thus *yadgans* were not necessary. *Bagaqs* or *barxis* [religious practitioners, discussed later] who could chant were qualified to officiate. In Nemor, boots were not hung on the courtyard entrance, rather, a man stood on the roof with

¹⁹[A necessary disclaimer by the authors. "Superstitious religious beliefs" had long been criticized in New China.]

a bow and arrow until the ritual ended, and a spherical mound was built in the place of the bed cover hung from the pole.

The origin of this service is explained by a tale: In ancient times people wanted to offer sacrifices to heaven, but had no animals. Consequently, they often stole calves and, in order not to leave the calves' hoofprints behind, they put a pair of boots on the calf's rear legs. When they returned home with the calf, the boots were removed and put on the courtyard gate. The gate was then tightly closed. The screen hid the killed animal from Jiyaq (God of Fortune). In Nemor, the man standing on the roof was a sentry who kept watch lest the stolen animal was discovered. Though stealing was later discontinued, this tradition persisted. The offering chant follows.

*Father Heaven listen to our sacrificial chant,
Mother Heaven, let us explain our predestined relationships.
Princess Heaven sitting at the seat of honor,
Listen carefully with your keen ears;
Home-place Celestial Governor Heaven,
Sitting at the corner,
Look with your bright eyes.
We are not praying for blessings without reason,
Nor are we asking for compassion in the absence of disasters.
In order to keep our promises,
On precisely this day,
We offer all the sacrifices you need,
They are winnowing-fan ears,
Dark-fruit eyes,
Woolen hair,
Mouths for plowing,
Ribbon-like ribs,
Stool-like legs,
Fork-like hooves,
Furry black wool,
And oily fat.
We offer our lovable animals,
Offer to you as our sacrifices.
Take their lives,
Hold their internal organs high,
And let the door gods know,
Stay together with the sky, over the courtyard gate.
Pick out nerves from limbs.
Take out membranes,
Smear fresh blood on the spear,
Place major bones on either side of the incense burner table.
Stay with Goddess of Heaven,
Stay with Goddess of Spirit,
Place sacrifices on your left and right to express thanks,
Sacrifice the best ham and backbone meat.*

7.2b Holier Barken

This god was widely worshipped by Dagur. Hailar Dagur called it Da Barken. Aihui Dagur called it Maluo Barken. In Butaha, most Dagur worshipped it, except those

who worshipped Mording Etuo. Two tales explain its origin. According to the first, in ancient times, there was an odd Oroqen man named Tege Oroqen,²⁰ who was killed one day by a lightning bolt. Before dying, he sought protection from the lightning from tortoises and frogs, which were the only things in sight at that moment. Thus he and these two animals became Oroqen gods, and were thereafter worshipped. The practice later spread to Dagur living on the north banks of the Heilongjiang River. However, it only occasionally manifested itself through *yadgans' wenguer*, deities that *yadgans* communicated with, controlled, and used to treat ill people.

According to a second account, long ago on a Tibetan mountain there was a large rock, and one day it was split by lightning causing an antelope to jump out. It travelled as far as Shenyang, disturbing people in the vicinity. Later, before the antelope crossed the Great Wall at Shanhaiguan, the Manchu government had it put in a hide bag and thrown into a river. The monster drifted until the bag was broken by a flood dragon. The antelope escaped, and once more began disturbing people. The Manchu government again put the animal in a bag, and put it on a horse which wandered about. Finally, on the north bank of the Heilongjiang River, it was captured by a Tege Oroqen tribe. They thought that the bag contained valuables and opened it. The antelope jumped out and began running at large in the forest. Whenever there was rain with thunder, the antelope sought protection from the Tege Oroqen. During one violent storm, many people were struck dead by lightning with only the antelope surviving. Then the antelope fled to the confluence of the Nuoming and Ninjiang Rivers near Butcha, close to Eyiler and Bitai Villages, where an Oroqen farmer was working in a field. The antelope approached him. At this precise moment, a lightning bolt struck both the farmer and the antelope, shattering them into 99 pieces. Afterwards the antelope's spirit and that of his victims combined to make trouble and, therefore, they were spiritualized as gods. They were worshipped originally by the Oroqen and later, by the Qing Court.

According to Aihui Dagur tales, in early times the Dagur, Oroqen, and Mongols had been neighbors for a long time. They got along with each other as brothers. Later they reluctantly parted and exchanged *barken* as tokens of friendship. The Oroqen gave the Dagur Maluo Barken. The Mongols gave Nuo Barken to the Dagur. The Dagur gave their *barken* to the Oroqen. Time has failed to preserve the *barkens'* names. Before the Dagur moved to Hailar, they did not have Da Barken. One summer about 100 years ago, some Dagur youngsters from Dengteke Mokon in Nantun were bathing in the Yiming River. A birch bark box floated by. Out of curiosity they salvaged the box, and began struggling over it. When the box was opened, all sorts of animal figures and a serpent-skin tunic stained with blood were found. These were taken as ill omens and placed back into the box, which was tossed back into the Yiming River. The box did not drift in the river current, but stayed at the same place, refusing to move. Meanwhile, some girls in the group that had taken the box began to go mad. *Yadgans* divined that the birch bark box had put a spell over the girls. The box was taken out of the river again, and sacrifices were made to it. Afterwards, Dengteke Mokon Dagur had Holier Barken, while Manna and Archang Mokons did not. This *barken's* full name was Holier and consisted of 58 creatures and objects. Names and numbers of each follow. Of the above 17 images, the first 15 were woodcuts and the remaining two were cloth images.

²⁰[*Tege* refers to a David's deer, thus Tege Oroqen signifies an Oroqen who used a David's deer.]

1. Mangie (demon) (9)
2. Nine-headed Ildengir Mangie (1)
3. Delgeedii (9)
4. Takiigar (2)
5. Bukuiger (camel back) (2)
6. Karaanii Kaqoonii (2)
7. Koltogdii-Kaltagdii (2)
8. Kuli (leg) (1)
9. Altanxu Kabil (gold tortoise) (2)
10. Mungunxu Kabil (silver tortoise) (2)
11. Semerken-Kentel (2)
12. Birgii-Biqwu-Biqieqin (1)
13. Nariin-Gekuu-Quaangaalan (2)
14. Iserhorie (deer antler) (9)
15. Miaoqaan (fowling piece) (1)
16. Tere Mudur Tele Jur Mudur Jutgelgen (2)
17. Yesengkokormarsilang Yesengwuginlurgel (Nine Children Dancing-Nine Girls) (9)

The following is only part of the "Holier Barken" chant. The remainder is in the process of collection.

Holier Barken Chant

*The divine seat at the extremes of the earth behind,
 Was established when Goddess of Earth was discovered,
 It is in the direction of the Sileka River,
 At the source of the Erguna River,
 At the spur of Senqili Mountain,
 And at the source of Senge Spring;
 He makes his home in Souxi Cave.
 There were walls built with pine wood,
 A mangrove flagpole,
 A scented shrub-leaf bag cushion,
 And 99 bags;
 By nine lightning bolts,
 They were broken into bits,
 In honor of Koltogdii-Kaltagdii.
 Being broken into bits,
 They were meant for Karaanii-Kaqoonii.
 Where did he grow up?
 It was on the Heilongjiang River,
 While he was drifting down the Jinqili River,
 He assembled all the birgii,²¹
 He thus gathered all living birgii,
 And set South Sea as his destination,
 He built a shelter on the island,
 He was listed in Dalai Lama's lama register,
 Troubled the city of Beijing,*

²¹[Tribes.]

*He occupies a genuine position,
 And was renowned in the empirical court,
 He had a kang edge of jade and gems,
 And a pearl seat.
 He began to gain fame and fortune there,
 And traveled through every province,
 While passing by Suolun Dagur,
 He was enshrined by every household,
 His image occupied two walls of both sides of every home.
 He was a god with three seats,
 One seat was for the plow,
 Hiding in the moldboard,
 Dairai²² sitting on the original seat,
 Has sacrifices of double dragons,
 A double dragon throne,
 A variety of satins and silks,
 And variegated khadakh;
 He wore a serpent robe,
 Wrapped in satin,
 Standing on pure satin,
 Surrounded by painted decorations,
 Sculptures,
 Carving on pine trunks,
 Paintings on poplars:
 Bukuiger-Takiigar,
 Koltogdii-Kaltagdii,
 Karaanii-Kaqoonii
 Semerken Kentel,
 Babkai Batel
 Balodi Buke.²³
 At the river juncture,
 A boat sails down,
 Oroqen in the forest,
 Mergen, a capable hunter,
 Leaves no trace,
 Unseen footprints,
 Golden tortoises,
 Silver frogs,
 Humming wasps,
 Squirring lizards,
 Jingling bells,
 Cuckooing cuckoos,
 Howling leopards,
 Strong and mighty hogs.*

The Hailar area chant differed from the Buteha area. The former contained many Oroqen and Suolun words, which makes it virtually incomprehensible. *Bagaqs*

²²[An aggressive god.]

²³[Mighty person/giant.]

chanted the locations and adornments of the gods. As to sacrifices, there were major and minor rituals. Major ones required a white-headed date-colored bull for Holier Barken, a maroon cow for Holier Barken's *urokxi*,²⁴ and a yellow stallion for Holier Barken's *maluo*.²⁵ At the sacrificial rite, nine men served liquor and tobacco, and then nine men and nine women danced. Major sacrificial rites were led by *yadgans* with the help of *bagaqs*. Minor rites could be led by *bagaqs* without *yadgans*. At minor sacrificial rites, a sheep was sacrificed for Holier Barken and a male sheep for Maluo.

7.2c Hojoor Barken (Ancestral Gods)

Every Dagur *mokon* had its own *hojoor*, and *mokons* of the same *hal* shared one *hojoor*. Some *mokons* had two *hojoors*. It was rare for two *hals* to share one *hojoor*. Certain *hojoors* were worshipped by two *mokons* at the same time. Other *mokons* had two *hojoors*. For example, the *hojoor barken* of Duertala Mokon of Esier Hal was also worshipped by Aola Mokon of Aola Hal. According to one tale, long ago a person of Aola Mokon had a daughter who was betrothed to a boy of Duertala Mokon. The girl was often ill and, when she was 16-years-old, a *yadgan* was invited to see her. He reported that she was on the verge of becoming a *yadgan*. After prayer, she was cured. The father, however, disapproved of her becoming a *yadgan*. Finding opportunity in her father's absence at Ganzhuer Temple, she went to a *yadgan* and began learning how to be a *yadgan*. Soon her father returned and stopped her study. She then died and, 3 days later, her father also died. This was followed by the death of many Duertala people. Sacrifices were desperately made to the girl as Hojoor Barken. Her power was soon felt in her mother's home, and she became the Hojoor Barken of both *mokons*.

The following relate to Hojoor Barken origins: Long ago there were seven boys and one girl in Duboqian Mokon of Onon Hal. The girl was betrothed to a boy of Mording Hal. Before marriage, the girl became pregnant, which was discovered by her uncles. In order to escape punishment, she fled with her vanity case. Her uncles at once set out in pursuit, and found her at Yisherhada. Unwilling to return, she plunged into a river off Guaile Mountain cliff and drowned. Her vanity case drifted in the Nenjiang River to the Mording Mokon area. As a result of her spirit apparition, Orner and Mording Mokons were afflicted with frequent diseases. Consequently, she was established as a *hojoor* goddess. There was no image for her. Nine liquor cups were used in worship. The origin chant for Hojoor Barken follows.

*This goddess was worshipped by our first ancestor,
When and where she originated and how she emerged,
Was once relevant to the Inlaid Yellow Banner,
These questions are related to Huonli open field.
She hid in Yisir Cliff,
And stayed high on Guaile Cliff.
Her hand-holds were found in ponds,
Her chains in green water,*

²⁴[*Urokxi* is unknown to us and those we consulted.]

²⁵[*Maluo*, as used here, was unknown to those we consulted. Later, it is used to mean wooden Kaltagdii and Koltogdii images. Perhaps it refers to an image of Holier Barken.]

*And thrones in clear rivers.
She was transformed in a dressing box,
And immortalized in a red cloth wrapper,
She flew like a red sparrow,
Swam among carp,
Made friends with crucian carps,
She was entrenched on Archang Cliff,
She walked back and forth on Niesi Cliff.
She was involved with seven Mording groups.
Disseminating nine ancestral goddesses,
Goddess of Duboqian,
Was in charge of 10 families,
And was the root of 20 clans.
Her spirit became a wenguer.*

7.2d Mording Etuo (Mording Grandmother)

Long ago a man of Mieji Mokon of Mording Hal was conscripted. He served in an east China army for many years. When he returned home, he brought a Han servant girl. She later went mad from maltreatment and caused trouble among the seven *mokon* of Mording Hal. In a meeting of the seven *mokons*, it was decided to cast her into the Nenjiang River near Lesser Mording Village. At this particular moment the man who had brought her there was in Beijing where he died as a result of her evil spirit. Thus people of the seven *mokons* of Mording Hal began worshipping her as a goddess. Her image was a cloth figure attached to another cloth. A worn image was not replaced until a new child was born to the family. Her spirit did not become a *wenguer*. *Yadgans* made her power felt. According to other accounts, her spirit once met Holier Barken in Beijing. They agreed not to be worshipped by the same family at the same time. Where Mording Goddess of Grandparents was worshipped, Holier was not worshipped, and vice versa. Offerings for the goddess were a small pig, a roe deer, and buckwheat gruel.

7.2e Goddess Hojoor of Shewor Tuorsu Mokon, Mording Hal

Long ago Shewor Tuorsu Mokon had a servant girl who went mad after marriage. Her husband's family cut off one of her little fingers to exorcise the evil causing the madness. She soon returned to her parents' home, but on the way she drowned as she crossed the Nenjiang River. Her spirit was subsequently deified. Her husband's family put her little finger in her dressing box. Seven days later, when the box was opened, a golden bird flew out. It flew into the water where she had drowned and saw her corpse being eaten by fish. Her spirit then troubled the Shewor Tuorsu Mokon. Subsequently, it was established as Goddess Hojoor of the *mokon*. Meanwhile, her spirit became a *wenguer*. In the *mokon's yadgan* chant for this goddess, her origin is revealed:

*She was transformed into a demon in a dressing box,
Her little finger turned into a bird,
The lively bird's fate was related to deep water near the beach.
She was eaten by fish,
And sucked by carps,*

7.2f Goddess Hojoor of Mor Mokon, Guobeile Hal

Originally, people of Guobeile Hal had a common ancestral deity. When Mor Mokon began to have its own ancestral goddess, it ceased to worship the original common ancestral god of the *hal*, which continued to be venerated only by Manna Mokon. Mor Mokon's new ancestral goddess was Nainii Taiti Barken. Her origin is as follows: One summer before 1792, a woman, who had married a man of Mor Mokon in Chuorgala Village, visited her parents' home in Mor Village. As she went back to her own home, she was caught in heavy rain, struck by lightning, and died. On hearing this, her mother decided to go see her. But she also was struck by lightning, and died exactly where her daughter had been killed. After these two deaths, successive plagues struck the *mokon*. Many died. Before long, mother and daughter were established as ancestral goddesses. Guo Lurong, Mor Mokon *yadgan* who was in her 60s in 1956, became a *yadgan* in the name of her parents' *hojoor*. Her predecessor was a domestic servant of the *mokon*. Forty years after her death she became the *mokon yadgan*.

According to tales, not all those killed by lightning could become a *mokon hojoor*. In ancient times, only those killed by lightning bolts in winter could. The body of the *hojoor* could become a god or goddess with three different names: The upper part of the body was Kengerdailale Berchuoker, the middle part was Hojoor Keyideng,²⁶ and the lower part was Hojoor Doleboor.

7.2g Bogol Barken

This god was the oldest of the Dagurs. According to a tale, when Dagur moved from the north banks of the Heilongjiang River, this god was their only *barken*. It consisted of many parts. The image was piled up to a height of 35 *chi*. People stopped worshipping it about 50 years ago. This explains why Qiqihar Dagur called it Walan Barken (God of Many Images). The chant for this *barken* is:

*His birthplace is on the Heilongjiang River,
And his ancestral place is on the Huangjiang River.
He screams on the Ji River,
Swims in rivers,
Jumps in gullies,
Wanders in deserts.
He has connections in the Mo River,
And has descended in a towering rage.*

This god was composed of 24 *tege* (seats) arranged as follows:

1. Tribal chiefs
2. Blacksmiths
3. *Laiqin* [eagle figure on *yadgan* hats] lamas
4. *Yadgan* Wuminan Ritual
5. *Yadgan* Wuminan Ritual
6. Fishermen
7. Hunters

²⁶[*Keyideng* signifies an auxiliary god.]

8. Peddlers
9. Three coffins
10. Fox spirits
11. Monsters
12. Grain grinders
13. Infants
14. *Tuoruo*
15. *Wulie* (crows)
16. Cuckoos
17. Two deer²⁷
18. Lizards
19. Aoli Barken
20. Niangniang
21. Nine goddesses
22. Earthworms
23. Two dogs
24. Snakes

All the foregoing were paintings attached to cloth. Keyideng was nine gold-foil figures stuck on a piece of five-color cloth. There were 15 Achang Keyideng, which were paintings of 30 dragon figures. Maluo was wooden Kaltagdii and Koltogdii images. And, there were small images of lizards, snakes, 15 human heads, and paintings of graves and *ayantuoruo* [pillar/stake]. This god was worshipped and sacrificed to at a small temple in every family courtyard. Its spirit could create marital problems. Offerings were a sheep, a goat for Keyideng, a strawman, and a straw bird. The offering for its *ayantuoruo* was a sheep sacrificed at the top of the southeastern corner of the room, where the kitchen range was located. Previously, Hailar Dagur did not worship this god. A tale says that 70-80 years ago (1880s), an Archang Ali man named Qikao was transporting things for hire in an ox cart to Qiqihar. While passing Ermenqin Village, the ox suddenly reared up. This drove Qikao mad. After his companion brought him back home, a *yadgan* danced in trance. He concluded that Bogol Barken was making trouble. Hailar Dagur subsequently began worshipping this god.

7.2h *Jiyaaq Barken*

According to a tale, one day long ago somewhere in Mongol territory, a lamasery cook met a Dagur. He boasted to the Mongol cook about Dagur wealth and livestock abundance. The cook was convinced that this was true, and yearned to go there. At last he managed to escape from his temple. On his way to the Dagur place, he was struck by lightning and died. In time, Dagur established him as Jiyaaq Barken. He was not an evil spirit and did not plague with illness. He was responsible for domestic animals and wealth. All Dagur *hals* and *mokons* worshipped him. His image was a white cloth figure of a male and a female attached to a blue or yellow cloth, which was hung outside the house to be worshipped. A healthy horse (ridden only by males) could be chosen for this god. Sheep were also sacrificed. At the time of the ceremony, houses were cleaned, and butter or sesame oil used to make *jual* (lamps). His sacrifice chant was:

²⁷One male and one female.

*With his birthplace in the inner land,
 He wandered among Mongols,
 Served thousands of lamas as a cook,
 Following Dagur and Suolun,
 On the way to us,
 He saw small clouds gathering above,
 Dark clouds appeared,
 He was struck by five lightning bolts,
 Split by nine lightning bolts altogether.
 Even elms were split by the lightning bolts,
 Fruit trees were felled,
 He walked to our village and wuorkuo,
 And became Jiyaadailale.
 He stands in the west,
 Receives sacrifices of double dragons,
 He sits on the seat of dragons,
 With nine boys leaping around,
 And nine girls and nine girls joyfully dancing about,
 We have established Jiyaq as our ancestral god,
 Who sits in the corner of the west wall,
 He rides a yellow horse.*

Some Hulunbuir Dagur called Jiyaq Barken "Jung" when animals fell ill and invited a *yadgan* to dance in trance to appease this god. This [ritual] was called Dashed (Sacrificing for Jung God). Sick animals were driven past the god image, beseeching protection and riddance of disease. The chant for Jung follows.

*Our grey-haired father,
 And aged mother,
 Bestow upon us many descendants,
 Offer us barrels of milk,
 Give us clever eloquent sons,
 Grant us prolific cattle.*

The Aihui Dagur called it Nuo Barken (God in the Corner), perhaps because its images were hung in the home's northwest corner.

7.2i Hayin

When *bagaqs*, *barxis*, and *zhalies* of a *hal* or *mokon* died, their spirits became wicked. People fashioned their images from roe deer and sheep skin (*hayin*). At offering ceremonies, Chinese mugwort was burned. Incense was not burned. Pigs were killed as sacrifices.

7.2j Aoli Barken (Fairy Fox Spirit)

Aoli Barken was recognized at the end of the Qing Dynasty. It originated in the spirits of the fox and yellow weasel. It was poorly indoctrinated and not recognized by the authorities. All Dagur worshipped this god.²⁸ It was not a *wenguer*. When

²⁸Chinese: Husantaiye.

it manifested itself as an evil spirit, some went mad. It was worshipped in a miniature temple in each family's courtyard. If there was no temple, it was placed in a storehouse which was off limits to women. Offerings were pigs, sheep, chickens, liquor, and fruits.

7.2k Koton Barken or Huaran Barken

Toward the end of the Qing Dynasty, this god's spirit began to be felt in the army camp of Laoliancheng. Later it was worshipped widely in northeast China. It was brought into a Dagur community by a Dagur who had served in the government army. Afterwards, Dagur of all *hals* and *mokons* began worshipping it. It also originated from a fox and was worshipped in the family courtyard. Offerings were swine, sheep, chickens, fruits, and liquor.

7.2l Wuxi Barken

In ancient times a widow gave birth, and, in order to save her reputation, she killed the infant. When its resentful soul met the spirits of a fox and yellow weasel, it immediately became malicious, and brought diseases to many people. Almost all *hals* and *mokons* worshipped it. It was not a *wenguer*. It was worshipped in the family courtyard temple. It brought misfortune mainly to pregnant women and infants. Offerings included swine, chickens, liquor, and fruits. The smaller image on the shrine's left side was the major goddess, the two adults were her parents, and the images on her right side were her midwife and husband.

7.2m Niangniang Barken or Higeewqan and Uqikweeqaa

Three sisters--Yunxiao, Qongxiao, and Bixiao--were killed when fighting Jiangziya [as described] in the *Romance of Granting Titles and Territories to the Nobles*. Later they were all established as goddesses [that is, Niangniang Barken, or Hegeewqan and Uqikweeqaa]. All Dagur worshipped them, for they could control smallpox and children's diseases. They did not exert evil influences on adults. Their images were kept in a niche. Offerings were a pig, chickens, liquor, and fruits and were made when diseases broke out.

7.2n Goddesses of Child Protection or Womie Barken

Womie Barken lived in nine yurts, which had a nine-step stairway. Gold and silver trees of heaven were about the yurts, which were encircled by three layers of walls. Within the walls there was a large cooking pot. Outside the courtyard there were a pair of phoenixes (male and female). Old parents were dressed in long gowns. Children were conceived in nine springs. Fetuses were taken out, and then held in their mothers' arms in front of their ample bosoms and on their backs. They had gold and silver *galoha*. The goddess had large breasts which hung to her sleeve ends and could be tossed over her shoulders. Offerings for this goddess were a white male *wenguer* horse and a sheep. They were made in the hope that she would bestow children and bless children.

7.2o Uginuxi Niangniang

Uginuxi Niangniang was composed of Wusaiwushi Niangniang, nine women who drowned themselves in a river, Achang Niangniang, a male *barxi*, a lame scarlet farm ox, a sheep tied to an *ayantuoruo*, nine snakes, a cave with fox spirits, and forest. A gray horse was sacrificed as *wenguer*. The Keyideng for Niangniang was images of nine persons and two dragons (of gold foil). The Keyideng for Wuhsi Niangniang was images of nine persons (of gold foil) glued on a piece of blue cloth. This goddess protected against disease and calamity.

7.2p Abagardi

Abagardi was a *yadgan*'s god. It had a ferocious bronze face and a black bear-hair beard. It was the spirit of black bears and Wugeli Hadalan, the god in charge of *yadgans*' other deities. After a Wuminan trance dance, *yadgans* summoned all the gods that they controlled around Wugeli Hadalan, and began a blood-eating ritual. A red and black ox was sacrificed as *wenguer* to this god. When a cow was sick with a swollen udder, people sacrificed millet gruel, burned nine holy lamps, and rubbed the cow's swollen udder with bear hide.

7.2q Wenguer Barken or Guarban Ayan (Three Ayans)

Tales have it that long ago there were over 70 families in Doortaletun Village which was situated near the Nuoming River. One day a strange girl in green, who knew powerful magic, came to the village. Villagers thought that she was a demon and invited a lama to read scriptures to subdue her. But the lama died and his spirit combined with that of the girl to cause trouble. Then an Oroqen *yadgan* named Yaleba Wangqin came to suppress the two demons, but he also died and his spirit joined the other two. Afterwards, the village had three combined evil spirits. Villagers gradually died until only seven families remained, who then venerated these spirits. Later, Yaleba Wangqin's spirit became a *wenguer*. Later, a *yadgan* came who could control it.

7.2r Sum Barken

Sum Barken was God of Temples. It was enshrined and worshipped in small family courtyard shrines. It was the spirit of a 1,000-year-old black fox and a 10,000-year-old white fox. It had 12 *tierong* (small white mouse-like animals) and a single-legged *tuoyun* (small black spotted animals). A *yadgan* who controlled this spirit manipulated these small animals. Cattle and ponies were frequently sacrificed to this god.

7.3 Other

7.3a Obo

Worshipping *obos* was a common time-honored custom. A nearby mound or hillock was chosen, a stone mound was made, and a tree was placed in the center. Passers-by dismounted from horses, or got out of carts, and reverently added stones. Later, with the growth of *mokons*, *mokon obos* were constructed. Annual offerings included cattle, sheep, and swine. When Dagur *mokons* grew into larger communities,

village-based *obos* appeared. *Mokons* living in the same communities revered a common *obo*. The purpose of such worship was to bring favorable weather and good returns from crops and livestock. At the *obo* ritual, horse racing, wrestling, neck-power contests,²⁹ and so on were held. Beginning in the Qing Dynasty, the government also participated in *obo* rituals.

On the Waixinganling (Outer Xingan Mountain) patrol route map made prior to the signing of the Aihui Treaty by the investigation group of the Buteha Eight Banners' army, there were many marks indicating *obos*. These were all ones at which the government participated in worship. In the Hailar area, in addition to the Hujiernor Obo worshipped jointly by Dengteke and Manna Mokons, and the Chagan Obo, which was worshipped by Archang Mokon, there were also inter-banner *obos* and banner- and *suomu*-level *obos*. *Obos* set up in *mokon* cemeteries were known as *huayan obo* (cemetery *obos*).

7.3b Bainacha

Forests were controlled by Bainacha. Hunter success and traveler security depended on him. He watched over all birds and beasts. People worshipped him by kowtowing to old strange-looking trees and caves where he resided. When eating outdoors, food and liquor were offered to him. Because he never harmed man, people sometimes called kind people Bainacha.

7.3c River God

During droughts, old women summoned all women to a river. Each brought a chicken to worship River God. Men did not participate except for one or two, who were invited to help. The chickens were killed. Their skins were hung on a wood tripod, the meat was cooked, and an officiating *bagaq*, who knew the [appropriate] chant, prayed for rain. Finally, the chickens were eaten, and then the people splashed water on each other as a symbol of rain.

7.3d Big Dipper

The Big Dipper was called *doloohad*. When children fell ill, seven oil lamps were burned as an offering. People did not kill animals as sacrifices.

7.3e Huole Guoerlong

When people contracted eye diseases, nine oil lamps were lit at night and people kowtowed to the southwest, worshipping Huole Guoerlong. No animals were killed.

7.3f Xieru Dalaile

Nine gold and silver foil figures were glued on a blue cloth [the whole of which] was known as *hayin*. Also affixed to the cloth were figures of the sun and moon, and two small pieces of animal hide with straight hair attached. At the same time, a wooden dragon figure was set up as the image of the god. A dark gray horse or an ashen bullock were considered to be its *wenguer*. It could cure scabies and other skin

²⁹[A long loop is placed around the neck of two men and each tries to pull the other past a line, using only the neck.]

diseases. Sacrifices for Xieru Dalaile were grey-headed sheep.

The above 10 *barkens* were worshipped widely by Dagur. Additionally, there were family gods. Among these deities, Tenger, Huolieli, Hojoor, Huohuor, Bogol, Jiyaag, and Hayin were aboriginal *barkens*. Aoli, Haohao, and Niangniang Barkens were adopted by Dagur religion from other cultures. Additionally, Dagur were influenced by Buddhism. Hailar Dagur were strongly influenced by Tibetan Buddhism as a result of longterm intermingling with Barhu Oriat Mongols. In the past, both Left and Right Wings [wing equivalent to banner] of the Suolun had lamaseries. But the Qing government, to insure a ready supply of conscripts, denied Tibetan Buddhism to the Dagur and Oroqen. Consequently, inhabitants of the Left and Right Wings of the Xinbarhu Mongols invited lamas to care for lamaseries. Every autumn lamas with government-issued identity documents visited these temples to read scriptures. In 1900, the lamasery of the Right Wing was destroyed and never rebuilt. The remaining Left Wing lamasery was what is now Guanghui Temple located in Nantun. It was built in the seventh year of the reign of Emperor Jiaqing (1802).

Hailar Dagur called Buddhas that they worshipped Share [Yellow] Barkens, meaning gods of the Yellow Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. They believed that these deities blessed and protected people, unlike the trouble-making *har barkens*, or gods of the Black Sect, that is, *yadgan* gods. Generally speaking, Dagur were not as devoted to Tibetan Buddhism as were the Mongols.

Finally, under Han cultural influence, some Dagur worshipped Emperor Guan, or Guanyu. In the past, young Dagur [men] were conscripted into the military. They came to believe that Guanyu was a military god who could bless and help them win battles. Consequently, Aihui Dagur built a small wooden Guanyu Temple in each village. On the front wall of each Guanyu Temple there was a picture of Guanyu surrounded by the Dragon King and Niangniang Goddess. Each year on the fifth of the fifth moon, pigs were slaughtered to Guanyu. In the old Aihui Town at the Niangniang temple, on the 18th of the fourth moon, incense was burnt and people kowtowed to Guanyu in the hope of having healthy descendants. Dagur also participated.

7.4 *Yadgans*

7.4a *Divisions*

Dagur *yadgans* may be divided roughly into two groups, *hojoor yadgans* and ordinary *yadgans*. *Hojoor yadgans* were responsible for the *mokons* and *hal hojoor barkens*. *Yadgan* positions were not hereditary, but *yadgans* were required to be *mokon* or *hal* members. A member of one *mokon* could not become a *hojoor yadgan* for another. For example, Manna Mokon had an ancestral god named Ulan Barken in the Buteha area before moving to the Hailar vicinity. Later in Hailar, they had five successive *hojoor yadgans* who all accepted Ulan Barken.

The first generation of *hojoor yadgans* were officially named Aduonuonuo or Gahucha. After one died, he was represented by a blue cloth with an attached leather figure of the deceased *yadgan*. The second generation of *hojoor yadgans* were called Tuoqinga. The third generation were called Yishun, the fourth were known as Naxunxidi, and the fifth were referred to as Wurgaibu. The fifth generation was a person from Mehertu Village of Manna Mokon. After his death in 1930, no other *hojoor yadgans* took his place.

7.4b Mokon Hojoor Origins

The *hojoor barkens* of Dengteke Mokon were known as Buohuoledail and Buohengchuo. After moving to Hailar, Dengteke Mokon had the following four *hojoor yadgans*.

(1) Yige Shangde (senior *shangde*, name unknown). *Yadgans* were dressed like common people at death. Sacrificial objects included beads, heart-protecting brass mirrors, and drums that they had used. A *yadgan* officiated at a ceremony to send off the *tuoruo* (sacred tree). Abiding by the deceased's testament, people either cremated the body or put it in a tree as animal prey. Later, the bones were collected in a pile and covered with stones. An *obo* called a *shangde* was built north of the pile. When a *yadgan* died, people did not say that he had died, rather, they said that he had "gone to *shangde*." His successors sacrificed to the *shangde* once every few years.

(2) Wuqiken Shangde (junior *shangde*, name unknown).

(3) Ding Yadgan (name unknown)

(4) Pingguo from Dengteke Mokon, Nantun, 53-years-old in 1957.

Bosihuqian Mokon's Hojoor Barken was known as Zhuorihan and Zhuolinzhaio. In 1957, the *hojoor yadgan* of this Hailar *mokon* was Lhama (aged 79 years). He was called Lha Yadgan. Alhachang Mokon's last *hojoor yadgan* was named Fulengcheng. He died in the mid-1920s. There were no successors.

An ordinary *yadgan* took a *dodizhugale* (external god) as his deity. For example, during the last years of the Qing Dynasty, Manna Mokon's Fukang took Sum Barken, and Yin Yadgan took Wenguer Barken. After the latter died, her son, Sendengbuku, became a *yadgan*. He was killed by a subordinate of Babuzhaba in 1917. In 1957, Huang Yadgan of Nantun (female, 69-years-old) became a *yadgan* in 1921 and took Sum and Wenguer Barkens as her deities. She became a *yadgan* a few years after she married into Dengteke Village in 1917 and contracted dysentery. Immediately after being cured of the dysentery, she became mad. Sometimes she was sane, sometimes she saw various animals entering her room. Over a 5 year period *yadgans* could not cure her. They reasoned that her insanity indicated that the gods wished her to be a *yadgan*. Finally she agreed, and immediately recovered. In 1921 she took Hojoor Yadgan of Archang Ali as her master and started to become a *yadgan*.

[The following accounts were collected. They explain *mokon hojoor* origins.]

Manna Mokon Hojoor Yadgan

Long ago a Manna Mokon *yadgan* was taken prisoner in battle. Competent in the magic arts, he at last escaped from prison, leaving his clothing behind. He died in a gully on his way back home. His soul became a sparrow and flew back to his hometown of Buteha. The bird slipped into the house through a window, landed on the west *kang*, and related what had happened to the old parents. The sparrow also expressed its desire to be a *hojoor barken*. From then on, Manna Mokon worshipped the bird as a *hojoor*. They designated it Ulan Barken. Its image was composed of nine figures of men, which were made of gold and silver foil attached to a red cloth (*tegelegen*—five golden ones and four silver ones). The first-generation *yadgan* who received Ulan Barken's power was a man. His wife followed as the second generation [*yadgan*]. Both became gods after death. They were called Oke Aqika Barken. Their images were two leather *ain* (figures) glued on blue cloth.

Enen Hal Hojoor Yadgan

Two brothers vanished as Enen Hal made its way from the Heilongjiang River to the Nenjiang River. The elder brother was named Charhan, the younger was Zhuolinzhao. The *hal* vainly searched the woods for the lost brothers. Later, when some *hal* members went hunting in mountains, one suddenly became mad while resting in a shade. He said, "The two lost brothers were killed by lightning and their spirits are becoming *hojoor barken*." Afterwards, Enen Hal worshipped the brothers as *hojoor barken*. Images with two figures were used. Their *wenguer* was Duboqian Kerulole. The *yadgan* who took this *wenguer* was the Enen Hal *hojoor yadgan*.

Dengteke Mokon's Hojoor Yadgan

Dengteke Mokon's ancestor, Behuole dai, took his servant, Bekunchuo, with him when he joined the army. The master was fatally wounded and died during a battle. Before expiring, he spoke of his hatred for war in the form of a poem [presented in a later section]. Bekunchuo later died of disease while marching. Thereafter they were both venerated by the *mokon* as a *hojoor barken*. Dengteke Mokon's *hojoor yadgan* took this *wenguer*.

Mording Hals

[This account was given by] Fulengcheng, *hojoor yadgan* of Archang Ali [who said that], long ago, a grandmother of Mording Hal had seven sons. When they became adults, she vanished. Many years later the seven brothers had numerous descendants who, one by one, began to establish their own households. Later, an old woman appeared and visited every home. Some of the vanished grandmother's descendants recognized her and respectfully offered milk gruel while others ignored her. She caused trouble to befall the latter, who eventually was established as Mording Etuo. Those who recognized her and gave her milk gruel did not worship her, because she did not trouble them. *Yadgans* who took her as a *wenguer* became *hojoor yadgans* for those who worshipped Mording Etuo.

7.4c Yadgan Tales

Gahucha Freezes the River

Soon after Dagur moved into the Hailar region, a person of Manna Mokon bought a domestic servant from Xinbarhu. The servant's name was Aduonuo³⁰. Later he became *hojoor yadgan* of Manna Mokon, and was known as Gahucha (uncle of the storehouse). Unlike other *yadgans*, he had extraordinary abilities. One spring day his master was tending herds on the north banks of the Hailar River. He wanted to cross with his herd, though it seemed impossible. He turned to Gahucha and said, "You are said to have special abilities. I want you to help me drive the herd across the river to the other bank. Can you make the river freeze?" Gahucha replied, "Yes, but the problem is that if I do so, my life will be shortened by 10 years, and you will have fewer descendants." The master disregarded this, and pressed him to invoke his magic. Gahucha had no other choice, donned his magic clothing, and danced. Sure

³⁰[*Aaduo* means herds and *nuonuo* means child. The name suggests "shepherd boy."]

enough, three bends of the Hailar River froze. Gahucha said, "Now you can safely drive the animals across the river."

The Death of Gahucha

Long ago the archives of the Hulunbuir local government were stolen. Finally, the officials invited Gahucha to dance. After requesting 30 armed soldiers Gahucha said, "When I dance, the brass mirror on my back will fall and roll away. I want all of you to chase it." When he danced, his brass mirror dropped and rolled out of the gate of the government court directly toward the rear of a Guanyu Temple, where there were many graves. When the mirror stopped at a grave, Gahucha ordered the 30 soldiers to dig. He said, "No matter what you see, don't be frightened. Kill it with your weapons. If you are in danger, I will help you."

A coffin was dug out which contained many archives, but when they opened the inner cover of the coffin, they discovered a man wearing dark glasses, reading a book. Instead of killing the man, the soldiers fled, leaving their weapons behind. Without help, Gahucha took up a spear and killed the demon. Unfortunately, the demon's blood splashed on a sleeve of his magic clothing. With his deity stained by the demon's blood, he was frequently afflicted with disease and soon died.

Gahucha's Mirrors

Gahucha had two very effective mirrors from Ulaanbaatar. The large one, which he wore on his back, was called *arhan tuoli*. The small one was called *nieker tuoli*. It was his heart-protecting mirror.

After Gahucha died, the heart-protecting mirror was passed to Sokedai Yadgan. He took it with him wherever he went. Every time he went out driving his freight cart to earn money, and then returned from Qiqihar, the heart-protecting mirror rolled back home ahead of him by 2-3 days, informing his family of his imminent return. When a lama living in seclusion at a temple heard about this mirror, he found it so evil that he purchased it for one silver dollar from Sokedai Yadgan. To purge it of evil, the lama put it in a three-layer bag and began chanting. After chanting for 2 days and nights he was exhausted. He touched the bag, found the mirror was still inside, and then put the bag under his head and fell asleep. When he woke up, the mirror had vanished. It had rolled out of the bag and was retrieved by its former owner, whom it had been following before he reached Qiqihar. When Sokedai Yadgan reached Qiqihar, he bought many things with the money given by the lama. While he was passing through the Xingan Mountains on his way home, he met the lama and showed him the mirror. The lama admitted that he had lost much [the mirror and the money]. From then on, the mirror remained in the hands of the Manna Mokon *hojoor yadgan*. To prevent the mirror from rolling away, he wrapped it in women's trousers and, as a result, the mirror lost its effectiveness. This mirror was said to be in the magic robe of the last *hojoor yadgan*, Wurgaibu of Manna Mokon.

Gahucha Chooses a Temple Site

Kuisu and Fanqiabu, ancestors of Manna and Dengteke Mokons, did not return to their ancestral home of Buteha, but settled near a pond 2 kilometers south of Hailar. They planned to build what is now Guanghui Temple at Nantun, and asked Gahucha to choose an auspicious temple location. While Gahucha danced south of Hailar, he

took out a sword, tied it into three knots, and tossed it into the air. The ringing sword flew in the air toward the south, finally landing where the temple was later built. Afterwards, the temple became the divide between Manna Mokon east of the temple, and Dengteke Mokon west of the temple.

Tuqingga

In the 1890s Tuqingga's sister, the *hojoor yadgan* of Manna Mokon, became ill. Many *yadgans* were invited to cure her, but they all failed. Tuqingga refused to care for her. He said that he was at odds with Yikedai Yadgan, a domestic servant of Barhu, of Qijianfang, and did not want to be murdered by him [because he lived near his sister]. His anxious mother said, "Why do you refuse to see her, your own sister, while she is deathly ill?" He then had to go, but before leaving, he said, "This time my magic power will be lessened." Dressed in his magic robe, he and the messenger [who had brought word of his sister's illness] rode off for his sister's home. On the way, his heart-protecting mirror dropped from its leather case and rolled northwest. Though he and his companion tried hard, they failed to catch it. Thus his magic power was somewhat reduced. When he reached his sister's home, he did not dance. He only sacrificed some animals and then hastily departed. His sister gradually recovered.

Two days after he returned home he began to ail. He told his family that he had been hexed by Yikedai and might die that day. He said that after he died, his family should put his magic robe on his corpse and put him, together with his magic drum and drumsticks, on an oxcart and take his corpse to a place in the open air where barking dogs could not be heard. The ox should be unharnessed from the cart and tied to the wheel, and those who had accompanied the cart should go home and wait 3 days. He said that during these 3 days, if he did not wake up, he would *shangde*, but if he did wake up, they should go to his home before he arrived there and put a *suanna* string [string between *yadgans* and their gods] between the door of the house and the courtyard entrance. His clothes were to be hung on the string and scented grass was to be burnt, in front of the house.

After he died, the family acted accordingly. They dressed him in his magic robe, put him on an oxcart, and transported him to a place called Hargana Zhalaga. They unharnessed the ox, tied it to the wheel, and left. On the third day before daybreak, a drum was heard. According to his previous instructions, everything was readied. When the courtyard gate was opened, his family found him dancing near the home. He danced along the *suanna* string three times, took off his magic robe, and changed into the waiting clothing. As he entered the home he said, "A crow has substituted for my body."³¹ Later, a dead crow was found in Hargana Zhalaga. Then he took incense to the Yiming River, burned it, and jumped into the water. When the incense was about half burnt a dead carp 1.5 meters long was suddenly seen floating on the water surface. Tuqingga jumped out of the water and said, "I have moved my bodily corruption onto the carp's body. Now I shall live until I'm 70."

7.4d Training

Longterm illnesses, and especially madness, were signs of becoming a *yadgan*. Such people were regarded as *yadgan* candidates, chosen by gods controlled by the last generation *yadgans*. A sick man could never be cured until he assented to be a

³¹[A crow had died in his place].

yadgan. At the same time, a *yadgan* was invited to come to cure him, which meant that he was inviting an experienced *yadgan* to teach him. When they met they chose a day in spring to learn the sorcerer's dance [so that the aspiring *yadgan*] could grasp the essentials of being a *yadgan*. Learning the dance took at least a winter and a spring. Some learning periods lasted more than 2-3 years. Insane wildness in dancing indicated graduation, for the *wenguer* of the gods was believed to reside in the trainee's body. Every *yadgan* held sacrificial rituals or dances regularly after a certain period of time--Wuminan and Yierding.

7.4e Wuminan

Wuminan was held during the third or fourth moon once every 3 years. It was a grand ceremony for *yadgans* to present gifts to the gods, and pray for blessings and protection from disasters for the *mokon* and the *yadgans*. It was also time for examining *yadgans'* behavior since the previous Wuminan. After careful preparation, a date was fixed and the *ali mokon* and *nimagarte* (patients treated by the *yadgans* who belonged to other *mokons* or *hals*) were informed. In time, people came with gifts, which normally included sheep, liquor, incense, *khadakh* and so on.

An experienced *yadgan* was invited to officiate. The sorcerer's dance was held indoors or near the village where people set up a yurt or *xieling*,³² in which were placed two birch trees called *gelituoruo*.³³ Three wooden bars were tied between the two trees in the shape of a ladder. On three bars were hung brass images of Hojoorayan and Abagardi. Twenty meters south of the *gelituoruo*, a birch was put up which was called *bodituoruo* (outdoor magic tree). Images of Jiyaq, Dailale, and Keyideng were hung on it. The three birches had green branches and leaves, and were cut 2 days before Wuminan. Their bases were not buried, but were attached to a wooden stake called *artemenggegate* (gold and silver stakes). A red cotton *suanna* was put up linking the two *tuoruo*. An iron ring with silk strips of five different colors was put on the *suanna*.

The sorcerer's dance was held in the morning, afternoon, and evening. After each dance, *yadgans* removed their magic clothes, rested, and ate. The invited *yadgan* was called *da yadgan*. He sat on the right side of the indoor *tuoruo* and was responsible for directing the officiating *yadgan*. The officiating *yadgan* sat on the left side of the indoor *tuoruo*. When a dance began, the invited *yadgan* beat the drum and chanted, summoning the gods, one by one. Then the two *yadgans* stood. The officiating *yadgan*, following behind the invited *yadgan*, began dancing around the *tuoruo*, beating drums. Meanwhile, designated spectators beat drums to cheer them, and sang with the dancing *yadgans*. This was done several times. While dancing wildly, the officiating *yadgan* would fall suddenly to the ground. He was attended by spectators, but was allowed to roll around on the ground for some time. This signified the arrival of the gods the *yadgan* had invoked. When the *yadgan* stopped rolling, the descended gods, through the *yadgan*, began explaining their history and status. Spectators who wished to fulfill a vow to the gods, and the sick who desired help, knelt and offered a wooden cup of liquor or milk to the *yadgan*. They told him that they would sacrifice sheep or cattle, and expressed sincere thanks to the gods, or explained their

³²Yurtlike structure with a wheel as its top supported by two cart shafts and a reed mat.

³³*Tuoruo* is a magic tree used by *yadgans* at a grand religious ritual. *Geli* means indoor.

troubles and calamities. Through the officiating *yadgan*, the god told the supplicant how he had helped someone who was troubled before. Finally, the gods told the officiating *yadgan* when he had given a wrong remedy to a sick person, when he was influenced and troubled by other gods and *yadgans*, and how to avoid such difficulties in the future. After this, when the descended gods departed, the officiating and invited *yadgans* continued dancing to see them off, concluding the ceremony.

Whenever inviting gods, sheep or goats were sacrificed. After the sacrifice ritual, they were cooked and eaten by all participants. During the first 2 days of Wuminan, gods were requested to descend and sacrifices were offered.

On the third day of Wuminan, Kure was held. All *mokon* and *nimagarte* participants³⁴ stood together in the open air. Two *yadgans* put a 12 arm span length of leather rope around the crowd, and pulled it tight. They then loosened the rope and measured it. This was done three times. If the length was found to have increased, it signified future population growth. Next, the encircled people looped the rope into three lengths and asked everyone to pass under it. This prevented disease. After Kure, the *yadgans*, one following the other, danced three times from the indoor *tuoruo* to the outdoor *tuoruo*. Then a piece of felt was placed on the ground. Nine wooden cups of milk were put on the felt. This was called *tamgula* and represented sacrifices to gods of heaven and earth of all directions, *obo*, and *luosi* (mountain and river) gods. Then from the indoor *tuoruo* to the outdoor *tuoruo*, the two *yadgans*, with the help of those assembled, rolled on the ground three times, signifying that they had ascended to the third floor of a sacred hall. Finally, they chanted and offered sacrifices.

A blood-eating ritual was held during the night prior to the ceremony's end. During the daytime, a 3-year-old ox was killed and bled. The blood was mixed with milk and milk liquor. Nine sticks of incense and nine pieces of ox lung were also put into the mixture, which was placed in a wooden bowl for the blood-eating ritual. Around midnight, the two officiating *yadgans* began dancing to invite gods to come eat the blood. All lights were extinguished. Two *yadgans* danced constantly in the dark, as spectators sang and beat drums to encourage them. As the gods ate the blood, the *yadgans* imitated the call of the cuckoo, which meant that the spirits had turned into cuckoos to eat the blood. At the same time, the *wenguer* spirits of the officiating *yadgans* were given nine *isel* (lizards), three *mangeldol* (spirits), and 12 *dualen* (life trees) images smeared with ox blood. In this manner, Wuminan ended. The three *tuoruo* trees were buried elsewhere. The officiating *yadgans* gave the horse, silk, and cloth to the invited *da yadgan*. The *dualen* were 12 different animals living on 12 different plants.³⁵

³⁴Pregnant and menstruating women were not allowed to attend.

³⁵[Those we could not identify we give in the Chinese transliteration.]

TABLE 7.1 *Dualen* Trees and Animals

<i>Plant</i>	<i>Animal</i>
Willow	<i>galierte</i>
Poplar	owl
Thick willow	<i>ximuku</i>
Carob	tree mouse
Plum tree	marten
White-trunked red-branched willow	tieshihan
Bush willow	20 crows
Fir tree	10 <i>anggula</i>
White birch	<i>shuomuha</i>
Trifoliate orange	52 millet birds
Elm	cuckoo
Camphor tree	gigantic serpent

7.4f *Yierding*

Wuminan was the *yadgans'* largest and grandest ceremony. In addition, either annually or once every 2 years, *Yierding* was held in the third or fourth moons. It was observed mostly at home, but sometimes it was held in the open air. As in Wuminan, people of the *mokon* and *nimagarte* were informed, and an old experienced *yadgan* was invited to co-officiate or supervise. The ceremony lasted for only 1 day. At the ceremony, willows, rather than birches, were used. Instead of killing an ox for the blood-eating ritual, a 3-year-old sheep was killed for its blood. Fewer sacrifices and gifts were offered than during Wuminan. Liquor, incense, *khadakh*, and cloth were offered. Kure was not held during *Yierding*. Sacrificial sheep were killed and the flesh and viscera boiled. Heads, chest flesh, livers, and kidneys were boiled and offered as official sacrifices. *Yierding yadgan* dancing was divided into four parts. The first invited the officiating *yadgan's wenguer*, the second was for the *yadgan's* god, the third was for all other gods, and the fourth was for blood-eating.

7.4g *Cleansing the Body*

During the first moon, *yadgans* held small-scale sacrificial rites at home for gods. At this time they used sacred water to purify their magic clothing and their bodies. Sometimes sheep were killed, and liquor and fruits were offered. Heart-protecting mirrors and colored pebbles were put in a large pot filled with boiling water (*arshan*). Before the sorcerer's dance ended, *yadgans* first splashed *arshan* over themselves with a pot brush, and then over other participants to prevent diseases and catastrophes.

7.4h *Function and Social Position*

Yadgans were responsible for keeping *mokon* members from misfortune and disaster. One of the major purposes of Wuminan and *Yierding* was to free the *hal* or *mokon* from misfortune, as was the *obo*. Wuminan and *Yierding* were also times to pray for favorable weather, bumper harvests, and healthy animals. To make offerings and give remedies to the diseased was another common religious activity of *yadgans*. The

yadgan felt the pulse to discern what particular spirit was troubling the sufferer. If the determination proved difficult, the *yadgan* divined by washing a roedeer shoulder blade free of any flesh, chanting softly, and placing it over a fire. Resulting cracks showed the direction of the trouble-making spirit. The *yadgan* also tied a large and a small ax together. The *yadgan* repeated the names of all the deities that the family venerated. He raised the axes as he said each. When he came to the name of the troubling deity, the *yadgan* could easily lift the axes. If all this did not help, the *yadgan* turned to his own *wenguer*, which gave him suggestions in his dreams after he burned incense and slept. This was known as *suoluobe*. Once the troubling deity was identified, the *yadgan* sang prayers and made vows to help the sufferer quickly recover. Cattle, swine, or sheep were sacrificed to the deity. Offerings varied, depending on what the particular deity preferred, as was described earlier.

Even though these activities were not guaranteed to cure, people preserved them for a long time. A 1956 social research investigation in Morin Dawaa indicated that many people still regarded *yadgans* as saviors, especially elders and middle-aged people, who remained intensely religious. Some secretly enshrined deities at home. *Yadgans* could not openly be invited to dance. During the course of this research, a Dagur man of 50 asked, "Why don't we ask Chairman Mao to order the pacification of the ghosts and keep us in good health? If we can do that, we won't have to turn to *yadgans* and *bagaqs* for good luck."

Dagur were devoted Shamanists. *Yadgans* received genuine respect and love from society, though they held no positions of privilege. They shared in labor and production, and received no regular payment for curing diseases. Rather, they were given meat, liquor, sheep hides, and clothing from those they helped. No *yadgan* became rich as a *yadgan*. Before 1949, *yadgans* were regarded as indispensable, though few desired to become *yadgans*. Their humble and poor life explains this.

7.4i Garments and Other Magical Implements

All *yadgans* had magical garments, which were called *shamashikai* in Buteha, and *tuowa* in Hailar. Magical drums were also used as implements. Religious garments and magical implements that symbolized various deities and natural objects were protective, and helped *yadgans* wield magical power.

The *magal* (magical hat) had a copper or iron frame with a round copper plate on top. On the plate were two copper six-pronged antlers. Between them stood a copper bird. Inside this framework there was a velvet lining. On both sides of the hat hung two strings, which could be tied under the chin. The small bird on top symbolized the deity the *yadgan* controlled, which was originally believed capable of being transformed into a cuckoo. The number of antler spikes signalled the *yadgan's* seniority. A novice *yadgan* was not entitled to the *magal*. Instead, he wrapped his head in a red cloth when it came time to dance. This went unchanged for 3 years. At the next Wuminan, he was allowed to wear a three-pronged antler hat. After three more Wuminans, he was allowed to wear a six-pronged antler hat. He was then regarded as a *yadgan* who had been *tongda* (recognized) by the deity. *Khadakh* and silk of various colors (67 centimeters long and hanging from the back of the hat) were fastened to the hat symbolizing a rainbow. When a *yadgan* was invited to dance, a silk strip was tied to his hat as a token of gratitude and reward. Accordingly, the more strips of silk in his hat, the higher his seniority. On the front side of the hat a 3 centimeter strip of black silk hid the *yadgan's* eyes.

Jawaa (magic garments) were tanned elk tunics with tight sleeves and waist, and a Chinese-style jacket buttoning down the front. When buttoned, the *yadgan* could

not take long steps. Eight large copper buttons symbolized eight town gates. Sixty small copper mirrors on the first part symbolized town walls and, on the back part, five copper mirrors (four large and one small) were attached. The big ones were protective mirrors. Hanging from the sleeves and the front part were 12 black velvet strips 3.3 centimeters wide and 20 centimeters long. They denoted four limbs and their eight sections. There were 60 copper bells symbolizing wooden city walls on the strips hanging from the front part. The heart-protecting mirror was worn on the shirt. Other magic implements included magic skirts, which had 24 floating stripes and embroidered figures of the moon, sun, and deer under trees. The 24 stripes were arranged in two rows. The upper 12 symbolized the 12 months of the year and the lower 12 symbolized 12 *dualen*. *Dagur yadgans* also used magic drums and magic strings of beads, usually with 108 beads.

The *zhahalt* was a shawl worn on top of the *jawaa* with 360 small shells signifying the days of the year. On either shoulder there was a cloth bird figure (male and female). They were regarded as *yadgan* messengers and were known as *bul-zhaokul*.

The *halbangtu* (magical skirt) was attached to the lower section of the back part of the *jawaa*. It consisted of 24 strips and pieces of cloth and stood for bird tails. The skirt was embroidered with figures of the sun, moon, and deer under trees. Of the 24 strips, the bottom 12 were 60 centimeters in length, and symbolized the 12 months of the year. The other 12 were 30 centimeters long, and symbolized the 12 *dualen*.

The *asalang* was on either side of the *jawaa* in the form of nine thin leather strips, 67 centimeters in length. To the bound part of the strips were tied nine *bujiledais* (iron or copper scoop-handle shapes). Four of them were on the right side, and five were on the left side. When the summoned deity descended during [the *yadgan*'s] trance dancing, the *yadgan* ceased beating his drum. He held the *asalang* as he conversed with the deity.

In constructing the *wengturu* (magical drum), a 3.3 centimeters wide strip of elm, willow, or pine wood was bent into a circle 67 centimeters in diameter. Goat, calf, roe deer, or wolf hide was used. Three iron circles were fixed on the circular frame at three points. Leather strips were fastened for carrying straps. The importance of this magical drum was second only to that of *jawaa*. At times, without the *jawaa*, the drum could help cure illness.

The *jisuru* (drumsticks) were made of rattan and bound with hide. They were wrapped in a fur-bearing animal's leg skin. A hole was drilled for fastening a leather thong.

A total of 108 beads were used. When praying with a *jawaa*, a *yadgan* placed these beads across his shoulders. But a *yadgan* who controlled a *wenguer* used little cymbals, bells, swinging drums, and clubs.

7.5 Other Religious Practitioners

7.5a Otox

*Otox*s represented *Niangniang*. Most were female. They were not restricted to their own *mokon*. One *mokon* might have had two or more *otoxs*. Their magic clothes were simpler than those of *yadgans*'. They were known as *guaalars* (skirts), and featured small silk flags strung together (*delbul*). When smallpox or children's disease broke out, *otoxs* were invited to offer remedies and sacrifices. They also divined the future

by using the Eight Diagrams.³⁶ Their status was less than that of *yadgans*.

7.5b *Barxi*

A *barxi* was a manifestation of Niangniang or Aoli Barken. She had no *mokon* restriction and no magic clothing. She did have 108 chanting beads, and could cure scabies, set broken bones, heal wounds, and so on. She cured by blowing saliva and chanting.

7.5c *Qiyanqi*

Spirits of foxes, wild pheasants, rabbits, raccoons, and badgers searched for a man to be their *erjin* (master). He was called *qiyanqi*. He was a fortune-teller and could perform acupuncture.

7.5d *Bagaq*

A *bagaq* did not have his own god. When *yadgans* danced, he assisted. He could read chants, but could not cure sickness. He could only chant for ill people and hold small-scale sacrificial rituals. There were no female *bagaqs*.

7.5e *Balieqin*

Women wanted to be *balieqins*, especially old women experienced in birthing. A small number of *balieqins* invoked Aoli Barken.

7.5f *Zhalie*

Among Aihui Dagur, there were religious practitioners known as *zhalies*. They were neither *bagaqs* nor *barxis*. They assisted *yadgans*. They had no gods to invoke. When a *yadgan* danced and was possessed, *zhalie* were responsible for communication. Because *zhalie* were familiar with *yadgan* activities, people also invited them when they invited a *yadgan* to cure sickness.

The people mentioned above were not separate from the laboring masses. They received no special treatment. When invited to cure illness, they were well-treated. At sacrificial rites, they were given animal hides or meat.

³⁶[Eight combinations of three whole or broken lines used in divination.]

Oral Literature

Over thousands of years the Dagur created a rich and colorful folk literature and art of various forms, depicting work and life. This chapter is concerned with oral literature. The two chapters that follow it are concerned with recreation and embroidery. They are based on recent social research work among the Dagur, which focused on economic and social organization. It represents a very limited attempt, and is far from covering all that the titles suggest.

8.1 Mythology

Dagur mythology includes human origins and grotesques found in nature.

8.1a Human Origin

In the beginning, God of Heaven made man of earth. That explains why dirt comes off when people rub their sweating bodies. After men were made, they were in a kneeling position. The ground was wet and very cold, which is why men's kneecaps are always cold. Soon after man was made, dark clouds gathered above, suggesting rain. Then God of Heaven immediately tied people to a harrow. In the process, some suffered broken legs and others were blinded. Thus there are lame and blind people in the world today.

8.1b Early Human Life

In early times, the Dagur lived in forests. People were hairy and did not need clothes. Pointed sticks were made to hunt animals and meat was eaten raw. In time, it was learned how to use bows and arrows. It was then possible to hunt more animals. Consequently, more territory was explored. Some even left their communities and migrated to other places. Later, some moved to river valleys and began to eat salt. As time went on, people became less and less hairy and wore animal hides.

8.1c Women Marry Men

In ancient times, a man was normally married to a woman and lived in her home. Gradually, men did not like this arrangement and frequently returned home. This ritual was soon changed, and women were forced to go to the man's home to live when they married. At the start of this system, women, as had men in an earlier time, often returned to stay in their former homes. In order to induce the bride to stay longer in the groom's home, the latter's family had to give her a large chest. The bride was then reluctant to leave the groom's home because she feared losing the chest.

8.1d Gaxina Cave

According to a story by an old man from Hubuqi Village in Morin Dawaa, there was a cave along the upper reaches of the Gan River. It was situated about 250 kilometers from the village, and was on a sheer precipice open to the southwest. It was 30

meters across, and shaped like an arched door. The cave's interior walls were smooth and the floor resembled that of a courtyard. Once a group of Dagur armed with birch bark torches entered the cave. They found the interior covered with moss about 0.3 decimeter in thickness. The cave was 500 meters in length. Inside there were two smaller caves. One led to the west, and one led to the north. The north cave floor was paved with stone steps. Ascending the steps, the cave explorers arrived at an exit. On the upper edge of the opening there was a stone cap shaped like a pot lid. People say that, in the past, an Oroqen hunter followed a roe deer to the cave mouth where he noticed that the stone cap was broken. He quickly entered and saw a dazzling light. Momentarily at a loss, he picked up a stone, took it home, and showed it to his family and relatives. One recognized it as silver. This news spread quickly. A local official then ordered people to search for the cave. They did so, but found that the cave was impenetrable. Then the official ordered a stonemason to open the cave, but though the stonemason tried his best, he could not.

8.1e Cheqire Cave

Cheqire Cave was about 20 kilometers from Gaxina Cave. It was situated along the lower reaches of the Gan River among three mountains surrounded by still more mountains. Inscriptions on the walls appeared to be the Eight Diagrams or incantations. A tale relates that long ago, Sun Wukong³⁷ was observed on this mountain. He often caused disturbances and therefore, was suppressed. This explains why the mountains overlap in this area and why there are crevices. The cave wall inscriptions were incantations against ghosts. They can not be read by mortals.

8.1f Huhad Cliff

Huhad (Man Cliff) was in Hadayang Village. Down the Ninjiang River, two stone figures stood on a mountain top. Long ago, seven fairy maidens descended to the world. Heaven was offended and sent Thunder God to punish them. The maidens were later struck by lightning and died. Two became stone figures, one of whom lost her head. Afterwards, epidemics without remedy began to plague the village. *Yadgans* were asked to pray to the gods, who said that the spirits of the fairy maiden goddesses were responsible. Soon the epidemics ceased.

8.2 Poetry

Dagur poetry falls into two categories--narrative poems and parables. The former were the most popular.

8.2a Uqun (Narrative Poems)

These developed relatively late. They were mostly written in Manchu, and were very popular. At festivals, and during slack work times, they were recited and sung by those who read Manchu. Everyone enjoyed them. Dagur narrative poetry has various themes. Some depict productive activities such as "Fishing and Rafting." Others describe the heroic struggle of the working class against the ruling class as in "Shaolung and Daifu." Some are satirical of feudal society, such as "Refraining from

³⁷[A legendary monkey with magic powers depicted in the novel *Journey to the West*].

Drinking, Sex, and Greediness." Others narrate heroic deeds of Dagur soldiers patrolling frontier borders during the Qing Dynasty. "Erguna and Galbiqui Patrolling" is an example of this type. Still others reflect the prosperity of Dagur fairs in Hulunbuir, such as "Ganjaor Fair." In 1953, 40 narrative poems were collected and published in Morin Dawaa in Manchu. Some were written by the folk and others were written by intellectuals.

Major Dagur poets we identified included Chang Xing (1809-1909) of Hailar, who was an associate commander of the frontier patrol. He wrote "Erguna and Galbiqui Patrolling" and "Bukuguol." Qin Tungpu of Buteha wrote "Idylls," and "Ma Mengqi."

Four-line stanzas, alliteration, symmetry between lines, and the same number of words per line characterize these poems. In Dagur narrative poems, mountains match mountains, flowers match flowers, birds match birds, and animals match animals, resembling Chinese poetry. Poem length varies from one to 100 stanzas with 40-50 being common. The following illustrates a pastoral idyll.

*Time flies like rivers,
Spring has returned and winter has gone,
A man lives in the world,
He rarely lives to be 100,
Life is difficult to manage,
And is hard for both you and me,
As we busily work,
Seasons change before you know.
Spring comes,
Snow melts on the ground,
Dried grass has rotted away,
The land comes to life again.
The sun warms the ground,
Breezes caress our faces,
Warm spring breezes blow,
Bringing life to nature.
We go out to listen,
And hear quails converse,
We look into the distance,
And gain pleasure at heart.
When we come home,
Our parents will say to us:
"Spring has come,
Prepare for plowing and sowing,
Are seeds ready?
Are the cattle fat?
Is hay at hand?
And harness complete?
If these are not ready in advance,
Trouble will ensue,
If we don't work hard,
We will lose the harvest."
These words have weight,
And must be born in mind,
This will be remembered,
And must be realized.*

*Spring plowing begins,
And the plow is in the field,
I work hard in the field,
And furrows a 100 bows long are plowed straight.
As my steps move forward,
Seeds are scattered over the field,
I broadcast seeds evenly,
Ignore tiredness.
We encounter hard places,
Each step is difficult,
Our tiredness is not all,
Even the bull sweats.
In hope of bumper harvest,
Sweat streams down our faces,
If only crops can grow well,
Hardship is forgotten.
Various crops,
Are grown in rotation on large fields,
It is deeply understood that the harder we work,
The more we harvest.
Without crops life stops,
We pray to heaven for blessings,
Spring has been busy,
And finally comes to an end.*

*Days are shortened by early rising and late retiring,
Summer comes to the fields,
Weeds grow tall in fields,
Shading young plants from the sun.
Fields we have cultivated,
Need my weeding before they can grow,
I go to the fields with a hoe,
To clean it of weeds.
Weeds should be dug out by the roots,
Before they grow again,
Weeds grow so close to the young plants,
It is difficult to separate them.
The sun shines on our backs,
Just like a ball of fire,
Though we are dazzled to blindness,
And our minds swim, but we find no shelter.
Beaded sweat on our foreheads,
Flows down our necks to our chests.
Morning dew chills to the bone,
When showers come there is no place to find shelter,
The home road is muddy,
And its stickiness takes more of our time.
Mosquitoes and flies buzz about,
Bloodily stinging our bodies,
Don't despise these little small-eyed insects,
They can follow us till death.*

*Summer hoeing has come to an end despite hardship,
 And is followed by autumn,
 Go to the fields to look,
 And we see an endless sea of crops.
 If they grow well,
 We smile from ear to ear,
 If they are not flourishing,
 Our foreheads' wrinkles deepen.
 It is natural that not every crop,
 Can grow well,
 With sickle in hand we harvest,
 Not minding tiredness.
 One plant, one grain,
 How can it be lost in the field?
 Immersing ourselves in wheat to the waist,
 We bend over and move forward reaping crops.
 We reap the fruit of our labor,
 And exchange it for money,
 The wealthy possess it at last,
 And dispose of our fruit.
 Waist-high oats,
 We reap them by climbing over them,
 When tired and hungry,
 We eat xintel and hage³⁸
 Holding ripe buckwheat in hand,
 And under our arms we cut them,
 For a poor and humble family,
 Buckwheat is the best food.
 Big full millet swings from side to side,
 We reap it well,
 Every time we calculate the harvest of our crops,
 Millet takes the lead.*

*We keep busy harvesting till late autumn,
 While winter draws near,
 Threshing crops,
 We are busy till night.
 Autumn winds' piercing cold,
 Felt in the bones,
 Poor peasants' toil,
 When shall we be rid of it?*

*Busy farm work,
 Can hardly be described in a few words,
 To provide the family with food and clothing,
 Toilsome work we don't mind.
 Our sweat and blood,
 The lords never see,
 The day after threshing,*

³⁸[Baked oats--large particles were called *xintel* and flour was called *hage*.]

*Officials come again asking for rent.
If it is not a poor harvest,
The family easily sees the year through,
But whether the harvest is good or poor,
Is not decided by us.
Even if it is a good harvest,
Falling prices befall us,
How can money-minded merchants,
Understand our endless toil?
They come to the door,
Finding fault after only a few words,
For the sake of living,
We have no choice but to sell cheaply.
Maybe we peasants,
Are foolish and ignorant,
But our country depends on us for everything.
We have worked hard and performed meritorious service.
Only because we are laboring people,
Are we despised from generation to generation.*

8.3b Parables

This second form expressed thoughts and emotions through the medium of stories in an implicit way. They were few in number.

Music

Dagur have both vocal and instrumental music. Vocal music was composed and performed in various ways. The mouth string organ was the major Dagur musical instrument.

9.1 Vocal Music

Dagur developed traditional folksongs of various types, including songs sung while working in the fields, musical dialogues in antiphonal style, and dancing to music with words.

9.1a Zhandal (Work Songs)

Zhandal were sung in forests, the open air, and while driving ox carts. Words were not fixed, but mostly improvised according to the singer's emotions. More often than not, words were not sung, but replaced by sounds like *nayeyao*. The pitch was high, and such songs were melodious and full of trills. This was a special feature of Dagur music. This song type was popular among Dagur of different areas. Dagur living in Manchuria had *zhandals* with distinct local tones. *Zhandals* collected include working folksongs from the Nuoming River, from Nawen, and from Qiqihar. Lyrics were composed by folk artists and the music and lyrics became folksongs. "Sweetheart" is one example we collected:

Sweetheart

*Time flows like water, spring has returned to our hometown;
The vast grassland is again dressed in light green.*

*Warm breezes blow at my face bearing flower fragrances throughout the grassland;
Day lilies across the slope fill my basket before I know it.*

*Swallows fly in pairs and larks converse in song;
My sweetheart, where are you?*

*Standing on the cliffs gazing, a white sail on the river;
My sweetheart, come quickly you dear girl.*

*Waves of water smile at me and two oars become busier;
The kind boat moves quickly toward me.*

*The Nenjiang River is deep and long and the boat is sailing a long voyage;
My sweetheart, aren't you on the boat?*

9.1b Dialogues

Popular musical dialogues primarily depicted industrious Dagur at work. Usually they were sung by a pair of women. They were also performed by many people in turn. Men listened and seldom participated in musical dialogues. The following are two examples:

Katar. What flies away with this sound?
Kangar. What follows this sound?
Katar is a flying pheasant and,
Kangar is a hunting eagle following.

What is fleeing, jumping in a hurry?
What is following immediately behind?
A fleeing rabbit,
And a hound follows behind.

What chirps on the wall?
What stares at it from the foot of the wall?
A sparrow chirps on the wall,
A cat stares at the sparrow.

What is that in a black shirt?
What is in a black sleeveless jacket?
It is a crow in a black shirt,
And it is a magpie in a black sleeveless jacket.

What is that with a red spot on the head?
What is that with a yellow feather on the chest?
It is a red-crowned crane with a red spot on the head,
And it is a golden eagle with a yellow feather on the chest.³⁹

The above depicts Dagur hunting life. The following song illustrates household and farm work.

What crows at dawn?
Who rises with the crowing to cook?
It is a rooster that crows,
And it is the wife who rises with the crowing to cook.

What whizzes in the air?
What swishes on the threshing ground?
It is the breeze whizzing,
And the wooden mill swishing.

What moves around the grinding platform?
What follows behind?
The donkey moves,

³⁹Kangar is the sound of a bell attached to an eagle. Katar is the sound of a flying pheasant.

And the grinding roller follows.

What swishes?

What rustles?

A sieve swishes,

And flour rustles.

9.1c Dance Songs

Women danced as they sang, describing the life of women. Sometimes lyrics were improvised. The following was popular among Butaha Dagur.

Walking into the front room I sing a song,

The song for my husband's brother is a quail song.

Walking out of the room I sing a song,

This song of loneliness is a mandarin song.

Lyrics like these were divided into four-line stanzas. Lines were alliterated.

9.2 Instrumental Music

Although the Dagur did not have sophisticated musical instruments, they did have a special ethnic musical instrument known as the *mokulien* (mouth string organ). It was made of metal, and it had a thin steel piece in the middle. To one side was a bent pointed end. To play it, the lower end was held in the left hand, the upper end was placed in the mouth, and the end of the steel piece was plucked. As the steel piece vibrated, music was produced. The volume was low, and the sound range was narrow--within five degrees. It was a simple musical instrument mostly played by women. One famous performer, Bojoor, from Morin Dawaa, could perform more than 10 different types of music with this instrument and was once invited to Hohhot for a recording.

In the past, people used flutes made from hollow grass. They were fragile when dry, and were soaked in water. Superior to the hollow grass and of greater volume, was the reed flute with five key holes. There were also oat stem flutes. They were fragile and were used by children. Over the last centuries, with the influx of such Han musical instruments as bamboo flutes, traditional Dagur musical instruments of this sort became outmoded, except for the mouth string organ which was still popularly used. Such "alien" instruments as bamboo flutes, vertical bamboo flutes, and four-stringed bowed instruments were popular among Qiqihar Dagur.

9.3 Dance

During Spring Festival and slack farming times, dance enthusiasts gathered to dance in spacious homes. Most dancers were women. *Lurgiel* was a special style that combined dancing and singing. It was a very popular traditional dance among Butaha and Hailar Dagur. It was called *hakumai* in Qiqihar. *Lurgiel* was performed by two persons facing each other while others cheering. Near the climax, others joined in the dancing. It began with singing and, as the mild melodious music and rhythm increased, the steps followed the beats in time. As the steps become faster and wider with the music [building toward the climax], a dancer placed one hand on the waist and the other hand reached out toward her partner. The hands moved in turn,

suggesting fighting. At this moment, a third party might have joined the "weaker" dancer and "confronted" the "stronger" one. They danced as long as they liked, and when they stopped, another pair was invited [to perform]. Dance words and movements came from daily life and production activities. Those depicting hunting were mostly imitations of animal sounds. For example, *geku* and *daqi* were sounds of the crow and cuckoo. *Hama* and *heihei* were cries of bears and wild boars. Dance movements imitated characteristics of birds and animals. Slow steps symbolized birds walking. Bending and jumping combined with face to face confrontation. Biting the shoulders and turning abruptly were imitative of animal fights. Such dances were bold and flowing and depicted a hunting lifestyle. They were popular with Dagur living in various areas, and especially in Butaha. This suggests that this dance type originated early in the Dagur hunting era. Additionally, dances portraying gathering, carrying water, milking, as well as women looking in a mirror and combing [their hair], were performed. Women in Qiqihar performed a bean-picking dance. As a result of long association with other ethnic groups, certain Dagur lost *lurgiel*. For example, Aihui Dagur (in Heilongjiang), as a result of Han Chinese influence, adopted traditional *yangko* (folk dance). Dagur living in the Tacheng area of Xinjiang danced singly and in pairs. Those living in Kunbetun danced *hanchuan*.⁴⁰

⁴⁰[A land boat used as a stage prop in folk performances.]

Recreation

The study of Dagur recreational activities is not well documented. Only these few descriptions are presented.

10.1 *Hanik*

Dagur girls were fond of *haniks*, human figures made of paper and colorfully decorated. Girls were proud of the number of *haniks* they had, which ranged from tens to hundreds. Elegance of shape and color were also important. An ordinary *haniks* game involved two people. It proceeded like Han Chinese children playing "family." To begin, girls built a cardboard "yard" and arranged the *haniks* inside. The *haniks* "visited" each others' "family" and had "weddings." *Haniks* were made by folding a paper into a long cone resembling a body in a tunic. The figure of an old person was made by dressing a cone so that it resembled a figure in a long robe and a mandarin jacket. The head was represented by sticking cardboard on a match or straw and inserting it into the top of the cone body. An ordinary *hanik* was about one-third meter tall. Colors, clothing, and shapes of the heads of the figures varied according to the desired ages and sex.

10.2 *Galoha*

To play *galoha*, an even number of *galohas* was throw into the air, one by one, and caught on the back of the hand. The person who caught the most started the game. He collected all the *galohas* from everyone and threw them into the air, trying to catch them on the back of his hand. If he caught three, he cast one into the air and, at the same time, picked up three from the ground and tried to catch the one in the air. The number he picked up from the ground had to equal the number of *galohas* he caught on the back of his hand. Game participants did this one by one, and the person who caught the most won. *Galoha* was very popular among children who collected *galohas*. In a second form of play, *galohas* were divided between two or more players, and then pooled again. The person who began the game cast the *galohas* on the ground, and then "shot" the two lying in the same direction with a finger. When he shot them, he picked them up. When there were no *galohas* lying in the same direction, it was the next contestant's turn, who cast the *galohas* again and resumed the game. The one who shot the largest number won.

Embroidery

Girls began learning sewing and embroidery at the age of 15 by making shoes and socks. She was held in contempt if she was unskilled at this. Forty to fifty years ago girls prepared many pairs of socks prior to marriage. Sock soles were made firm and durable by stitching with cotton threads using beautiful patterns. Dagur women made marvelous embroidered shoe uppers, tobacco pouches, and pillow cases. The patterns were mostly of flowers, birds and other animals, and beautiful scenes. By the close of the Qing Dynasty, with the influx of Han literature, human figures were major embroidery patterns, including characters from such novels as *Journey to the West*, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*,⁴¹ and *Outlaws of the Marsh*. Flat, glued, lockstitched, connected, and folded were styled of Dagur embroidery.

⁴¹[Wei (220-265), Shu (221-263), and Wu (222-280).]

Part II: Dagur Shamanism

An Introductory Discussion of Dagur Shaman Prayers

Wu Baoliang

This translation has been prepared by Fan Qiqing and Li Xuewei. It is of Wu (1987).

Translation

Shamanism, also known as the Black Faith, is a primary religion of northern Chinese nationalities of the Altaic Language Family. It was undoubtedly historically believed in by Dagur.

The shamanic offering of sacrifices to gods is customarily referred to as "sorcerers' dance in a trance." Prayers sung while dancing are called *yiru* by Dagur. There are over 80 kinds of prayers for each god when a *yadgan* prays. Few have been collected so far. In *An Investigation of Dagur Society and History*, only eight segments of prayers were collected. It is time to save this branch of cultural heritage.

Gods which Dagur enshrine and worship are divided into two categories, gods borrowed from other nationalities and national gods. National gods include Tenger Barken, Fuguole Barken (one from a set of gods), Holier Barken, Hojoor Barken, and Jiyaaq Barken. Only for these gods are there comparatively regular prayers. Aoli Barken, Haodong Barken (City God), and Wuxi Barken (Window God) were borrowed from other ethnic groups and there are generally no prayers for them.

On the basis of contents, Dagur Shamanic prayers may be divided into two groups. One mainly conveys greetings while the other is descriptive.

1.1 Greetings

Greeting prayers were created long ago. Excluding religious content, they have a single focus. Gods are listed first, and are followed by the beauty of a sacrificial beast. This is presented in exalted terms intended to move the god and receive his or her blessing. A part of a prayer follows.

Prayer words for Tenger Barken

*Father God, hear my prayers,
Mother Goddess, please explain the reason;
Princess Goddess in the seat of honor,
Hear with your keen ears;
Official God sitting at the corner,
Observe clearly with your bright eyes.
I'm not praying without reason,
I'm not begging for sympathy without suffering.
Scrupulously abiding by my previous promise,
I bring the sacrifice you need.
The sacrifice is a hog I've raised,
With ears as big as a dustpan,
Eyes as black as chouli,
Bristles like fine hair,*

*Fat five fingers thick.
Its main body,
Lies on both sides of the incense burner table,
Its hind quarters and scapula,
Placed before your eyes.*

1.2 Description

Such prayers are rich in the arrangement of content, and mostly recount a god's misfortunes before he or she was venerated. They also tell of the special treatment he or she later received. In short, they are a generalization and versification of legends of gods' origins. This is the major part of Dagur Shamanic prayers. An example follows.

Prayer for Jiyaq Barken⁴²

*Millions of Mongolians travelling round,
Having once been a lama's cook;
Longing for the place where Dagur Suolun live,
Then on the way, going there,
A piece of dark cloud floating in the sky,
Following it a green gleam of light,
He was hit to swoon by the fifth lightning bolt,
And struck to death by the ninth lightning bolt;
The fifth lightning bolt also struck elms,
And the ninth burned fruit trees.
The spirit floated to Wurikuo Village,
And was established as Jiyaq-Dailale ,
Who receives sacrifices,
With dragons in pairs,
A throne with dragons in pairs,
Dancing by nine boys and dancing by nine girls.*

Dagur Shamanic prayers were created and formed in Dagur clan society over a particular historic period. They are oral folk works. They may be called songs of prayer to the gods, or offering greetings to gods, god-worshipping songs, and god-consoling songs. The purpose for offering greetings to gods is to eliminate disasters and, therefore, they have a strong sense of utility.

Dagur Shamanic prayers have free rhyme. In terms of point of view, they undoubtedly belong to the "folk singing and telling" category. They are a type of singing. Although they do not portray lifelike artistic images and impress people deeply through language art, as do other folk speaking and singing forms, they have unique artistic qualities.

The rich flavor of life and strong religious cast are artistic characteristics of Dagur Shamanic prayers. By primarily offering greetings and description, they display unique Dagur cultural atmosphere. For instance, *choulizi*, *huazi*, and *shouzi* mentioned in the prayers are all unique to Dagur areas. The following is typical of Dagur sacrificing animals.

⁴²[This is a literal translation.]

*Using the blade of killing,
Picking out the muscles from the four feet;
With the diaphragm removed,
And blood smeared on the spear.
Its main skeleton has been placed,
On both sides of the incense burner table;
Its hind quarters and scapula have been placed before your eyes.*

With respect to patterns, the structure of Dagur Shamanic prayers is usually not constrained by rigid order and symmetry of word numbers. Stresses are placed on coherence and intactness of plot. As an example, prayers for Hojoor describe tirelessly and rustically the entire process through which the goddess came to be "worshipped as the mother of the Duboqian Clan and administrator of 10 clans from an ordinary person."⁴³

The first word of each line rhymes in all rhyming Dagur folk literary compositions. Shamanic prayers are melodious when read aloud, though translations cannot capture this. This illustrates that they conform to certain innate rules which make them "naturally rhyme," though they are sung without musical accompaniment.

Employing figures of speech and parallelisms in the course of description is another unique Dagur Shamanic prayer characteristic. For example, the passage describing the sacrificed pig reads: "With ears as big as a dustpan, eyes as black as *chouli*, bristles like fine hair..." This technique renders things [described] more vividly, adds to clarity, and increases artistic appeal.

Dagur Shamanic prayers are often embellished and romantic. This is manifest in describing objects and scenery.

Dagur no written language, thus communal praise has significance. At the same time, Dagur Shamanic prayers are valuable to many scientific fields such as literature, ethnology, history, religion, and folklore. For example, the "Local Cook in Mongolia," "*Mergen* of the Oroqen," and so on mentioned in prayers, will doubtlessly become evidence for studying relationships between nationalities. Another example is that gods embodied in prayers not only consist of Father God, Mother God, but also of Princess God and the Official God. This is a particularly unique custom in religious belief.

The final worthy note is that the formation of Dagur congratulatory words and praises have an original relationship with Dagur prayers. The following is a passage from wedding congratulations and praise.

*Our boy and your girl,
The marriage is made over 1,000 li;⁴⁴
Selecting the bright wedding day,
I bring chaente...⁴⁵
A present for Laoku Huad,
Is a jiroo shuolbur;
With eyes like Venus, wolf ears,
Legs like those of Handege, otter hair...*

⁴³[From the relevant prayer.]

⁴⁴[1 li = 0.5 kilometers.]

⁴⁵Betrothal gifts from the bridegroom to the bride's family.

This passage is very similar to that of prayers for Tenger Barken. Hence, it is easy for us to infer that Dagur congratulations and prayers were created on the basis of Shamanic prayers, and to some extent, are a redevelopment of Shamanic prayers.

A Discussion of Dagur Folk Plastic Art

E. Suritai

This translation has been prepared by Fan Qiqing and Li Xuewei. It is of E. Suritai (1987). We use "plastic" to refer to the art of shaping forms in clay, stone, wood, and so forth.

Translation

Dagur, who have a spoken language, but no written one, have a rich literary art, especially in folk literature. Dagur folk plastic art has pronounced national characteristics, varied forms, and a certain status in the history of the plastic arts in our country [China].

According to collected materials, Dagur folk plastic art includes Shamanistic paintings, embroidery, paper-cuts, toys, carved bones, weaving, clothing and personal ornamentation, civil architecture, and handwriting. The above-mentioned plastic arts are undoubtedly the organic components of Dagur art heritage.

Four points need to be made when examining the development of Dagur folk plastic art. The first is that it has a certain original relationship with other northern nationalities in near ancient times. The second suggests that it has a close relationship with the plastic art of neighboring nationalities over the same time period. The third is that Dagur plastic art has affected the development of the plastic art of nearby nationalities. Finally, Dagur retain unique characteristics and laws of their own nationality from beginning to end that were determined by the surrounding unique natural environment and economic conditions, and ethnic psychology, quality, and aesthetics. It gradually came into being, although we can see that Dagur plastic art has a close relationship to that of other nationalities.

The history of Dagur folk plastic art is very long, but the exact time of its beginning, especially taking into account such problems as its inherent relationships with other ancient Chinese nationalities within the same language family, is the topic of a later study. Presented here is a brief discussion of the development of the folk plastic arts of the Dagur from the mid-16th century.

2.1 Shamanistic Fine Art

Historically, Dagur mainly believed in Shamanism. The present Ewenki, Oroqen, Hezhe, Manchu, and Mongol nationalities once also believed in Shamanism.⁴⁶

For every nationality, religious development influences social structure, the economic base, and ideology. Literary art also has intermediary effects on religious development. As Shamanism spread among Dagur, it also drew support from the effects of such literary art as folk oral literature, folk music, folk dancing, and folk painting. Without these, Shamanism would have lost its power of expression. However, this type of relationship between literary art and religion is merely

⁴⁶The Shamanic fine art of other nationalities is omitted here because the writer mainly discusses the Dagur nationality.

external. An essential distinction is made with religion itself. It is only one kind of artistic form that serves Shamanism. It is not Shamanism itself.

According to the comprehensive survey of the total conditions of north Shamanic art in our country, there are four stages of development.

(1) The early and middle stages of Shamanic fine art of the Oroqen and of the Yakut Tribe of the Ewenki is the first stage of development, namely the primary stage.

(2) The later period of Shamanic fine art of the Tungus Tribe of the Oroqen nationality, and the Hezhe nationality is the second stage, namely the stage of change.

(3) The Shamanic fine art of the Ewenki Suolun Tribe and the Dagur is the third stage, namely the stage of transformation.⁴⁷

(4) Manchu Shamanic fine art is the fourth stage, namely that of decline.

Dagur Shamanic fine art embodies the third stage of northern Shamanic fine art because it mainly has fine artistic characteristics of the transformation stage, except for characteristics of the primary and transitional types of the first and second.

Dagur shamanistic gods consist roughly of intrinsic gods and gods from other ethnic groups. Intrinsic gods are included in the first and second types of Shamanism, which may be regarded as fine art serving this type of gods. It embodies the early type of Dagur Shamanic fine art.

Types of early Dagur Shamanic fine art are woodcuts, color paintings, papercuts, and skincuts. Woodcuts are very simple. The five sense organs and simple posture of the gods are roughly outlined. Color paintings merely give the outline in a single line painted in color in an incisive style. Many god images, in terms of composition, are portrayed in parallel forms. The relationship between the main gods and auxiliary gods is roughly shown. For example, Bogol Barken consists of 24 main gods, and Keyideng, Maluo, and so on, are its auxiliary gods. Such forms as woodcuts and papercuts are used alternately when portraying god images. For example, in the above-mentioned god images, the main gods are color painted images and the images of secondary gods are such types as woodcuts except for goldleaf images. Another example is the 17 types of gods in Holier Barken consisting of 58 living things and articles. Among them there are 15 woodcut god images. The remainder are color-painted images. Hojoor Barken is a cloth-cut image. Jiyaq Barken is depicted with a blue cloth bottom on which continuous images pressed with silverleaf or goldleaf are depicted hand in hand.

It can be seen that the above described Shamanic fine art has more primary characteristics of plastic art, which are closely related to the first and second stages of Shamanic fine art.

Dagur Shamanic fine art taking external gods as subject matter belongs to the latter type of Dagur Shamanic fine art, namely the transitional stage. Aoli Barken, Niangniang Barken, and Kuotong Barken were introduced from the Han nationality and other nationalities inside Shanhaiguan in Hebei Province when Dagur officers and soldiers served in the Qing Dynasty military. During this historic period, Taoist temples, such as Guandi Temple of the Han nationality, appeared in some Dagur regions. Fine artistic forms embodying models of expression of external gods appeared subsequent to the introduction of these gods. The appearance of these new fine artistic forms was caused by the new reformation of Shamanic arts. Various shapes of color-painted images of wooden shrines and ancestral tablets emerged. Painted images changed greatly with regards to what was portrayed in terms of

⁴⁷[After a significant amount of change, "art" has become something else--change leads to transformation.]

composition, line, and color-painting. New fine artistic forms exhibit certain measuring principles for portraying images of gods. They more clearly distinguish between main and secondary gods. Some of the latter are similar to Buddhist images of niche statues found in Chinese Buddhist art, such as seated maid gods with waiters standing by. Curtains are painted above the gods' images. Tables are painted in front of the main gods' images and feature such utensils as bowls, chopsticks, and dishes. This type of expression parallels Chinese coffin chamber frescoes where the grave hosts sit together at banquet tables. The stage of image modelling is mostly of images and clothes of the Dagur nobility. This is quite different from the early stage of Dagur Shamanic fine art. Seen from the shape of figures and clothing, no matter how abstruse these external gods are, they do not break away from the foundation of Dagur religious life in the hands of Dagur religious painters. The only exception is that they re-embody genuine status distinctions in the form of fine arts. In terms of technique, they are smoothly drawn with single lines and painted with water colors. The style resembles traditional Chinese realistic painting. It is characterized by fine brushwork and close attention to detail and has thick broad-stroke colors. Although lacking in terms of the technique of applying color to drawings, lines are smooth, flow easily, and convey forcefulness and beauty. The dull countenance of early stage images is surmounted here. Images are gentle, attractive, and smiling. All these techniques mature in the latter stage.

Dagur Shamanism belongs to the primary religious category. It did not have religious denominations, nor did it codify a religious power that dominated every aspect of Dagur society. Shamans had no monasteries where they were concentrated, nor did they perform in fixed places. They practiced in scattered locations and individually. Thus it was not possible for there to be professional religious painters. They were scattered folk artists who were engaged in the creation of Shamanic fine arts. Improvement in painting technique was limited. They mostly copied their predecessor's works. Their own creations were secondary. Such a method cannot avoid stylization and, of course, it influenced the reformation and development of the artistic styles of Shamanic fine art. Dagur primarily put god images and color-painted images on image shrines and ancestral tablets on room walls. The positions of different gods varied from one god to another. Later, some families put god images behind vegetable gardens in a small building which resembled a wood-structured attic. The maximum number of such buildings where deity images were kept was ten. The minimum number was three to four. From an artistic standpoint of art, I feel that these buildings significantly display shamanic fine art.

In addition to the fine art that serves Shamanism, a milk cow god named Zhuoli Barken is similar to the Hunting God of the Hezhe nationality. The appearance of this god mirrors Dagur desire to beseech the milk cow god to insure more milk, and bless milk cows and their calves. Generally, milk cows and milk, a woman milking, and two gods—a male and female—sitting at a table on which food was set, were depicted. Such paintings were primarily painted on cloth or boards, and the technique was to draw single lines and paint with colors. Paintings depicting this type of god exhibit folk custom painting characteristics mirroring one aspect of Dagur life.

In all, the forms of Dagur fine Shamanic art have undergone a long historical process and have, undoubtedly, experienced certain improvements.

2.2 Folk Embroidery Art

Folk embroidery art has a comparatively long history, beginning perhaps in the Qing Dynasty. Folk embroidery art developed rapidly in the Qing Dynasty, probably because feudalization of Dagur society accelerated after the entire country was united under the Qing Dynasty. The moral principles of Chinese feudal society, especially the three obediences⁴⁸ and the four virtues,⁴⁹ profoundly influenced moral attitudes. In families dominated by feudal society, mothers asked daughters to learn sewing and embroidery, and stressed the value of being gentle and submissive. Custom required that when girls married, they were required to embroidered articles to the wedding that featured various designs such as tobacco pouches and pillows. Women at the wedding evaluated them on the basis of structure, design, color, and stitching. The bride was evaluated on the basis of her embroidery skill. This helped develop embroidery art.

Communication between all nationalities, especially influences from embroidery art of the Han and Manchu, exerted a profound influence, by encouraging and influencing Dagur embroidery art.

Economic development in every field provided for development of cultural and artistic undertakings with certain material prerequisites.

Dagur folk embroidery art techniques include smooth embroidery, applique embroidery, lockswitch embroidery, knot embroidery, and folded embroidery. Fold embroidery⁵⁰ was of a comparatively high level. It displayed a sense of the quality of the images and subjects with intensity. Dagur employed embroidery in subjects such as small tobacco pouches, insteps (including annexes of the upper part of shoes), sleeves, and the open fronts of garments. On gloves, pillow tops, cradles, handkerchiefs, and scarves, embroidery was employed as artistic decoration.

Embroidery styles may be put into four categories: The first is one of symmetrical and radiating lines, which then take many clouds of twisting lines with geometric lines as the dominating motif. The second is natural lines. Examples of the latter include lines of grass and flowers. These include peonies, lotuses, plum blossoms, orchids, bamboo, chrysanthemums, apricot blossoms, peach blossoms, *dazixiang*,⁵¹ and many kinds of water plants. Animal embroidery features birds, beasts, dragons, phoenixes, Chinese unicorns, horses, sika deer, red-crowned cranes, wild geese, golden pheasants, ducks, butterflies, fish, and insects as the main motifs. Others include hills, stones, trees, small bridges, running water, pavilions, attics, floating clouds, rainbows, and rosy clouds.

The third is mainly lines signifying luck, and the hope that one's wishes will come true. These include designs of good fortune, wealth, longevity, and word designs.⁵² The latter is a design for stories about people, which is mostly embroidered on pillow covers and small tobacco pouches. Story sources are predominantly classical Han and

⁴⁸[To the father before marriage, to the husband after marriage, and to the son upon the death of the husband.]

⁴⁹[Morality, proper speech, modest manner, and diligent works.]

⁵⁰Colored silks and satins are folded into various images and subject matter, and then main seams are embroidered, for example, petaled flowers are folded and the stamen is embroidered.

⁵¹[Meaning unknown.]

⁵²[Chinese characters for "longevity" and "10,000."]

Manchu literary works. Folk stories are from Dagur sources. For instance, certain story plots from *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, *Xiangji (Notes on the Western Wing)* *Xue Ren Gui Dong Zheng (The Eastern Expedition of Xue Ren Rengui)*, *Erdumei (Erdü Plum Blossom)*, and *Dream of Red Mansions* are embroidery subject matter. It can be said that the embroidery designs on each pillow top and each small tobacco pouch, are a story. In terms of Dagur folk embroidery art, embroidery using stories as material accounts for a large proportion. Why are the story plots in these literary works mirrored in Dagur folk embroidery art? The main reason is that many Dagur had a good command of Manchu during the Qing Dynasty. Using a story-telling form and the Dagur language, they popularized the story plots in the above-mentioned classical works in the Manchu language translation.

Dagur folk embroidery art has its own characteristics. Firstly, the technique of intense contrast is mostly employed in tone. For example, pillow top embroidery mainly takes white as the bottom, while shoe insteps are dark blue, dark violet, and dark green. The embroidered part of small tobacco pouches are mostly white-bottomed. Colors in sharp contrast are employed as intermediary colors when these bottoms are embroidered. Although the intermediary colors are complex, intense, and varied, they still have the mediating effect of insuring that the colors of embroidered artistic works are not a jumble of colors, but that the colors are vivid, bright-colored, and beautiful. This is accomplished because of the large area of white, black, or other dark-colored bottoms. In embroidery featuring stories concerning people as the theme, character images are succinct. Their motive force is colossal. Owing to the composition of one dimensional form with scattered (discreet) locations, and the stylistic characteristics of traditional Chinese painting, there are all sorts of things one would expect to find in small-size embroidery, such as distant mountains and near trees. Portrayal of character images is not so painstaking. Expressions lack personality. Nevertheless, these factors do not affect the artistic effects of the embroidery tableau. They still appear as complete compositions, rich in tableau, and full of vitality. In terms of portraying hills, stones, flowers, grass, and trees, the technique of deformed exaggeration is exercised. While embroidering articles, the method is usually to fold into shapes and then, lastly, adding more color with the method of geometric smooth-embroidery. This expressive technique method is approximately like that of formalistic paintings. Geometric colored areas are not large, hence they do not destroy the entire effect, and, on the other hand, accentuate emotion, light, and quality. From this point, it cannot be said that Dagur embroidery art lacks national characteristics.

Manchu and Han embroidery art greatly influenced that of the Dagur. Some argue that every nationality accepts the culture and art of other nationalities. First of all, only when there is something in their cultures and arts that accord with, and are close to the content or forms of folk customs and emotions of the native nationality, can they be accepted and have substantiating and enriching effects on the culture and art of this nationality, and be changed into their own in the process of acceptance. It is such a process that the development of Dagur folk embroidery art has experienced. In absorbing the embroidery art of other nationalities, it was gradually digested and turned into one of the components of the traditional aesthetics of the native nationality. This substantiated and improves Dagur embroidery art. It formed embroidery art which is not only similar to that of the Han and Manchu nationalities, but also has its own notable characteristics.

2.3 Folk Paper-cut Art

Dagur folk paper-cut art is not as rich and varied as that of the Han. It mostly employs such forms as many ring chains, symmetry, and radiation, which take twisted cloud-like lines as the main. This kind of paper-cut is chiefly used as a base in embroidered work, and in plastic works in birch bark container images. Sometimes it is used as decorating designs at the outside of ceiling draughts, which display stylistic characteristics of boldness and lack of restraint. Paper-cuts are done by first folding square paper into forms of four, six, or eight angles, and then cutting. Ensuing paper-cuts are unbroken and thought provoking. There are also paper-cuts of flowers, grass, and trees which are artistically bold and graceful. Unfortunately, paper-cut art has not become an independent viewing and admiring one on the part of the Dagur.

2.4 Plastic Art of Birch Bark Containers

North China nationalities have made birch bark containers since ancient times. Archaeological excavations suggest that the Xianpi, Qidan, and Nuzhen used birch bark containers. Modern nationalities such as the Oroqen, Ewenki, and Hezhe did so at times. Dagur birch bark containers have their own ornamental style as compared with those of the Oroqen and Ewenki, in terms of construction method, modelling, and types. Birch bark has tenacity and elasticity, and has the advantages of being waterproof, dampproof, saltproof, acidproof, portable, and sturdy. Birch bark containers used by modern Dagur are mainly boxes, buckets, baskets, and cases. They have no birch bark bowls, boats, cradles and deer whistles, as do the Ewenki. This difference precisely mirrors the different economic lifestyle of the two nationalities. With regards to plastic art, the method of pressing interlocked sawteeth together is a striking characteristic, as is stitching joints of tube-shaped round containers. While a small birch bark basket is being made, the top is first closed, and then bent back along the edge. The cover-handle for carrying is made of willow wood. This is a unique characteristic.

While decorating birch bark containers, Dagur employ such techniques as color-painting, flower-cuts, point-pricking, flower presses, flower-gilt and colored cloth hollowed out and inlaid.⁵³ Sometimes they are used separately. For example, when certain decorative patterns are pressed, more point-pricking decorative patterns are added in order to achieve better artistic effects. Ornamentation with hollowed-out and inlaid color cloth is especially exquisite.

Decorative patterns have such forms as round circles, twisting-line clouds, *baoxiang*⁵⁴ blossoms, and geometric patterns and also, propitious [Chinese] characters such as "longevity." Sometimes there are patterns for decorating animals and human characters. It can be said that Dagur ornamental styles and other techniques of birch bark containers take the premier position among the northern nationalities employing birch bark containers.

⁵³[We are unable to explain "colored cloth hollowed out and inlaid."]

⁵⁴[Meaning unknown.]

2.5 Folk Toys

Hanik is the main Dagur folk toy. It is a toy mainly played with by girls. It is made by first folding paper, cutting it into models and lastly, painting it. The way of playing is like that of Han girls playing *jiajia*, a game related to household work. Each Dagur girl had a minimum of dozens and a maximum of hundreds of *hanik*. *Hanik* are varied, images are different, and the colors are beautiful. Sometimes there are characters riding saddled horses. To make *hanik*, first fold a piece of paper into a thin, long and circular tube in the shape of an isosceles triangle resembling a robe, then cut another piece of paper into a pair of double short-robe-shaped coats. Put them on the round tube shaped like an isosceles triangle after the cut paper has been glued together. Then cut another piece of folded paper into a symmetrical head image, open it after it has been cut, glue a short stick at the back, put it into the small opening at the top of the tube with an ornamental cap on top, and lastly, paint the five sense organs and all sorts of ornaments on the "clothing." The sizes of this type of *hanik* are not all the same, some are several *cun*⁵⁵ and some are several *chi* in height. They can be made to stand while playing and folded when not in use. There is also a unique *hanik* that has a head made of a complete egg shell. With the five sense organs painted in color, the image is vivid and the shape is unique. Other Chinese nationalities do not have folk toys with such a unique style.

2.6 The Art of Bone-etching

Overall, Dagur folk bone-etching art is not developed. The main one is the bone-etched ornamental art done on pipe stems. In making such bone-etched crafts the shank bone (mainly that of roe deer) is filed, and then sawed into small-sized round-shaped pieces. These are sawed into rings, some of which are dyed black while others remain white. They are then arranged in alternating black and white rings on the stem and attached to the pipe (white bone) bowl, which is subsequently inlaid with double-layered round designs and star designs of white and black bones. The round bone rings which form the pipe stem not only add to a sense of harmony, but also makes the modelling of the pipe bowl appear unique, graceful, and harmonious.

2.7 The Art of Handwriting

Although the Dagur have no national written language, they have their own art of handwriting. In order to stay in step with the times of each historic period, the Dagur have learned and used written languages of the Manchu, Mongolian, and Han. Their employment has promoted development of the Dagur economy and culture and provided an art of handwriting. In terms of Dagur handwriting types, there is (the use of the) writing brush, fingers, and bamboo pieces. With regards to handwriting styles, there are three forms in the Manchu language which are executed swiftly and with strokes flowing together. These are cursive hand rendered small, cursive hand rendered large, and regular script. There are also regular script, cursive hand, and official script,⁵⁶ simplified from *xiaozhuan* in the Mongolian language. In Chinese, there are regular script, cursive hand, and official script.

⁵⁵[1 *cun* = 0.1 *chi*. 1 *chi* = 1/3 meters.]

⁵⁶[A style of calligraphy current in the Han Dynasty (206BC-AD220).]

Many outstanding Dagur handwriting artists have emerged in the last centuries. For example, Mr. Mengxishen from Morin Dawaa was a famous handwriter of the old generation. He excelled in cursive hand and official script.

2.8 The Art of Civil Architecture

Dagur architectural art is mainly employed in civil architecture. The main body of a building faces north, and usually is divided into two or three rooms. Outside the two rooms there is a kitchen. There is a pool-shaped *kang* used for drying grain, and sometimes for people to sleep on after being covered with flat plates. There are three *kangs* in the inner room. They face south, west, and north and resemble a hoof. In the south wall, there are two or three wood-frame windows, which are mostly arranged in vertical crossbars and horizontal squares. There are also windows in the west wall. It can be seen from these arrangements and structures that the civil Dagur architects emphasize the effects of light supplementation and ventilation. In families with more people, the eastern wing room is built to live in. The storeroom is usually set up in the west. Thus, the U-shaped structure appears again in the courtyard.

The Dagur storeroom is not only unique among northern civil buildings, but also, it is based on certain scientific ideas. The wooden base plate of this kind of wood-structured storeroom is 3 *chi* high. It is waterproof and is well ventilated. There is a wood balcony in front of the storeroom, which is used for drying things in the sun and for storage. The four sides are joined by tongue-and-groove construction, pressing, and inlaying with nails. The Dagur roof is of an inverted "v" shape and is covered with a woven willow net. Straw is placed on top. Thatching is done by putting straw from bottom to top and pressing it. When the ridge is reached, the thatch is tied in a knot, and then a large inverted "v" shaped general frame is applied to one room and, in addition, on the ridge. Tens of small frames are also employed. All the frames are connected. The Dagur courtyard is divided into inner and outer sectors. The outer courtyard usually has piles of faggots and straw, a stable, and a cowshed. A neat passageway connects it to the inner courtyard. A division between inner and outer courtyards maintains a distance between the living area and animal sheds. The weaving of the fence circling the courtyard also has national characteristics. The extrusively woven willow fence is like a many-petaled patterned ornament. The poles buried in the middle are barely visible.

Dagur architecture has certain characteristics that mirror the backwardness and independence of a small-scale peasant economy. Conversely, it manifests the fact that the degree of feudalization of its social structure was not deep. That is, it still retains traces of clan communes. In all, Dagur architecture belongs to the category of Chinese civil architecture.

Dagur also have plastic arts of weaving and transporting tools. But they shall be omitted here.

To sum up all the above, many types of Dagur plastic art cannot be separated from the economic base, consciousness, moral attitudes, and artistic philosophy during early feudal society. It has been substantially developed. It has certain national characteristics dating from the Qing Dynasty. This is the reference point for redevelopment of Dagur plastic art.

There inevitably is much one-sidedness and even some mistakes in this article. The writer is at the beginning stage of research and also, the source materials employed are mainly from Morin Dawaa. I hope that this one-sidedness and the mistakes will be pointed out.

Part III: Folktales⁵⁷

⁵⁷[We are aware of Bender and Su Huana (1984). We have tried to not duplicate their tales in this collection.]

Collection

Sayintana

This translation of Sayintana (198?) has been prepared by Li Xuewei.

Translation

From January to June of 1983, with the help and concern of the college and local leaders, I went to where Dagur tribes live for half a year to complete the work of folktale investigation and collection. Because it was the first time for me to do this work, and because of poor conditions, I felt that I would be unsuccessful. I have many more things to tell, but I can't express them in my stories. These Dagur stories I collected are only a small part of the whole. I do not suggest that these are all Dagur folktales, they are only a small part. Though I heard some Dagur stories in my childhood, they were heard for joy, and that was a very different experience than that received in the course of this collection. The place I went to was my home place, which I had left for many years. I was much impressed there with the warm hospitality provided by my old friends, and the trust of teachers who had taught me in my childhood. I felt excited when I saw my old school, and I also received much support from the local people. But the stories that I collected, which are so interesting and colorful, excited me the most. It was as though I was swimming in the sea of this great nationality's culture. This both stimulated and surprised me. If I had had thousands of rolls of film, I would have used them to take pictures of the things I saw. If I had had thousands of tapes, I would have recorded what I heard. I wish I could plant them in the forest of our Chinese culture forever, and put them in every person's mind forever.

Dagur Folktales is the third such collection. The first was published by Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House in 1979. It was edited by comrade Men Zhidong and was titled *Selection of Dagur Folktales*. The second was published by Inner Mongolia People's Press in 1981. It is *Collection of Dagur Folktales*, and was edited by Husile and Xueyin. I was able to collect and translate stories with the support of the college, local officers, and Inner Mongolia Nationality Research Institute.

In this book, I have included 89 Dagur stories and folk legends.

1. I collected, translated, and edited 87 stories. The material was collected through recordings and taking notes.

2. Two stories were published in magazines. One is "General Sa's Big Gun," which was collected by Batubaoyin. The other is "The Wind Blew Bukui Away," which was collected by Suishujin. When I was collecting, I heard these two stories from Sayier and recorded them. But I later found that the two already published were very good, and I chose them without hesitation.

3. "Nisang Shaman"⁵⁸ was provided by my teacher, Mr. Dadarongga, who translated it from Manchu. When I was collecting folktales, I heard this story from

⁵⁸[For other collections of "Nisang" see Stary (1985) and Nowak and Durrant (1977). The version given in this collection by Sayintana differs somewhat from the two just cited, especially the conclusion.]

Qiker and Jin Guide. I made a few changes according to what these two tellers told me.

When I started my collecting work, I worried that I did not know how to do it well, so how could this work be started? I visited Professor Wu Binan at Liaoning University in January of 1983. He taught and earnestly guided me, and gave me a dazzle of materials that he had recorded. Among these was the preface of *The Jindeshan Folktales*, and he also described the favorable experiences of Mr. Pei Yongzheng when he was making his collection. Later, I benefitted much from these valuable experiences.

I arrived at the place where I was to collect and inquired as to where tellers lived. The first folktale teller I wanted to find was Yihe, but I was too late for she had died a year earlier. However, I did find her daughter and listened to some of her stories. Unfortunately, she couldn't remember many stories clearly. Then I went to Tengke Commune in Morin Dawaa and found another teller, Qiker.

He spent 13 days to tell me the 120 stories he knew. I took much of the old man's spirit and time. I wanted to publish a special collection of his stories, for I believed that many of his stories should be collected as scientific materials. Thinking it would not be easy to publish another book, I only selected 50 of his stories for inclusion in my collection. In short, Qiker's stories constitute a main part of this book.

When I was translating and collecting the materials for this book, I followed the principal of removing the artificial and wrong, and choosing the cream. Most of the stories I selected are rich and healthy in content, of an educational nature, and characteristic of this ethnic group. Secondly, I emphasized literary and scientific value. I emphasized the literary significance of the folktales.

When translating and editing these stories, I abided by the rule "record factually and edit carefully." I've never dared to change even a little or polish the style. I did my best to retain the original style.

I also selected stories of different types so as to provide more materials.

Here I take this opportunity to express great thanks to relevant comrades and leaders who rendered help, especially Professor Zheng Jinwen who is over 80. He greatly supported me. Professor Nabinam from Liaoning University also gave much assistance. I shall never forget their help. Also, certain other comrades provided valuable suggestions during my translation and collection. I thank them here.

Lastly, I sincerely want to express my thanks to the tellers, and such local government offices as Morin Dawaa, Inner Mongolia Nationality Institute, and the Publishing House which helped to publish this book.

Hohhot, August 1985

Introduction

Sayintana

This translation has been prepared by Li Xuewei. It is taken from: Sayintana (198?). The folktales that follow were taken from this collection, with the exception of those collected by Shelear.

Translation

Our country has many ethnic groups. Each has created its own colorful culture over a long period of historical development. Brave and hard working Dagur are engaged in the work of developing and utilizing border areas and unifying the motherland. They have created a splendid literature and art out of their accumulated knowledge.

For many historical reasons Dagur do not have a written system. Their literature is transmitted orally. Before 1949, the government denigrated the minorities. Consequently, their literature was discriminated against. It was excluded from the history of Chinese literature. After 1949, the Dagur had a new life and there was rapid growth in their literature.

After 1949, and especially in recent years, the folk literatures of Inner Mongolia have made much progress as a result of the government attaching great importance to them. The rich and beautiful Dagur myths, folklore, and stories have become a bright element of Chinese literature.

There are 89 selections in this book.⁵⁹ All are interesting, with not only deep meaning, but also with strong folk features. These stories realistically portray the Dagur's long period of poverty and aspirations. They vividly depict national heroes much respected by the Dagur, and may be read for pleasure and encouragement. From these selections, we may further appreciate the spiritual wealth of our great motherland. They illustrate that the Dagur have been working to enrich Chinese culture. Dagur folk stories are a part of China's cultural treasure, a fragrant flower blooming on the Xingan Mountains.

Now, I'll comment about this book, and about Dagur features I noted as I collected, translated [Dagur to Chinese], and edited this book.

1.1

One national feature reflected in Dagur folktales is the deeply rooted nature of ethnic religious belief. Religion is the most important feature of Dagur folktales. These stories all have primeval content because they are closely related to society and history.

Shamanism is a primeval religion dependent on hunting, fishing, and sorcery. Central to Shamanism is that everything is endowed with a spirit. Shamanism is a superstructure and ideology based on a primitive economy. It is related to primeval Dagur hunting and fishing production. It also illustrates the Dagur interpretation of

⁵⁹[Only a portion of the 89 tales were selected for translation and inclusion in the following collection.]

reality.

In terms of social development, during different stages of culture in the BC period, especially before the primitive stages, every race had similar ways of gathering, fishing, and hunting. There were thus some commonalities in Shamanisms among races north of the Yellow River, the sorcery of the Central Plains, and primeval religions of the southern races. However, at the primitive stages, economic production differed. The Central Plains were fertile and the weather was hot. Consequently, primitive agriculture began there and primeval religions developed dependent on agriculture. Meanwhile, the Altaic tribes north of the Yellow River lived on prairies and in forests. The climate was cold, Shamanism was retained, and religious differences emerged between south and north. The cultures of the south and north also differed.

Dagur lived in Heilongjiang Valley, and rarely contacted other people. Retaining a clan system of tribal communities, their religion was primeval and stable. When moving from south Heilongjiang to the Nenjiang drainage area, Shamanism was retained. At this time, however, other religions lashed out against Shamanism, but it still was independent and complete. It permeated production, society, traditions, folk literature, and art. Dagur folk stories are rife with Shamanistic features, giving Dagur folktales a distinctive style.

The following is a discussion of certain aspects of Shamanistic worship. In Dagur stories there is much worship of nature. Worship of the sky and animals is particularly prominent. Dagur ancestors were similar to other people in their veneration of the eternal sky. The immortal sky was supreme, and it was referred to as Tenger. This mental view emerged under conditions of low productivity. Dagur explored history, and believed themselves to be descendants of a hunter and the sky's daughter. Tenger controlled and dominated tribal life.

A two-stage development may be seen in the concept of the immortal sky. The first was the plain worship of nature. Long ago man could neither control nor comprehend nature. Man was not independent of natural forces, thus nature worship began. The supernatural engendered feelings of mystery and fear giving rise to nature worship. For example, "Origin of Snow and Rain" relates how Tenger first freely offered oil and flour to man, but then stopped because the people were wasteful. Afterwards he sent only rain and snow groundward. People believed Tenger controlled rain and snow. This also reflects Dagur ancestors' worship of nature.

During the second stage of tribal communities, man envisioned the sky in a way that was influenced by mode of life. Tenger was divided into Father Sky, Mother Sky, and Princess Sky. Many stories reflect this. For example, "Dainiwuyin and the Hero" relates how Dagur descended from two female immortals and two hunters. As Kesiven⁶⁰ indicated in *Outline of Primeval Culture*: "In myths reflecting matriarchy, the totem is created as a grandmother. These myths also tell that the grandmother had a son and a daughter, who became the first couple. Myths reflecting patriarchy have two brothers, instead of the brother and sister. The brothers are heroic twins who create culture. The concept of a brother and sister, or two brothers, reflects early social community."

This is precisely the case in the above-mentioned stories. Tenger was the immortal sky of clan society. For example, "The Deity Defeats the Monster" relates how a monster invaded a hunting place. He monopolized the animals, and injured the hero who hunted there. The deity grew angry and defeated the monster, recovering the lost territory. Subsequently, Dagur could hunt, and led a safe and rich life. In these

⁶⁰[A transliteration of Russian??]

stories, the ancient Dagur explore their history and contacted Tenger's daughter, Dainiwuyin. When yearning for a rich and safe life, they beseeched Tenger. This illustrates how sky worship is very important in Shamanism, and shows features of Dagur nature worship.

Dagur ancestors also worshipped such fierce animals as the bear, snake, bird, hawk, and tiger. The story "Younger Brother and the Tiger" tells how the tiger protected a small boy, and then brought him many valuable animals and helped him return home. In "Zhaosi Mergen and Zhanglihuakatuo," the name of an old man was "Bear," and an old woman was named "She Bear." These reflect animal worship.

Dagur folklore also includes worship of Wenguer. Altaic Shamanism refers to the deity Wengong. Dagur refer to it as Wenguer.

There are three elements to Wenguer worship. Wenguer animals include the hawk, bear, tiger, wolf, antelope, and horse. In "De Mergen and Qinihuakatuo," the Deity of Qinihuakatuo included two leopards, a white snake, a black snake, a deer, and two gold peacocks. The Deity of Meihuakatuo included two fallow deer, a goat with a single horn, two grouse, and two flying snakes.

Wenguer plants involved the worship of trees such as the pine, plum, and willow. "The Tree and the Young Hunter" tells how a young hunter in the wilderness slept by a large elm. He suddenly heard a small poplar ask the elm to cure its mother, but the elm didn't go because it felt responsible for the hunter. We know ancient Dagur lived in mountains and forests, and were in intimate contact with animals and trees. This led to a respect of plants, especially trees, which is a feature of forest culture.

The hero and ancestor Wenguer are other features of ancient Shamanism. Ancestors were much respected, considered brave, and were regarded as deities. This attitude deepened, thus Dagur folk literature came to be filled with heroism.

Dagur folklore includes soul and ancestral hero worship. The beliefs that all things have spirits and that souls never perish are basic to Shamanism. Though ancestors may die, they continue to live in another world. They must be enshrined and their souls worshipped. The soul was divided into three parts--the immortal soul, the temporary soul, and the revived soul. The tale "Origin of the *Taitichuchu* Bird" describes a baby that died from starvation and then became a *taitichuchu* bird. "Mother's Heart" and "The Rich Man Becomes a Calf" illustrate this as well.

Immortal souls are souls of ancestors, those that made contribution to their tribes, and souls of famous shamans. Dagur believe these immortal souls exist with living people, and protect descendants and tribesmen.

The hero and ancestor Wenguer originated in matriarchal society. In the matriarchal commune, after the woman chief died, she was esteemed as the first ancestor mother, or tribal guardian goddess. During late matriarchal society, as Dagur entered patriarchal society, worship of male ancestors emerged. Legends regarding ancestor worship of male ancestors include legends of females, as well as males. Examples include "Mording Etuo," "Origin of Manna Mokon Deity," and "Story of the Ancestor Deity of Enen Hal." Almost every Dagur tribe has its own *hojoor barken* (guardian god) and all Dagur have the guardian god Holier Barken, except for those who venerate Mording Etuo. Certain *hals* have guardian gods. There are stories and legends about these guardian gods. Legends about the ancestors provide a continual reminder to respect elders and ancestors.

In addition to heroes, ancestors, and Wenguer, shamanistic legends include stories about shamans, sorcery, sacrificial rites, and prayers. They show that the Dagur could not defeat danger, disease, and poor production forces. This led to the desire to borrow powerful natural forces to combat nature. They dared to conquer disease, and believed in shamans. Shamans were emissaries with superb power, and travelled

between gods and man. Shamans could pray down happiness and avoidance of disasters, expel devils, and banish demons. This is exemplified in the famous shamanistic legends "Tuqingga Yadgan" and "Gahucha." Other legends reflect conflict between religions. Shamanism held great sway, and a one-god religion could not replace it. Thus there are shamanistic legends concerning the triumph of shamanism over paganism. Examples include "Har Barken," "The Lama and the Python," and "Sukedai Yadgan."

1.2

Above all, Dagur belief and worship emanated Shamanism. Nature worship, worship of gods, and soul and ancestor worship, are all rooted in oral folk literature. Dagur envisioned various gods based on their environment, and expressed the hope that they could conquer nature through these gods. Of course, all religions are absurd. Shamanism reflects the view of primeval people, and, without question, Shamanism is also absurd. If we scientifically demonstrate how Shamanism functions in literature, we encounter obstacles. From a Marxist viewpoint, we can do this by analyzing relationships in national history, people's life, and religion. We should realize that Shamanism is a superstition. Meanwhile, we also see that the ancient Dagur anticipated conquering and altering nature. Only in this way can we fully comprehend the positive romantic features of Dagur folktales.

Among Dagur legends, many eulogize heroes, especially national heroes, who contributed much historically to national interest. Some are based on real heroes who defeated evils on behalf of the people. The most outstanding hero is Sajierdi Khan. He enjoys the highest esteem among Dagur, who believe that they are his descendants. Most people 35 and older recognize his name. He was courageous and skillful in battles. Many historical remains in the Nenjiang drainage area are attributed to him. For example, Yiwoqi Village is north of Nierji (Morin Dawaa Banner Town). Southwest of this village are two parallel castle ruins leading to the Re River. Vestiges of earthen hills may be found here. People say that the castles and hills were built by Sajierdi and his daughter-in-law. "Legend of the Side-Castles" is about these castles. "Legend of Damulahan," told along the upper reaches of one tributary of the Nenjiang River, concerns rocks on the opposite side of the river. Horse hoof marks on the rocks are reputed to have been made by Sajierdi's horse when it leapt over the river. West of Guoni Village, Morin Dawaa, are wheel and horse hoof marks. They are also attributed to Sajierdi. There is also a large iron pot somewhere in the Greater and Lesser Xingan Mountains left by Sajierdi when he retreated to the North Sea. There are city ruins 100 meters long and 70 meters wide in Nenjiang County. This city was built overnight by 100,000 of Sajierdi's stationed soldiers. Many phenomena in Dagur areas are attributed to Sajierdi. However, it is very difficult to find a definite historical link with Sajierdi. Even so, among the Dagur, Sajierdi legends have been made on the basis of their history. Sajierdi legends far surpass legends centered about Wuerke and Hachami in Morin Dawaa, and indeed, among all Dagur. Legends concerning the Dagur chiefs, Qipa and Bemubeguoer, are also favorites.

Faithful and unyielding characters are memorialized. Examples include "Grandpa Suyi," "The Wind Blows Bukui Away," and the soldiers who fought against Russian aggression in "General Sabusu's Cannon."

Dagur generals and army officials are praised and eulogized by Dagur. "General Duxingga," "General Duo," and "An Unknown General" praise military figures. Dagur folktales feature heroes who banish ghosts and kill demons, and battle evil and

the illusionary image of evil, the *mangus* (monster). Evil is their enemy, and they take up cudgels for those suffering from injustices. They aid those in need, never pausing to do what is right. These heroes are clever and courageous princes and descendants of heroes who excel at riding and shooting. Often, they experience extreme difficulties. Nevertheless, in the end they manage to defeat evil in nature and society, bringing happiness to humanity. In general, they are brave, powerful, and righteous.

Monsters, fine horses, and Bainacha are three artistic images. The monster is a negative figure in Dagur legends. It is a many-headed, semi-man/animal colossus. A nine-headed monster is the most ferocious. Regardless of the number of heads, all have hairy bodies, like to drink blood, and plunge people into misery and suffering. The monsters symbolize natural forces. In ancient times, Dagur ancestors lived in mountains and hunted, fished, and gathered. They were often at the mercy of natural disasters. They were afraid of natural forces and longed to overcome them. This contradiction led to the invention of this mysterious devil image. Heroes battled it and finally defeated it, with the help of God and God's horse.

With the further development of society, poverty and wealth appeared. Gradually, classes emerged. Thus, the monster image has a double meaning. It not only symbolizes natural forces, but other tribes, other clans, and aggressors. During this period, the image of the monster was a general symbol of evil and related legends reflect the internecine wars among tribes.

After defeat of the monster through struggle, it became the slave of heroes and shaman spirits, aiding heroes as they conquered nature, and helping shamans drive away disasters and evils. This indicates man could conquer nature during this period. The ancient god, Holier Barken, is beseeched when offering sacrifices. The exception is those who offer sacrifices to Mording Etuo. This ancient god includes nine monsters.

In Dagur oral literature, an outstanding horse is very important. In life, horses are good companions, great helpers, and good friends in war.

Bainacha is an amiable white-bearded old man. Dagur believe he lives in steep mountains, and gladly aids people in danger. Dagur, Oroqen, and Ewenki venerate Bainacha. They believe all wild animals and creatures living in mountains are Bainacha's. When hunting or rafting, they carefully watch their behavior and speech in fear of upsetting Bainacha. If Bainacha is angry, they will not be successful in hunting, something unlucky will happen while rafting, and they may even lose their lives. Towering mountains, deep valleys, huge rocks, and strange trees are seen as the dwelling places of Bainacha and are offered sacrifices. When drinking liquor outdoors, Bainacha is first offered liquor to express respect and the hope that he will extend protection and blessings. As to why Bainacha is believed in, it is likely linked to nature worship by Dagur ancestors.

Another important characteristic of Dagur legends is the clever integration of legends with natural scenery. There is a precipice near Hadayang Village of Morin Dawaa called Hudaha (precipice which seems human) which a legend explains. There are many legends which closely link scenery with reality. These legends demonstrate the rich Dagur imagination at work.

Beginnings

Origin of Snow and Rain⁶¹

At the time of the world's beginning, people dared not raise their heads for if they did, they bumped against the sky. People lived comfortably and earth was prosperous. The seasons changed in order with never a mistake. Animals were man's friends. People lived happily and didn't have to work. Wheat flour and cooking oil were given by Endur, and were plentiful, for it snowed wheat flour and rained cooking oil. But in time, women increasingly wasted them. One time, Endur saw a woman mix flour with oil, roll out a thin slice, wipe her baby's dirty bottom with it, and then throw it away. It struck Endur in the face. He was enraged and thought, "Man is too comfortable. If people continue to live like this, they will become evil. I must give them some hardship." Then he flew upwards, and the sky become very high, like today. Since that time, wheat flour and oil have never fallen from the sky, only rain and snow. People suffered from Endur's punishment and had nothing to eat. They had to work, and learn how to cultivate land. Afterwards, they cherished grain.

Why Dagur Have No Written Language⁶²

Why don't Dagur have a written language? It's because of Tang Seng's mistake. When he was going to get Buddhist scriptures from Western Paradise, he came to a sea that he could not cross. A large 1,000-year-old turtle swam up, and said, "I'll take you across if you promise to ask how many years I'll live." Tang Sang agreed and got on the turtle, which carried him across the sea.

After spending years in Western Paradise, Tang Seng returned with many Buddhist scriptures. When he reached the sea, the turtle swam up and asked how long he would live. Tang Seng said that he would tell him once they reached the middle of the sea. This made the turtle wonder if Tang Seng really had asked, but believing that he was a pious Buddhist monk who would not lie, he took him to the middle of the sea and repeated his question. Tang Seng said he would tell him once they reached the shore. The turtle realized that Tang Seng had not asked and threw him off. This scattered all the scriptures into the water. The turtle ate Tang Seng, which extended the turtle's life 1,000-10,000 years. Once people learned that Buddhist scriptures had fallen into the sea, many came there to salvage what could be found. Some were salvaged, others sank to the bottom of the sea. Those that were salvaged became the written languages of certain peoples, and the lost scriptures were the written languages of other nations. Thus, Dagur have no written language.

Still today, Dagur are troubled not having a written language. When they tell this story, they chide Tang Seng. Maybe some day, the scriptures on the sea bottom will be salvaged, and the Dagur will have a written language.

⁶¹Teller [TE]: Qiker; Collection Area [CA]: Morin Dawaa [MD]; Translator [TS]: Yan Zheng

⁶²[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yan Zheng

The Fairies and the Hunters⁶³

A mother and her two sons, Kurugure and Karegure, lived at the foot of a mountain. Each had a treasure horse and both hunted everyday. They had a treasure hunting dog and a treasure hunting falcon. One day as the two sons were hunting, two female celestials flew to the top of the home and sang:

*Are Kurugure and Karegure at home?
Is the dog in the courtyard?
Where is the falcon?*

The old mother replied, "They are not here." The two female celestials removed their feather clothing, entered the home, and helped the old lady clean and cook before flying off.

This continued for a long time. The old lady thought how wonderful it would be if the two fairies married her sons, and told her sons what had been going on. The next day the two sons pretended to go out to hunt, but after going only a short distance, they rushed back and burned the fairies' feather clothing. The fairies were then forced to marry the two brothers. Old people say that Dagur are descended from these two fairies.

Why Women Live in Their Husbands' Homes⁶⁴

In ancient times women were housekeepers, and did such work about the house as milking, planting crops, collecting wild fruit, sewing fur clothing, cooking, and so on. Hunting was the main work of men, and for this reason, they did not live without women. Men had to live in the women's homes when they married. Initially, men abided by this custom and family law, but later, as long as they were not hungry and cold, they did not return home when they were out hunting. In time, women came to marry men. At first, they were not used to this, and often thought of their mothers, and didn't wish to stay in the homes of their husbands. Later, mothers gave their daughters cloths and large chests as dowries. Consequently, women were reluctant to leave their dowries, and thus stayed at their husbands' homes. Afterwards, women didn't want to return to their mothers' homes.

How Burial Rule Changed⁶⁵

Long ago if you lived to be 60 you were rolled down a roof to your death. Later, how did this change? Once there was an unimportant young officer in the king's palace. He greatly respected his father, and, when he reached the age of 60, the young man hid him a cellar and secretly cared for him.

The king's palace was haunted and the king posted a notice ordering all officers to take turns keeping watch and capture the ghost. Those who kept watch were unsuccessful and the king had them executed. Soon the young man's turn to keep

⁶³[TE]: Badaronga; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Wang Xiujun

⁶⁴[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Wang Xiujun

⁶⁵[TE]: Narengua, daughter of the famous folk artist, Yihe; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Jiang Weiqing

watch would come. He worriedly consulted his father who said, "Walk south until you see a deer with antlers that reach heaven. Climb up and you'll find yourself at heaven's gate. Tell the guard there about the ghost, and say that you want to borrow treasures to kill it. He'll give you two boxes which you can use to kill the ghost."

The young man followed these instructions, and found a deer with antlers that reached heaven. He begged the deer to let him climb up. The deer answered, "If you agree to ask heaven when my antlers will drop off, I'll let you." The young man promised, so the deer allowed him to climb up. At the top, he found a man standing at heaven's gate who asked, "Why have you climbed here?" After explaining, the guard gave him two boxes, and warned him not to open them on his return trip.

The young man returned to the top of the deer's antlers to return to earth. The deer asked, "Did you ask heaven my question? When will my antlers come off?" The young man dared not say that he had forgotten. He said, "Wait just a moment and I'll tell you." Halfway down, the deer repeated the same question and the young man answered as before. Once he reached the ground the deer asked again. The young man said, "Let me move away and I'll tell you." He hurried away, turned, and shouted, "Heaven told me that your antlers will come off now." Immediately, the antlers fell to the earth like falling trees.

As the young man proceeded homeward with the two boxes, he curiously opened one. A small animal dashed away and he was afraid to open the other one. When he reached home he gave the unopened box to his father, who congratulated him on his success. That night he went to the place to wait for the ghost. Some time later, a donkey-like thing appeared. The young man opened the box and a cat jumped out and yowled. The donkey began shrinking, and finally became a rat. The cat pounced and killed it. The palace ghost was really a rat-ghost because, long ago, there were no cats on earth. At that time rats were huge and very numerous. After cats appeared on earth, rats never became rat-ghosts again.

The next day, the king was informed about the young man's success. He ordered him to explain how he had managed to catch the ghost. The young man knelt and said, "Your majesty, I'm sorry that I disobeyed you. You ordered that everyone over 60 be killed. But I didn't want to kill my father because I dearly love him. I hid him in a cellar. He was the one who told me how to catch the ghost," and then he explained what had happened after his father had advised him. The king ordered the father to appear, who confirmed his son's story. The king summoned all his officers and said, "From now on, the rule that people over 60 must be killed is abrogated." Afterwards, everybody people supported this and old people lived long lives.

The Founding of Guanghui Temple⁶⁶

When the Nibuchu Treaty was signed, the Hulunbuir Prairie was part of China. The Qing government worried that it might not be able to adequately garrison the border and, in the 10th year of the reign of Emperor Yonzheng, people were sent to live on and defend the border. For this reason, more than 700 adult Dagur were sent there. Later, in the seventh year of the Qianlong reign, these Dagur were returned to their original homes in Buteha. However, two of these Dagur, Kuisu and Fanqiabu, did not return because of government business. They remained in the Hailar region and became the ancestors of the Manna and Dengteke Mokons.

Kuisu and Fanqiabu built houses near Tukuliannor Pool, about 3 *li* south of Hailar.

⁶⁶[TE]: Enkebatu; [CA]: South Village, Hailar; [TS]: Zhang Guoqiang

Later they decided to move to a place that had good grass and water, and build villages there. They then visited a *yadgan* and asked him to select a place. The *yadgan* went south of Hailar, invoked his magic, held up a sword, tied three knots in it, and flung it into the air. The sword flew south and fell where Guanghui Temple was built. Manna Mokon built a village to the east of the temple, and Dengteke Mokon built one to the west. Dengteke Village was called South Village because it was south of Hailar.

Tobacco's Origin⁶⁷

Several hundred years ago there lived a couple who were much in love with each other. One day the husband suddenly died. The wife went to his grave everyday where her tears dampened the ground. When spring came, she noticed a sprout growing from the grave. She happily watched the sprout, for she understood it to be a symbol of her husband's love. When the eighth moon came, the plant had many pink blossoms. After the blossoms withered, seeds grew. After the plant's leaves slowly turned yellow, the wife curiously rolled pieces of a leaf into paper and smoked it. She felt much happier. Afterwards, she stopped going to the grave whenever she felt sad. Instead, she smoked. The next spring she planted some seeds she had gathered. In this way, Dagur came to have tobacco. It was a gift from the husband who wished to comfort his wife.

The Origin of the Bell Flower⁶⁸

A young man died soon after he married. His mother felt that his widow did not properly mourn his death, and mistreated her. She soon died and her mother-in-law buried her. Later, a flower grew out of her grave. Blossom clusters hung downward. People said this was because the daughter-in-law had become a flower. While alive, she had always kept her head lowered in fear of her mother-in-law. She was still afraid after her death.

The Origin of the *Taitichuchu* Bird⁶⁹

Long ago a young couple died, leaving only the grandmother to care for their baby. The baby still needed milk, so granny went out everyday to get some from neighbors. One day she was gone a long while and, when she returned, she found that the baby had died from hunger. Granny was tormented by the thought that she was responsible for the baby's death. She didn't want to keep on living. The baby's spirit became a small bird and flew above the village crying out, "*Taiti, chuchu!* [Granny, milk!]"

⁶⁷[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhang Guoqiang

⁶⁸[TE]: Narengua; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhang Guoqiang

⁶⁹[TE]: Narengua; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhang Guoqiang

The Choke-Choke Bird⁷⁰

Once a Dagur hunter lost his dog while he was hunting. He ran everywhere calling "*Choke! Choke!*" Finally he got lost and starved to death. His soul became a bird which flew about calling, *Choke! Choke!*" Dagur say that this bird is still looking for the lost hunting dog.

Why Eagles Eat Snakes⁷¹

Long ago there was a monarch of all the birds who wanted to know what meat in the world was the tastiest. He called the bee and the swallow and said, "Today you must go to all parts of the world and find out which flesh is the most delicious." The two set out. The swallow was not much interested in answering the bird monarch's question and only flew about, enjoying the scenery. On the contrary, the bee stung everything it met. Toward the end of the day, the two flew back. The swallow asked, "Which flesh is the tastiest?" The bee said, "While you were happily flying about, I stung camels, oxen, horses, foxes, dogs, snakes, and lions. At last I stung a person and felt it was the best. Hereafter the monarch should eat only human flesh."

The swallow was horrified with the thought of man suffering so. He said, "I'm exhausted. Let's sit and rest for a while." After they sat the swallow said, "I've never really seen the inside of your mouth clearly. Please open it and let me have a look." The bee obligingly opened his mouth, and the swallow pecked out his tongue. Afterwards, the bee could only hum. When they returned to the bird monarch, the bee flew around him. But because his tongue was gone, he couldn't be understood. The monarch turned to the swallow and said, "What flesh is the tastiest?" "Snake meat. Once you taste it, you won't want to taste anything else," replied the swallow. The monarch believed this and hunted snakes afterwards. Ensuing generations of bird monarchs were eagles. They continued to eat snakes because they believed what the swallow reported.

Why the Camel's Neck Points Up⁷²

Long ago a camel had beautiful antlers while a deer had no antlers. The camel was arrogant because of his antlers. Whenever he met the deer, he said something like, "You monster. Who is as bald as you? I'm even afraid to look at you." One evening, the camel stood by water, admiring his reflection. At this moment, the deer came running out of the forest. The camel again bragged about his beauty: "Everybody admires my beautiful antlers. Even cattle covet them." "Tiger invited me to be his guest, but I'm bald and embarrassed to go. Please lend me your antlers tonight. Tomorrow morning, I'll return them," the deer pitifully entreated. The camel agreed and, with his new antlers, the deer went to the tiger's home. The next morning, the camel went to a river to drink. When he saw his reflection, he realized that he was very ugly, and quickly jerked up his head, not wanting to see himself in the water. After a long wait, the deer did not return them. The deer did not intend to cheat the camel, but when he went near the river to return the antlers, he met many wolves.

⁷⁰[TEs]: Narengua and Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhang Guoqiang

⁷¹[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Mao Huiqing

⁷²[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Mao Huiqing

They chased him and he just managed to elude them by hiding in a mountain forest. Afterwards, the deer lived there. The camel has been without antlers for many years. Even today, when camels see their reflections, they jerk their heads up, and look to the right and left, hoping that the deer is returning with their antlers.

Shamans and Gods

The Tree and the Young Hunter⁷³

Dagur are shamanistic and venerate tree gods. They believe that elms, pines, and white aspens become gods when they grow old. Nobody dares chop them down. If they do, blood flows where they have been cut, and bad luck befalls the person who did the cutting. From some trees, water flows out. It can cure disease. In my childhood, I heard a story about a tree *yadgan* from an old man: Once a young man hunted in some mountains. One night as he rested under an old elm, the tree began swaying. A few minutes later a small aspen began moving even though no wind was blowing. The aspen said, "Tree *yadgan*, I have a request. Today my mother is seriously ill. Will you come see her?" The old elm replied, "A guest is here. I can't leave him alone, for there are many evil spirits in these mountain. They might harm him." The aspen continued to plead. At last the elm said, "Your mother is very old, but I suppose that she will not die before tomorrow afternoon. Even if I came now, I couldn't do any good." The small aspen thanked the old elm and left. The young hunter stood, politely kowtowed to the elm and said, "Honorable tree *yadgan*, I heard what you said. Thank you very much. You must be a famous *yadgan*. Please tell me what I may be able to kill in my hunting, and please tell me if my family is safe." The old elm said, "You will have a good hunt. Not far from here, you will find several aspens which have fallen. One will be the mother of the aspen that came here." The next day the hunter left and after some time, came to seven downed aspens. Before he returned home, he had killed many wild animals.

The Uncle's Death⁷⁴

A poor young man left his home to look for work. After travelling for one day, evening fell, and he could not see any houses. At last he saw a glimmer in the distance. When he got near, he found it was a small house. He saw a girl sitting on a *kang*. He shyly went inside. She suggested that they sleep together that night. Not knowing what else to do, or where else to go, he agreed. When he awoke at dawn, he found himself lying in a graveyard. He was so terrified that he hurried back toward his home. Soon the girl caught up with him, grabbed his clothing, and holding a hairpin demanded, "Will you live with me or not? If you don't agree, I'll kill you." He was thus forced to agree. They returned to his home together.

The boy's parents were pleased that their son had found such a lovely wife who proved to be a good cook and housekeeper. When the boy's maternal uncle heard that he had a wife, he came to visit. He was a famous powerful *yadgan*. He was known as Harimi Yadgan. When he saw the young woman he knew immediately that she was not a mortal and told his sister so. He then returned to his home for some of his magic *yadgan* implements. When he came back to his sister's home, he ordered his nephew to bring his wife before him. When the young man told his wife what his

⁷³[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Wang Xiujun

⁷⁴[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Wang Xiujun

uncle wanted, she asked him if he cared more about his uncle or her. He replied that he cared more about her, and then the two went in to see his uncle who said, "Nephew, do you think you have a good wife? She is not a mortal." "I may not be mortal, but I married your nephew because I love him. If you wish, let us compete. You may begin," the wife said. They stood some distance apart outside the house and the uncle shot three arrows at her. None found their mark. The uncle told her it was her turn. The young wife took a short sword and cut off the uncle's head. But he was, after all, a capable *yadgan*. He took ashes, sprinkled them on the wound, and put his head back on. The young wife again cut his head off and he repeated this. But the third time he placed too many ashes on the wound and his head would not join his neck. Slowly his body collapsed, but before he died, he said to his sister, "Tell my son that I died competing with my nephew's wife. Don't say anything else." The son was quickly informed of his father's death and came to cart away the body. The bride apologized to her mother-in-law for killing her brother. She replied, "We have always gotten along well. Though you killed my younger brother, he was at fault. Still, you cannot remain here." The couple then moved away.

The Demon and the Boy⁷⁵

A boy and his cousin left their homes to seek their fortunes. One night they came to an inn where the boy fell ill. A half-month later, his cousin left him. One night just as the boy was about to sleep, the door to his room suddenly opened and in came a pretty girl. She sat there all night and after dawn, departed, but returned the next two evenings. On the third evening she asked the boy to marry her and he agreed. After many days had passed, the inn-keeper found it strange that although the boy seemed to have recovered from his illness, he did not leave. He entered his room one day when he was out and curiously looked about. Seeing a hair-clasp in the room, he examined it and found that it was his sister's. When the boy returned the inn-keeper asked how the clasp came to be in his room. The boy told the inn-keeper all that had happened between him and the girl. The inn-keeper explained, "You should leave tomorrow. My sister has been dead for a long while, but because I'm fond of her, I did not bury her. I keep her in a coffin upstairs. I think that she has probably become a demon."

The boy left early the next morning, but at noon, the girl caught up with him, threatened him with a sharp hair clasp, and demanded to know if he still wanted her. He could only say that he did and then the two went on together. A few days later they had no money. The girl said, "I'll become a horse. Sell me and then we'll get some money. But you must not sell me to a lama or *yadgan*." She rolled on the ground three times and became a horse. The boy led it to town and thoughtlessly sold it to a lama for 20 *liang*⁷⁶ of silver. The lama led the horse home, hobbled it, locked it up in a storeroom, and began chanting scriptures at it. Three days later the horse was on the verge of death when the older lama sent a young lama in to look at it. But when the young lama left the room, he forgot to shut the door. Invoking its magic, the horse escaped.

With the 20 *liang* of silver the boy happily enjoyed himself for 2 days. On the third day he started home. As he walked along he felt someone tap his shoulder. He turned and found his wife who shouted, "You lied! You promised not to sell me to a lama,

⁷⁵[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yang Huisen

⁷⁶[1 *liang* = 0.05 kilograms.]

but you did. He nearly killed me!" But she quickly forgave the boy. Because she was in poor health, they stopped for a few days at an inn and then continued on to the boy's home. On the way they were again without money. This time his wife became a sheep which the boy sold for 5 *liang* of silver to a man whose child was ill. He had invited a *yadgan* to his home and he needed a sheep as a sacrifice. The *yadgan* danced in trance for a long while and then ordered several men to kill the sheep. It was only by using all her magic arts that the sheep managed to escape.

Meanwhile, as before, the boy was enjoying himself with the silver. On the third day, his wife caught up with him again. This time she threatened to stab him with the clasp. She said, "I've treated you kindly, but you have tried repeatedly to kill me." In the end they were reconciled and when they reached the boy's home, his parents were delighted that he had returned with such a beautiful wife.

In the meantime, the boy's cousin had returned home empty-handed. His mother repeatedly shouted at him, "You came back with nothing, but look at your cousin! He brought back such a lovely capable wife." The cousin, who was something of a *yadgan*, visited the boy. After he had seen the wife, he said to his uncle, "She is not human. She is probably a ghost. If she continues to live with you, there will be disaster." The boy's parents then asked their nephew to help them. The next day, the boy's parents said to their daughter-in-law, "Newly-married Dagur girls go to Niangniang Temple. Tomorrow, go there to kowtow." The next day, she took great care as she prepared to kowtow three times in the temple. As she kowtowed the second time her husband's cousin jumped out with a knife. But she was ready and the two fell to fighting. It was soon obvious that the cousin was no match for her and he sent word for an old *yadgan* to come. When the old *yadgan* arrived, he called the woman out of the temple where they fought. She saw that she was no match for him and fled 10 *li* from the village and slipped into a tomb. Though the old *yadgan* followed her and saw her slip into the tomb he had no way to bring her out and returned to the village.

That evening the ghost-wife changed herself into a headless donkey and caused trouble in the village. When the donkey brayed at a home, someone in the home would suffer terribly then die. Finally, the old *yadgan* said that he needed an absolutely fearless man. An old man who was a notorious village drunk--he used a bowl for a cup and a kettle for a bottle--spoke up and said that he was the man the *yadgan* needed. That night, he went to the tomb. The ghost-wife became a headless donkey, troubling the village as usual. At midnight, when she wished to return to the tomb, she found an old man sitting on the tomb. She begged him to let her enter, but he ignored her and refused to be frightened by anything she did. Then she began kicking and tormenting him, but he endured whatever she did for he knew that dawn would soon come and ghosts were afraid of sunlight. Finally, she had to go away.

The second night, the villagers all urged the old man to go again to the tomb, but he refused and it was not until he was given much liquor that he agreed. The previous night's events were repeated. On the third night, the old *yadgan* told the villagers to prepare an iron cauldron with nine handles and several carts of charcoal. When they had taken this to the tomb, the *yadgan* had several young men heat the cauldron. At midnight, the ghost slipped inside the cave, but when she heard activity outside, she transformed herself into a puff of black smoke and came outside. The waiting *yadgan* slashed the smoke with his knife and she fell into the waiting cauldron. Another cauldron was put on top. Though the ghost cried piteously, they refused to open the cauldrons until they had cooled. When they opened them, the beautiful wife was inside with many needles. The *yadgan* said that she was now human. The boy led her back to his home where they lived happily with his parents.

The Dagur and Oroqen *Yadgans* Compete⁷⁷

There were two *yadgans*. One was a Dagur man named Janjagege and the other was an Oroqen man. The Dagur *yadgan* lived in a small village called Urke-Merden in Morin Dawaa. He was very famous at that time. He was often invited to the imperial palace to cure members of the emperor's family. One day an Oroqen *yadgan* paid him a visit. Being regularly invited by the imperial family, the Dagur *yadgan* was so proud that he was unfriendly to the Oroqen *yadgan* and paid him no respect. In their conversation, each could not convince the other of his sorcery and, in the end, they decided to compete.

The Dagur *yadgan* demonstrated his sorcery first. In the sky came a gentleman in a very fancy sedan coach with a flying horse. It came down and landed in front of the house. Then it quickly disappeared. "Have you finished?" asked the Oroqen *yadgan*. "Yes," replied the Dagur *yadgan*. "Then let me show you my sorcery," said the Oroqen *yadgan*. And suddenly in the garden a tiger, a lion, a leopard, and a wolf appeared. They came into the house and lay down around the *tuoruo*, a tree with colorful ribbons and cloth strips, in the *yadgan's* home. And suddenly, the roof of the house was taken off and in came a huge serpent circling the *tuoruo*. The Dagur *yadgan* was so frightened by this that he told the Oroqen *yadgan* to stop. After awhile, everything returned to normal. From then on, the Dagur *yadgan* admitted that his sorcery was less powerful than the Oroqen *yadgan's*.

Tomenqi *Yadgan*⁷⁸

My mother was 9-years-old when this story happened. My mother's uncle, Tomenqi, was a *yadgan*. One time he went to treat someone and, on the way home, he discovered that he had been framed by another *yadgan*. As soon as he was home, he told his family that if he died, his body should be dressed in his *yadgan* clothing and he should not be placed in a coffin. He said he should be placed in an isolated place where there were no dogs barking. He also said that the next morning, a woman in mourning clothes might come to the gate on a cart pulled by a green ox and they should not under any circumstances, allow her to come in. He said that three carts of firewood should be prepared from the supply in the garden and if the family heard the sound of his drum, they should light the wood and strike gongs hard.

Indeed, Uncle Tomenqi died that night. And his family did as he had instructed. The next morning, a woman in mourning dress on a cart pulled by a green ox did appear, but of course she was not allowed to come in. In the afternoon, the sun was about to set and the family members started to light the firewood and strike gongs as soon as they heard the sounds of the *yadgan's* drum. In a minute, Uncle Tomenqi was seen coming back toward the home. He did not come into the garden directly, but performed in the wood fire for sometime without being burnt. Later on, he told that he had been framed by some *yadgan*. He lived for 20 more years after that.

⁷⁷[TE]: Shelear's mother; Collector [CL]: Shelear; [CA]: Nantong, Ewenki Banner; Collection Time [CT]: November 1988; Dagur/English Translator: Shelear

⁷⁸[TE]: Shelear's mother; [CL]: Shelear; [CA]: Nantong, Ewenki Banner; [CT]: November 1988; Dagur/English Translator: Shelear

Tuqingga Yadgan⁷⁹

More than 90 years ago, the powerful *hojoor yadgan* of Manna Mokon was named Tuqingga. He had a younger sister who fell ill. Relatives invited many *yadgans* to cure her, but none could. Though her relatives pleaded with Tuqingga to help her, he refused because he said that Yikedai Yadgan, who lived in the same village as his sister, did not like him and would kill him if he went to his sister's home. Finally, Tuqingga's mother forced him to go to his sister's home. Before he left he said to his mother, "My magic power will decline." On the way to his sister's home, his heart-protecting mirror fell to the ground and rolled to the northwest. He sighed, "Now that I've lost my mirror, my power will be much less."

When he reached his sister's home, he offered sacrifices of animals to the gods and his sister recovered. But as soon as he returned home he said to his mother, "Yikedai is secretly killing me. I will die today. After I am dead, dress me in my magic clothing, put me on an oxcart with my drum and drumstick, take me to a field where the barking of dogs cannot be heard, unhitch the ox and tie it to a wheel of the cart, and then return home and wait for 3 days and nights. If I don't return, soon after that time, you know that I will not. If you do see me coming back home, tie a string from the door to the gate."

After he died what he had requested was done. Three days and nights later he was seen walking toward the home. When he arrived at the gate he jumped three times along the string. Then he removed his magic clothing, put on ordinary clothes, walked into the home, and said, "I exchanged my death with a crow," and later a dead crow was found in Hargana Zhalaga. He then burned a stick of incense on the banks of the Yiming River, leapt in, and vanished. When more than half of the incense stick was burned, a dead carp more than 5 *chi* long suddenly floated to the water surface. Tuqingga jumped out of the water and said, "I put all my bad luck on that carp and now I shall live to the age of 70." And he really did live to be 70.

Nisang Yadgan⁸⁰

In ancient times in Lolo Village there lived a man named Bardubayin who had much property. Bardubayin and his wife had a son named Feiyanggu when they were very young. He was very clever and, when he was 15, he asked for permission to hunt in the Heliang Mountains south of the village with the villagers. Taking Aharji and Baharji, two house servants, their black hound, and a hunting falcon, they set out to hunt with 500 fine soldiers. The day they reached the Heliang Mountains they found much game and began hunting. While enthusiastically hunting Feiyanggu suddenly fell seriously ill. He quickly called Aharji and Baharji and asked them to pile up dry wood and make a fire so that he might warm himself. His illness worsened and he told the servants, "I'm very ill. Take me home quickly!" But just as they started back, his condition became even more dire, he gradually lost consciousness, and could say nothing. At last, he stopped breathing and his eyes and mouth tightly closed. Aharji mounted a horse, raced home first, and told his master about his son's sudden death. Hearing this unfortunate news, Bardubayin and his wife were so shocked that they fainted. The villagers were sympathetic when they heard about it.

⁷⁹[TEs]: Enkebatu, Xiaoyun; Area: Bayintuohai Town, Ewenki Banner; [TS]: Yao Xinglian

⁸⁰Areas Where Told: [MD] and Ewenki Banner; [TS]: Wang Jing

A few days later, Feiyanggu's coffin was placed in the main room and servants killed sheep and cattle. They collected so much game that they heaped it into a hill. After everything was prepared, a grand burial was held for Feiyanggu.

The old couple's only son, Feiyanggu, was now dead. When the couple were in their 50s, they beseeched heaven and prostrated before a Buddha image pleading for a child. When they were more than 50 they had another son whom they named Sergudi Feiyanggu, who was also clever and strong. He was adept at reading, riding, and shooting. When he was 15, he was a famous heroic hunter in that place. One day he asked his parents for permission to hunt in the Heliang Mountains with the villagers. They could not dissuade him and finally agreed. After discussion, he chose 5,000 excellent soldiers and taking Aharji and Baharji, their hound, and a hunting falcon, they set off. He rode on his strong yellow horse and galloped toward their destination. A few days later they reached the Heliang Mountains, set up camp, and began hunting. They rounded up many wild animals and in the excitement of shooting, Sergudi Feiyanggu climbed to a peak. He felt faint, saw many sparks before his eyes, and had a pain in his heart. He called Aharji and Baharji and ordered them to stop the hunt. Aharji and Baharji carried him to the mountain foot, piled up dry wood, and lit it to warm Sergudi Feiyanggu. But it was all to no avail for he worsened. In great pain Sergudi Feiyanggu called the servants and said, "Tell my old father and mother that I should have climbed to the mountain top and shot more wild animals. Then I would have been able to return, happily meet them, and repay their kindness in rearing me. But how could I know I would die before them because of this sudden misfortune? Not only can I not serve my parents till they die, but I will make them suffer from my death. What misfortune! What a pitiful man I am! I can't inherit the property they would have given me. I leave my old parents and die first. Oh, what a pity! How can I suffer so!" He cried painfully and wanted to go on speaking, but he died.

Aharji, Baharji, and many other servants wailed loudly by his sedan. But then Aharji stopped crying and said to Baharji, "Stop weeping! Our young lord has died. Why don't you mount your horse and report the news to our master quickly? I'll stay and bring the corpse back later. You go first. I'll also return tonight!" Baharji mounted a horse and raced back with 10 soldiers. In a short time they arrived at Lolo Village where Baharji dismounted at the gate, entered the house, knelt before the old man and lady, and wept without pause. Bardubayin said with a smile, "Baharji, why do you cry? Has your young master beaten you?" Baharji continued weeping without saying a word. The old man grew angry and shouted, "Lackey! Why do you keep crying without saying a word! Speak! What's the matter!"

Baharji said, "Don't be angry Lord, your servant will tell you in detail. Two days earlier we followed Sergudi Feiyanggu our young lord and hunted much game in the Heliang Mountains. He was very happy, but while excitedly shooting he suddenly fell ill and we decided to bring him home. He died on the way so I came first to tell you." When Bardubayin heard this, it was a thunderbolt from the blue. "Oh--my son!" the old man shouted and fell to the earth. The whole family was astonished, helped the old man up, called his name, and wailed. After a long time, he recovered and wept with the family. Just at that moment, those guarding the son's body arrived. Relatives and friends all went out to greet the corpse, brought it inside the home, and laid it in the hall. Bardubayin wailed loudly for the son:

*Our generous son!
We had you by praying to heaven and earth,
Our handsome boy!*

*We had you by pleading with gods!
You've left us now and gone away first,
Who will inherit our rich property?
You left us quickly today,
Who can ride our 10 horse herds?*

The old master wept sadly and endlessly, stomping his feet and waving his arms. By the other side of the coffin, the mother cried with streaming tears:

*My son Sergudi!
I bore you when I was 50.
I saw you as a treasure baby.
My son as comely as jewelry.
You are the eyes of your mother,
Your mother's heart and liver.
My pure white jade son,
How clean and fair your face!
How honest and upright your heart!
Oh, my heart and liver,
All admired you when they saw you!
Everyone envied you when they noticed you!*

The old man and lady lamented so long that they fainted for some time. Observing this, relatives and friends approached them and persuaded, "Your son has gone. This seems to be heaven's design and regardless of how long you weep, he will not recover. We hope you consider your health and think about the funeral. These are the most important things we should do now!" Bardubayin ceased wailing and said, "You are right. Since my son has died, who will inherit the property? I'll give him a magnificent funeral!" He called the two servants and said, "Go to the herds and catch two iron-black horses, a pair of sea-blue horses born in the ninth month, two strong yellow horses born in the fifth month, and two other horses--one blood-red horse and a black-mouthed horse, both born in the second month. These horses should be prepared with gold saddles and bridles. Butcher cattle, horses, sheep, and swine. Also prepare much liquor, fruit, and other food." Aharji and Baharji acted at once to obey. They told the herdsmen, "Catch the hair when you catch the horses, hold the horns when you catch the cattle, grasp the tails when you catch the sheep, and hold the chests when you catch the swine. Choose the strongest and 100 of each." They also organized the women to prepare chickens, ducks, geese, and other food.

They worked busily for a whole day. When everything was ready, they informed their master. Bardubayin led relatives, friends, and servants to his son's coffin with the offerings. He poured out a full cup of ceremonial liquor, and cried, "My Sergudi Feiyanggu! If your spirit is here now, listen carefully! Your father will burn 500,000 *liang* of gold and silver papers for you and has killed 500 animals. Every type of refreshment will be placed on 100 tables and another 100 tables will be covered with fruits. Besides, I have prepared 100 buckets of liquor and 100 buckets of colored wine. All these foods, gold and silver heaped like a hill, and liquor flowing as though from a pool have been prepared. If you know this, accept it." After saying this, a white-haired toothless ugly hunched-backed old man came to the gate murmuring:

*Doorkeeper, deyeku, deyeku
Tell your master at once, deyeku, deyeku,
An old man before he enters the coffin, deyeku, deyeku,
Wants to see the young man's remains, deyeku, deyeku,
I'll say farewell to the corpse! deyeku, deyeku,
Please let me in, deyeku, deyeku.*

The doorkeeper reported this to the old master who said, "Let him in. Let him eat his fill of meat, fruits, and the food I've prepared for the young master. Let him drink as much as he can from the buckets." The old man was invited in and walked slowly, passed by the food-hill and wine-pool, and went over to Sergudi Feiyanggu's coffin. Wailing and beating his chest with his fists he said:

*Generous young master,
Heard you were born in the world of man,
How happy was your foolish lackey!
Strong and handsome young master,
Heard you were born,
Your poor lackey believed you would live forever.
Excellent young master,
Heard you were born,
How happy was a luckless man such as I!
Clever and intelligent young master,
Heard you were born,
How pleased was your senseless servant!*

He continued, "Ghost who took away the soul of our young man, please be merciful and send the young heroic master's soul back and take mine instead!" and then he wailed in great agony. Bardubayin was so moved that he took pity on this poor old man, took off his yellow satin coat and gave it to him. The old man accepted it, put it on, slowly raised his head, and said, "Old Master Bayin, it's useless to weep endlessly. You can see the young man's soul was taken to the Netherworld. You should ask a famous *yadgan* to bring young master's soul back!" Bardubayin replied, "Respected old man, where can I find a famous *yadgan*? Those who live near the village are all worthless! They are good for nothing except stealing funeral fruit, food, and milk. If you know some great *yadgans*, please tell me at once."

The old man said, "South of this village is the Nisahai River. On the banks lives a *yadgan* called Nisang. She has magical power and can revive the dead! Why don't you call on her?" After saying this, the old man went out, walked for a short distance, flew up in the sky, sat on colored clouds, and vanished. The servant reported this to the astonished Bardubayin, who gladly thought, "It must have been Endur." He knelt, kowtowed three times, mounted a strong yellow horse with black stripes on its hooves, and raced to the banks of the Nisahai River. There were several homes west of the village. He saw a woman washing clothing by one of the houses. He dismounted, went a few steps ahead, and said, "Excuse me, please tell me where Nisang Yadgan's home is." The woman raised her head, looked at him for a while, and said with a smile, "You are going in the wrong direction. Nisang *yadgan* lives at the end of East Village."

Bardubayin remounted and rode to the east of the village and saw a woman repairing her home. He asked, "Where is Nisang Yadgan's home?" She said, "Elder brother, the woman washing clothes whom you spoke to Nisang Yadgan!"

Bardubayin returned to the house where he'd first gone, tied his horse outside the gate, and went inside. He saw an old woman sitting on the *kang*. He knelt and begged, "Sister *yadgan*, please have mercy and rescue my son!" Smiling, the woman answered, "Brother Bayin, please rise! Seeing that you have come and begged me, I'll see." She asked Bardubayin to sit on the *kang* and offered him tobacco. Then she washed her face and hands with clean water, lit incense on the altar, put a big bronze mirror in the water, and gazed at it while walking around for a long time. Then she sang in a dignified manner, "*Huoge, yege, huoge, yege...*" A moment later, her soul returned to her body and she began narrating:

*Brother Bayin came and begged me, kule yekule,
Brother Bayin, listen carefully, kule yekule,
When you were 30, kule yekule,
You had a son, kule yekule,
When he was 15, kule yekule,
He went out hunting, kule yekule,
An evil monster living in the mountain, kule yekule,
Took his soul from his body, kule yekule,
Killed his life, kule yekule,
From then on, kule yekule,
You didn't have children.
But when you were 50,
You had another boy,
He was clever and handsome,
You and your wife loved him dearly.
The year he was 15,
He went to Heliang Mountains to hunt.
Be bagged many animals, kule yekule,
Because his name was famous far away, kule yekule
The King of the Netherworld was jealous, kule yekule,
Sent a ghost named Mongordi, kule yekule,
Caught his soul and took it away, kule yekule,
So your son died while he was young, kule yekule,
Brother Bayin, who came and asked me, kule yekule,
If you don't believe me, then let it pass, kule yekule,
If you do believe, I'll try an idea, kule yekule.*

Bardubayin knocked his head against the ground and said, "It's the spirits who told me this and Zhang Wenguer narrated this. All are true and I believe it," and then he asked, "But how can my son regain his life?" Nisang Yadgan said, "Brother, if you have a gray and black dog and a colored spotted cock you can call a *yadgan* to bring your Sergudi's soul back first." Bardubayin pleaded again, "Sister *yadgan*, I beg you with all my heart to take a little of your busy time. If you can bring my son's soul back, I'll never forget your kindness. Regardless of how much gold, silver, and treasures you want, I'll give them to you without thinking. If you want clothes, you can choose any silk and satin in my home. If you want horses, cattle, and sheep, I'll give you as many as you want."

Hearing this, the *yadgan* very gladly said, "Let's go now!" Bardubayin was so happy when he heard this that he smiled broadly. He mounted at once and ran quickly home with his servants. The people at his home stopped wailing when they heard that there was a way to save the boy. Bardubayin told Baharji and Aharji to

prepare a sedan and fetch Sister Yadgan. They rushed to Nisuhai Village, found Nisang Yadgan's home, and extended their master's invitation. Nisang Yadgan prepared in a moment and stepped into the sedan. Quickly they arrived at Lolo Village. Bardubayin greeted her in front of the courtyard gate with all his family, invited her in, seated her in the center position, and began a banquet.

After dinner, Nisang Yadgan said, "Brother Bayin, you should invite a *yadgan* at once who is skilled at beating a drum. I'll soon bring the boy's soul back. I'm afraid he cannot be saved if we wait any longer." Bardubayin invited Zhorbinga, a *yadgan* who lived in the same village, to come at once. Nisang Yadgan dressed in her garments and began dancing. Zhorbinga beat the drum, but his rhythm couldn't follow Nisang Yadgan's fast dancing. Nisang Yadgan said, "Brother Bayin, this *yadgan* can't beat in time to my steps. How can I save your son?" Bardubayin said, "This Zhorbinga is rather well-known in our village. There are no others except him." Nisang Yadgan answered, "If this is true, then I can introduce someone to you. There is a *yadgan* known as Nari Feiyanggu who lives in Huoluo Village along the banks of the Nisuhai River. He was reared by his uncle and is very able. He can also beat a drum and a gong and he can follow my steps. If you can invite him, that will be fine." Bardubayin called Aharji and Baharji and said, "Ride on the strong yellow horse and invite Nari Feiyanggu Yadgan on my behalf!"

Aharji and Baharji soon reached Huoluo Village. As they entered the village they saw a group of people shooting at a target. They dismounted and asked one, "Where is Nari Feiyanggu's home?" A young man of the group angrily demanded, "Where do you come from? How dare you call my brother's name!" Aharji and Baharji thought he must be Nari Feiyanggu's servant and said good-humoredly, "If we don't say your brother's venerable name, how can we reach his home?" While they were talking, Nari Feiyanggu came out from the group, restrained his servant, went over and said, "My respected brothers, do you want my help?" Aharji and Baharji saluted him and said, "Our young brother, Sergudi Feiyanggu, unfortunately died. We invited Nisang Yadgan and she said that you know the spirits and can accompany her steps. So we have come to invite you!" Nari Feiyanggu turned and told his servants, "Tell my parents that Nisang Yadgan has called me!" Then he followed Aharji and Baharji to Lolo Village.

A bit later, when Nari Feiyanggu was ready and began pounding the drum, Nisang Yadgan dressed in her sorcerer's clothes decorated with eight treasures, a cap, and a sorcerer's skirt. Holding the drum and drumsticks and standing in the center of the room, she loudly offered her sorcerer's words to the gods. Her 90 joints began moving while she sang loudly and prayed quickly. Her 80 bones began trembling. She sang in a clear voice, "*Huoge, yege, huoge, yege...*" She invited the gods to descend and told Nari Feiyanggu, "I'll go bring the soul back from a dark place. I'll go save Sergudi Feiyanggu. I'll go to the Netherworld and bring him back. Prepare a rope. When the time comes, tie me and choose five strong young men to hold the rope ends tightly. When the god enters my body, drop 20 drops of water around my nose, 40 drops of water around my face, and tie the gray and black dog and colored spotted cock at my feet." Nari Feiyanggu said, "*Zha* (OK)!" and began beating the drum. Soon a god entered Nisang Yadgan, she fainted, and fell to the ground. Nari Feiyanggu stopped pounding the drum at once and put her clothing in order, tied the dog and cock to her feet, put 100 pieces of papers and 100 measures of soybean jam by her head, dropped 20 drops of water around her nose and 40 drops on her face, and stood watch at her side.

Nisang Yadgan led spirits, monsters, wild animals and, together, they went to the Netherworld, jumping and leaping. Before long, they arrived at the seeing-home

platform. She asked the monsters, "What is this place? Why do so many people gather here?" The spirits said, "These are people who died recently. They stand on this high place to turn and gaze back at their homes!" Nisang Yadgan said, "Then there's no need to be concerned about this. Let's go on!" Then they reached a junction of three roads. She asked, "Where do these roads lead?" The monsters said, "The east road leads to those who died of weapon wounds. The middle road leads to those who died from diseases and old age. The west one is the road leading to those whose life should not have ended. Sergudi Feiyanggu just passed down this road." Nisang Yadgan said, "We should go down this road." Leading all the spirits and monsters, she went down the west road. Quite soon, they reached a big river.

Nisang Yadgan asked, "What's the river's name?" The spirits told her, "It's called the Endless River. A lame *laga* is guarding it, but if you give him money, you can cross!" Nisang Yadgan rang her copper bell and sang her sorcery:

*Ferryman, huoge yege,
Lame laga, huoge yege,
Listen keenly, huoge yege,
Ferry your wooden ship, huoge yege,
To the bank here, huoge yege,
Let us cross, huoge yege,
If you let us cross, huoge yege,
Without preventing us, huoge yege,
I'll thank you with soybean jam, huoge yege,
If you let us cross quickly, huoge yege,
We'll send money in thanks, huoge yege.*

Just after finishing, a wooden came over from the other side of the river. Nisang Yadgan looked at the ferryman. He was a grey-haired toothless man with a bent back and only one eye. When he came nearer, he shouted, "Who dares call my name? This young lady? I seem to know you from before. Who are you?" Nisang Yadgan said:

*Dying old man, deniku deniku,
Listen carefully, deniku deniku,
My name is famous in the world, deniku deniku,
I've come to bring the soul of the dead back, deniku deniku,
I live by the Nisahai River, deniku deniku,
I'm Nisang Yadgan, deniku deniku.*

The lame monster said with a laugh, "How strange! When I was in the world, you were only an infant. How fast it goes. You've become a *yadgan* and used big weapons to come to the Netherworld to bring the soul of the dead back. You want to revive the dead." Nisang Yadgan said:

*Old man, I don't care if you laugh at me! Neikuye neikuye,
Lame old man with crippled hands, neikuye neikuye,
Listen in astonishment! Neikuye neikuye,
According to God's order, neikuye neikuye,
I learned and became a famous yadgan, neikuye neikuye,
Because I successfully enshrined and worship the Three Spirits, neikuye neikuye,
I have a dignified name, neikuye neikuye,
Blessed and protected by the gods and Buddha, neikuye neikuye,*

*I learned the best sorcery, neikuye neikuye,
You agitated and lonely old man, neikuye neikuye,
Listen to me with attention, neikuye neikuye,
Old grandpa, neikuye neikuye,
If you are merciful, neikuye neikuye,
Let us cross the river quickly, neikuye neikuye.*

The lame *laga* moved the boat to the bank. Nisang Yadgan asked, "Has no one crossed today?" The monster said, "No one has crossed. Yesterday, Uncle Mongordi took Bardubayin's son across the river." After they crossed the river, Nisang Yadgan took out three handfuls of soybean jam, three pieces of paper money, and gave them to the old man in payment. In a short time they neared the Red River, but found no boat to cross. While busily looking for a boat, a man wearing fur clothes and a fox fur cap came out of the east, riding a horse. Nisang Yadgan asked, "Brother, can you help us cross the river?" The man answered, "Sister, I haven't time to help you. I have other urgent matters!" and left. Nisang Yadgan got very angry, threw her drum sticks into the river, and chanted incantations. Then she led the spirits and monsters across the Red River. In fear of irritating the river master, she left three measures of soybean jam and paper money and went on.

Soon, they arrived at the Netherworld town's first pass, but the ghosts who guarded the gate wouldn't let them through. Nisang Yadgan angrily begged:

*Monsters powerful from birds, eyikule yekule,
Brave monsters, eyikule yekule,
Please help me pass through this gate, eyikule yekule.*

After she spoke, the monsters lifted her and flew over the pass. In a short time, they arrived at the second pass. The ghost guards were named Selegeta and Sejiletu. They shouted, "Where in the Living World do you living people come from? And how dare you cross this pass. We were ordered by the Lord of the Netherworld to guard the pass and we won't let you come through." Nisang Yadgan went a step toward them and pleaded:

*Selegeta, Sejiletu, heye heyeluo,
Come nearer and listen! Heye heyeluo,
Let me pass quickly, heye heyeluo,
I'll thank you with a reward, heye heyeluo,
Give you soybean jam, heye heyeluo!*

Selegeta and Sejiletu smiled and said, "Oh, what a talented female *yadgan*. What do you want, coming to the Netherworld? Are you sending your soul to the Netherworld?" and allowed Nisang Yadgan to pass. Nisang Yadgan asked, "Has anyone passed here?" They replied, "Uncle Mongordi with Bardubayin's son." She left them three handfuls of soybean jam and three pieces of paper money. Not long afterwards she reached Uncle Mongordi's gate and shouted loudly at the spirits in three rings surrounding his home:

*Uncle Mongordi, diku dikuye,
Please come out! Diku dikuye,
Why did you take a good man's life? Diku dikuye,
Whose time to die had not yet come, diku dikuye,*

*Why did you rob his life and bring it here? Diku dikaye,
Be merciful to me, diku dikaye,
Please return Sergudi Feiyanggu, diku dikaye,
To his parents, diku dikaye,
I will not take him away and leave nothing, diku dikaye,
I will reward you with something, diku dikaye,
I never lie, diku dikaye,
I will take out paper money, diku dikaye,
And I will send you soybean jam, diku dikaye.*

Uncle Mongordi laughed and said, "Nisang Yadgan, why are you so shameless? What have I stolen from you?" Nisang Yadgan said, "You stole nothing from me, but you took a lively person here before the time of his death. This is unfair and unreasonable!" Mongordi said, "Nisang Yadgan, please don't be angry! And don't blame me! But is it any of your business that I brought Sergudi Feiyanggu here? Our khan, Lord of the Netherworld, said that Sergudi Feiyanggu was clever and resourceful and asked him to wrestle Lama Buku and Lion Buku. He defeated them both. Our khan, Lord of the Netherworld, treats and protects him as his own son. How could he return him to you? You have come here in vain!"

Nisang Yadgan angrily called all the spirits around. They then went to the Netherworld Lord's castle where they found the gate tightly shut. She angrily said:

*Spirits that travelled the world, neineiye,
All of you listen! Neineiye,
Fly over the castle gate, neineiye,
And enter the castle! Neineiye.
Save Sergudi Feiyanggu and bring him out! Neineiye.*

Then all the spirits flew up and saw Sergudi Feiyanggu playing an animal anklebone game using golden anklebones with a group of children. The biggest spirit swooped down, caught Sergudi Feiyanggu and flew out of the castle. The children were surprised and reported to the Netherworld Lord at once. He was enraged and ordered the ghosts to call Uncle Mongordi. He scolded, "Mongordi, let me see if you can bring the boy back. Sergudi Feiyanggu, whom you brought here, was snatched away by an unknown thing. Bring him back at once." Mongordi kowtowed and said, "My Lord, don't be angry. The person who snatched Sergudi Feiyanggu away was none other than Nisang Yadgan, renowned in the land of man! She ordered her spirits to snatch the boy away. Let me follow her and talk to her!" Then pursuing Nisang Yadgan, he raced out of town.

Nisang Yadgan was very glad to have found Sergudi Feiyanggu and took his hand. As they were going, suddenly, she turned her head back and found Uncle Mongordi running not far behind them. Mongordi said angrily and rudely, "Nisang Yadgan! What a bad woman you are! You want to take Sergudi Feiyanggu back without paying anything. With great difficulty I caught him, right?" Nisang Yadgan replied kindly, "Uncle Mongordi, since you talk like this, let me give you some money to use!" Then she took out 10 handfuls of soybean jam and 10 pieces of paper money and gave them to him. Mongordi said, "Sister *yadgan*, isn't this too little? How can I bear it when the Lord of the Netherworld punishes me?"

"If you feel this is too little, I'll give you two more pieces of paper money."

"That's also not enough. When our Lord of the Netherworld hunts, he has no hunting dogs. At night, we have no cock to report the time. If you leave your cock

and dog, I can appease the Lord of the Netherworld. It can be a bit of a gift, otherwise, our khan, the Lord of the Netherworld, will punish me seriously. How can I bear that!"

"Uncle Mongordi, do you want to get my dog and cock without payment?"

"Sister *yadgan*, you question me in this way and don't give me anything. How can I face the Lord of the Netherworld and deal with his punishment?"

"Have mercy on Sergudi Feiyanggu and give him more living time."

"For you sake, I give him 20 years."

"This is so little that his navel will not have dried and his temple hair won't have grown out! This age is useless!"

"Then 30 years!"

"That's an age when a man's heart has not had time to stabilize! It's useless!"

"If that's the case, 40 years."

"That's not an age for one to enjoy ease and comfort. It's useless!"

"Then I give him 50 years!"

"He still will not have reached his age of ripeness! What's the use?"

"Then, 60 years?"

"He still will not have matured in his riding and shooting. It's also useless!"

"If that is so, 70 years!"

"This age still gives no time to understand the real meaning of things in the world. It's still not useful!"

"Then is it right to let him live to 80 years old?"

"That's not enough to have the official title of *zhangjing*! Of course it's useless!"

Mongordi said with final determination, "Then let him live to be 90, when his teeth are gone and his hair is white, his wisdom is at an end, and his body is bent with age. Let him have 20 sons. Are you satisfied now?" Nisang Yadgan thanked him, and gave him the dog and cock. But just as she turned and went with Sergudi Feiyanggu, Mongordi shouted suddenly, "Hey, Nisang Yadgan! Your dog and cock won't go with me!"

"Call *chuwu-chuwu* to the dog and *huaxi-huaxi* to the cock."

Mongordi did as Nisang Yadgan said which made the dog and cock run to Nisang Yadgan. "Nisang Yadgan, if I can't lead your dog and cock back, how can I face Lord of the Netherworld?"

"Uncle Mongordi, because you say this, I'll tell you the truth! Call *mo-mo* to the dog and *gu-gu* to the cock!"

Mongordi called as she told him, and sure enough, the dog and cock followed him. Then Nisang Yadgan took Sergudi Feiyanggu by the hand and retreated. They passed one place and met Nisang Yadgan's husband. He had boiled a pot of oil by burning wormwood and was waiting for her. He wouldn't let her pass regardless of what she said. He sneered, "Frivolous woman. No more of your impudence! You save the lives of others so why not save me? Does it mean nothing that we lived together for so many years?" Nisang Yadgan pleaded:

My dear husband! yege yegiye!

Please listen carefully! yege yegiye!

If you think of how we lived together from the time we were very young, yege yegiye,

Can't you let me pass? yege yegiye,

As for you, yege yegiye,

You've been dead for many years, yege yegiye,

Your bones have become black, yege yegiye,

*Your flesh and skin have rotted, yege yegiye,
Your ribs are broken, yege yegiye,
You died at the right time, yege yegiye,
You will have another life when your turn comes, yege yegiye,
How can I save you? yege yegiye,
If you are merciful to me, yege yegiye,
Let me pass, yege yegiye.*

But the man wouldn't let her go regardless of what she said. He threatened, "I'll accuse you before the Lord of the Netherworld." Nisang Yadgan worriedly said, "If you don't believe me, let's go see your bones!" Nisang Yadgan, holding Sergudi Feiyanggu by the hand, walked ahead and her man followed. They came to his coffin, opened it, and found only blackened bones inside with many wriggling worms. They looked carefully and found the nose bone had dropped off. Seeing this, Nisang Yadgan said, "Look! Your bones have turned black, your nose bone has fallen off. Your philtrum has moved, and you came to the Netherworld according to the time you should have. No matter how powerful I am, I can't save you!" Her husband grew more angry, gnashed his teeth, and said cruelly, "I've been waiting for you all this time here. Today, I met you by chance, so how can I let you go!"

Angrily, Nisang Yadgan replied:

*Listen carefully, hidu hiduye,
Take your cunning words back! hidu, hiduye,
Otherwise, I'll tear your lips off, hidu hiduye,
You left your old mother to me when you died, hidu hiduye,
I looked after her carefully all the time, hidu hiduye,
Now you see me, hidu hiduye,
And forget my kindness to you, hidu hiduye,
But want to kill me, hidu hiduye,
I'll let you never revive again! hidu hiduye!*

After saying this, Nisang Yadgan called big spirits to take her husband and locked him in Fengdu Town. She said:

*I'll live happily without a husband, hailu hailu,
I'll live freely...
I'll go everywhere for enjoyment, hailu hailu,
I'll enjoy the good scenes! hailu hailu!*

She tugged Sergudi Feiyanggu's hand and went on. Suddenly, they found a golden light ahead and also a bridge. To the left of this bridge there was a building made from diamonds and glinting with five colored rays. Nisang Yadgan was amazed, climbed to the bridge top, and found a monster about to grab three men sitting there. She drew nearer and asked, "Brother, who is living in the building? If you have mercy, please tell me!" The monster said, "Goddess Womie lives here. It is she who allows humans to reproduce themselves like roots and grow luxuriantly like branches and leaves." Nisang Yadgan gave that monster three pieces of paper money, three handfuls of soybean jam. Holding Sergudi Feiyanggu's hand, she went up the stairs and found two armored guards holding rods. Standing by the door of the treasure building, they shouted when they saw Nisang Yadgan, "Dead ghosts without lives,

where are you from? Go back quickly! If you move on, we will kill you!"

Nisang Yadgan pleaded, "Spirit brothers, I'm not a ghost. I've come from the Living World. My name is Nisang Yadgan. I have come to see and kowtow before her." Then the two ghosts let her in. Nisang Yadgan climbed up and found an old lady sitting in the middle position with many children playing around her. After Nisang Yadgan kowtowed, Goddess Womie said, "I don't recognize you. Where are you from?" Nisang Yadgan said, "Why don't you remember me? I came from here, was produced from your root, and branched from your trunk!"

"If you are from here, what's your name? I'll remember it!"

"I am Nisang Yadgan, come from the Living World."

"Oh! You are Nisang Yadgan? Who is that boy? You don't have any children, do you?"

Kowtowing again, Nisang Yadgan said, "Mother, listen! My husband died when I was 17. I served my mother-in-law and passed the days, but one day a mirror fell from the roof and dropped beside me. I could see nothing and fell ill for 3 years. I recovered after I promised to be a *yadgan*. The Lord of the Netherworld ordered the ghost, Mongordi, to catch this child. I brought him back by paying money and I'll take him back. Mother Womie, please have mercy on him and bestow him some children!" Mother Womie said, "Because you said this, I'll give Sergudi Feiyanggu five sons and three daughter!" Then, taking Nisang Yadgan by the hands, they went down the stairs.

"Mother, why is this tree so green?"

"That symbolizes the fertility of human children!"

"Why is that one withered?"

"That symbolizes people who have no children because for no reason they burned grass which horses and cattle graze!"

"Why does this simply clad couple feel hot and use fans?"

"When they lived in the Living World, they trusted and loved each other. When they came to the Netherworld, they still feel warm, though they wear simple clothing!"

Nisang Yadgan asked, "Why is that couple, covered with two cotton quilts, still shivering?" Goddess Womie answered, "They sinned. They cheated each other when they lived in the Living World and were not honest in their love. When they came to the Netherworld, they were punished like this!" Nisang Yadgan pointed to another person and asked, "Why have you hooked that person's tendon and hung him up?" Goddess Womie said, "When he was living, he did everything to cheat people. He used steel balance beams which balanced more than they should have when he put something in. And he also used balance beams which showed less than the natural weight when he loaned something to others. When he came to the Netherworld, he was punished in this way!"

"Why are those people climbing to that hill top with huge stone blocks on their heads?"

"When they worked in the Living World, they moved wood and stones from the hill. They made the wood and stones go everywhere. This injured Grandfather Bainacha's head. They should be punished after they died."

Nisang Yadgan saw a crowd being fried in a pot of oil. She saw their tortured movements in the pot and asked amusedly, "What's wrong with them?"

"When they lived in the Land of the Living, they did every bad thing. They robbed passing people and they killed kind people. After they died, they were put into oil and fried."

Nisang Yadgan asked, "Why are poisonous snakes wound about the bodies of those

women and biting them?" Goddess Womie said, "When they were alive, they had sex with other men. After they died, they are punished in this way!"

"Why are those men lying on their sides and being cut by a saw?"

"They treated their wives very cruelly when they were alive and had sex with other women. They are punished like this after they died."

"Why do those men with open mouths have no tongues?"

"They were dirty when they were alive and used pure water to wash their dirty things. They polluted holy and pure water, so when they came here, we cut out their tongues as punishment!"

"Why are those women undressed and thrown toward sharp spears and arrows?"

"When they were alive, they treated their mothers- and fathers-in-law very badly. They were not clean in dress and food and extravagant in spending."

Nisang Yadgan said, "Goddess Womie, you've given me so many lessons, thank you very much. We'll go now!" "When you return to the Living World, please warn those men and women who treat old people badly!" Goddess Womie said and returned to the treasure building.

Taking Sergudi Feiyanggu by the hand, Nisang Yadgan went ahead and soon they came to the Red River. She gave the lord of the river three pieces of paper money and three handfuls of soybean jam and crossed. They ran as quick as the wind and soon reached the boundless river which the lame *laga* guarded. They gave him three pieces of paper money and three handfuls of soybean jam. After they crossed they soon reached the gate of Bardubayin's home. When they entered, Nisang Yadgan who was lying on the ground, rang her sorcerer's bronze bell on her sorcerer's clothing with her trembling body. Nari Feiyanggu, who was drumming for her, at once understood and dripped 20 drops of water around her nose and 40 drops of water on her face. Nisang Yadgan jumped up suddenly, took her drum and drumsticks and danced in a circle as she beat the drum. Then she sat on a bench and sang:

*Brother Bayin, kuile kuile,
I nearly died, kuile kuile,
I brought your son's life back, kuile kuile,
It was very difficult, kuile kuile,
Open the coffin at once, kuile kuile.*

Just as she finished, Bardubayin ran to the coffin and looked inside. Sergudi Feiyanggu nodded and said, "Give me water, my throat is very dry!" Bardubayin happily carried his son to the *kang* and fed him soup and soft food. Sergudi Feiyanggu stood and said, "Mother, father," and kowtowed to his parents. Bardubayin and his wife were as glad as though they had found a beautiful treasure and readied a lavish feast. They invited Nisang Yadgan to sit on three layers of bed pads, led their son by the hands, knelt before her, and knocked their heads on the floor to thank her for her kindness in saving his life! Nisang Yadgan helped them stand and said, "Brother Bayin, your son will live to the advanced age of 90. He'll have no diseases or accidents from now on." Then she turned to Nari Feiyanggu, patted his shoulder, and said, "Respected Nari Feiyanggu, you helped me a great deal. Please drink a cup of liquor from my hand." Nari Feiyanggu said, "Sister *yadgan*, please drink for yourself. As your brother, I'll listen to your orders!" The banquet that Bardubayin prepared then continued on to midnight.

The second day Sergudi Feiyanggu was normal. His spirit had come back. When Nisang Yadgan was about to leave, Bardubayin gave her 1,000 *liang* of gold and silver, 10 carts of colored coats, big herds of cattle and horses, three carts of other

clothing, and three golden saddles as a reward for her kindness. Then, he accompanied her 10 *li* away and held another day-long banquet there. They parted at dusk. After Nisang Yadgan returned home, she treated her brother-in-law very well, changed her dissolute habits, and lived the life of a wealthy woman.

Afterwards, Bardubayin and his wife guarded their son every day and wouldn't let him go very far away until he was 18. When he was 20, he married a woman who was kind and able at sewing and housework. They had a perfectly satisfactory life after they married and respected and loved each other. It was said that both of them lived until they were 90 and that they had five sons and three daughters.

Afterwards, Nisang Yadgan's name was told from one to another and she became a noted *yadgan* in the world. But her husband accused her before the Netherworld Lord everyday and he went to see the Emperor and charged her before him. The Netherworld Lord discussed this with the emperor. Both agreed that the woman *yadgan* shouldn't be treated as an ordinary person. Her husband had gone to the Netherworld on time. His bones had blackened and his nose bone had dropped off. And though she was very powerful, she really couldn't save him. But if she remained alive, when people just died, they thought she might save them, consequently, the world would be crowded with too many people. And how would it be possible to deal with that? The emperor then ordered Nisang Yadgan to come to his palace to cure his mother. But she didn't cure the disease, though she tried every means. On this pretext, the emperor arrested her on the grounds of spreading rumors and cheating people, tied her with a thick iron chain, and threw her under Nine Springs.

It was said that as she was sinking, she held her hair up by her magic arts and, because her hair was very long, it showed on the surface of the water. The number of hair that appeared was the number of *yadgans* there would be among the Dagur. Because of this Dagur *yadgans* still exist today and there are many *yadgans* still treating diseases and relieving people's complaints!

Mording Etuo⁸¹

More than half of all Dagur deify Holier Barken. But some Mording Mokon people deify Mording Etuo. If you want to know why, I'll tell you a story: A woman named Mording had seven sons. When they all matured, she vanished. After many years passed, the sons had many descendants. They all married and lived with their wives and children in their own homes. Later, an old woman came to the area where they were living and often visited these families. Some descendants offered her gruel, but others ignored her and refused to give her anything. Afterwards, the families which did not invite her inside to eat gruel were plagued by evil ghosts sent by the old woman. To appease these ghosts, the families venerated Mording Etuo. The families that gave her gruel were not troubled by her and had no reason to deify her. They venerated Holier Barken.

Gahucha⁸²

After Dagur migrated to the Hailar area, a rich Manna Mokon family bought a slave from Xinbarhu and named him Aduonuonuo. Later, he became a *hojoor yadgan* of Manna Mokon and was famous for his ability. He was also known as Gahucha. In

⁸¹[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yao Xinglian

⁸²[TE]: Enkebatu; [CA]: Ewenki Banner, Baiyintouhai; [TS]: Yao Xinglian

spring, when his master herded along the banks of the Hailar River, he said to Gahucha, "You supposedly have much power. Can you make the river freeze so that we can drive the herd across?" Gahucha replied, "Yes, but my life will be shortened by 10 years and your descendants will be fewer." His master paid no heed and insisted that he invoke his magic. Gahucha complied, the river froze, and the sheep were driven across. Sometime later, files kept by a Hulunbuir magistrate disappeared and Gahucha was invited to locate them. Gahucha asked for 30 soldiers and said, "When I invoke my magic, my rear copper mirror will fall from my clothing and roll away. Follow it." After invoking his magic, his rear mirror fell to the ground and rolled to a tomb near Guandi Temple. Gahucha ordered the soldiers to dig in the tomb and added, "Don't be afraid. Regardless of what you meet, you must kill it. If any of you suffer, I shall help you." The soldiers then dug out a coffin. When they opened the lid, they saw many files and a man wearing dark glasses inside, reading. The soldiers were terrified and ran away. Gahucha then thrust a sword into this monster's heart and killed it. But blood spurted from the dying monster and landed on Gahucha's sleeve. This made him ill and he later died.

He had two powerful copper mirrors brought from Mongolia. The bigger of the two was called *arhan tuoli* and the smaller one was called *nieker tuoli*. After Gahucha died *nieker tuoli* fell into the hands of Sukedai Yadgan who always took it with him. He often went to Qiqihar by oxcart and as he returned home it rolled home first. When others saw it rolling along, they knew that Sukedai Yadgan would follow in two days.

At that time there was a small temple in the Xinan Mountains where a powerful lama lived. When he heard about the mirror he bought it from Sukedai Yadgan and put it in a sack made of three layers of cloth. He chanted Buddhist scriptures in an effort to remove the mirror's power. After 2 days and nights he was exhausted and slept. When he awoke, he found that the mirror had rolled back to Sukedai Yadgan.

Sukedai Yadgan bought some things in Qiqihar with the money he had been given for the mirror. When he returned home he stopped by the temple in the Xinan Mountains and showed the lama the mirror. The lama was then forced to acknowledge Sukedai Yadgan's power.

Origin of Manna Mokon Deity⁸³

A man of Manna Mokon was drafted into the army. Eventually he was captured and imprisoned. He took off his clothing, invoked his magic, and escaped. He ran hard every day, but because he had no food or water he weakened and died. His soul became a bird and flew to his home in Buteha. He flew inside and told his parents what had happened and finally said, "Father and mother, don't be sad for although I cannot fulfill my duty in life to take care of the two of you, I shall do so in death." His parents agreed and after discussions with other villagers, the son was deified and called Red Barken. Its image was one of nine people on a piece of red cloth. Five of the images were gold and four were silver. Afterwards, this deity protected Manna Mokon.

⁸³[CLs]: Central Nationalities Language Institute investigation team; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yao Xinglian

Zhaoli Gugu Dancing Deity⁸⁴

A beautiful young woman danced and sang very well so whenever there was a party, she danced and sang. During Spring Festival it was the custom to eat boiled dumplings, but because the village where the young woman lived had only two ladles, families were forced to eat dumplings in turn. During one particular Spring Festival, the young woman's parents sent her out to get a ladle so that they might eat dumplings. She went to another home, borrowed the ladle, and returned home. But, as she was returning, she stumbled over some cow dung near the family's cowshed, fell, and died.

All the villagers missed her and were sad. When girls danced *lurgiel*, everyone thought of her because she had danced it so well. Then, to remember the young woman, the villagers took a *zhaoli* (ladle) and dressed it in white cloth with a drawing of a young woman's face. The ladle was also given wooden legs, beautiful outer clothing, and a headdress. When dances began in the evening, the *zhaoli* was first taken to the cowshed where people called, "Zhaoli Gugu (young woman)! Come back! Let us dance *lurgiel* together." Then the *zhaoli* was taken back inside and dancing began. Two women held the dressed-up *zhaoli* and moved it back and forth on a table, making it dance in time with those dancing in the room. The dead woman's spirit observed all this and her soul descended from heaven into the *zhaoli*. Sometimes the wooden legs of the *zhaoli* doll broke. Some said that this was the moment that the spirit of the dead young woman entered the doll. In this way, the young woman celebrated Spring Festival with villagers.

Har Barken (Black God)⁸⁵

To the east of Kailieretu Village there was a temple housing a drawing depicting three people—an old woman sitting and holding a baby and a man standing by her. There is a story about this: Long ago Dagur lived along the north banks of the Heilongjiang River. Later they moved to the banks of the Nenjiang and Nuoming Rivers. Seven brothers of Ola Mokon lived there. Two lived in Duoyintun Village while the other five lived in Kailieretu. After many years the eldest brother died. He was survived by his wife who was more than 70. One day, as she worked in her garden, a dark cloud full of thunder and lightning circled around her nine times. A short time later, the sky once more cleared. Three years later, the old woman gave birth to a son who could speak and walk at birth. Villagers surmised that the child was evil for how could such a young child speak? They built a fire and threw the baby into it. As he burned, black smoke rushed out followed by a column of white smoke which rose heavenward.

The child was the reincarnation of a Tibetan Living Buddha, who, as he lay dying, told the lamas that were attending him where his next incarnation could be found. The lamas set out for the area described by the dying Living Buddha and came to the Kailieretu area and saw white smoke rising to heaven. They reached the site and, when they learned what had happened, they angrily shouted, "How terrible! The Living Buddha wished to protect you and give you happiness. Now that you have killed him your luck is gone." After the old woman and the male servant of the family died, a temple was built for them and the baby. These three were collectively

⁸⁴[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yao Xinglian

⁸⁵[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yao Xinglian

called Har Barken. Every year a cow was offered to this deity. It was beseeched to protect the village.

Man Cliff⁸⁶

There are two human-shaped stones standing on top of a cliff near Hadayang Village on the east banks of the Nenjiang River. Local Dagur call this cliff Huhad (Man Cliff). A story explains these stones: Endur lived in heaven with his nine beautiful fairy daughters who often flew down to bathe in the Nenjiang River. The fairies thought that though men lived in old broken-down adobe houses and wore threadbare clothing, they freely enjoyed the warm happiness of a family and occupied themselves with hunting and housework. In comparison life in heaven was cold, dreary, and unduly constrained by countless regulations. At last, the fairies disregarded heavenly mandate and escaped. Heaven Father and Mother discovered this and ordered the Thunder God to kill them. On their way to earth, the Thunder God killed seven. The other two flew down to a cliff near Hadayang Village and transformed themselves into stone where they could gaze down at man's world. They thought that this was better than being killed by the Thunder God. But, just as one was in the process of transforming herself, Thunder God struck her head.

Not long afterwards a plague spread in Hadayang Village causing many deaths. A *yadgan* went into trance and his god spoke through him, saying that two fairy maidens originally wished to live on earth, but heaven father and mother intervened and this wish had not been realized. After their deaths, they felt wronged. They continued to wish to live with men and had caused illness so as to attract attention. The *yadgan's* god ordered the people to build and sacrifice to a tablet to the fairies.

Village elders assembled and after discussion, a bull and sheep were sacrificed and the tablet was made. The *yadgan* said:

*Fairy maidens,
We have killed a bull and sheep,
To conciliate your souls,
We receive you as fairy goddesses.
Please don't be evil spirits,
Grant our children and grandchildren peace and health,
Bless them so they will multiply as the branches of trees,
Protect our animals so that they may be as dense as grass.*

Afterwards, generation after generation, this tale about the cliff maidens has been told in Hadayang Village.

⁸⁶[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhang Guoqiang

Tricksters

The Dreamer⁸⁷

A younger brother lived with his elder brother and his wife. Though they were poor, they lived together happily. A rich neighbor had a sow which was soon to litter. One day the sow went missing. Many people searched for it, but she couldn't be found. Finally, the rich man put up a notice that said whoever found the sow could have half of the piglets. When Younger Brother read this he said to his sister-in-law, "Tell our neighbor that I shall find his sow. I'll dream for 3 days." The sister-in-law delivered this message and returned home. Meanwhile, Younger Brother pretended to sleep, but that night he dressed and went out. He searched unsuccessfully for the sow. The same thing happened the next night. The third night he anxiously searched about 5 kilometers from his home and managed to find the sow with a litter of 12 piglets. Four had white spots on their heads, four had white spots on their front feet, and four had white spots on their body.

Early the next morning, the rich man's daughter-in-law came and asked if Younger Brother had located the sow in the course of his dreaming. Younger Brother entered the room where she was and said, "I dreamed of a place 5 kilometers southeast of here. You will find the sow and her piglets under a big tree. We can go there together tomorrow." The next day Younger Brother led the rich man to the sow and her litter. As he had promised, the rich man gave Younger Brother half of the piglets.

News of Younger Brother spread and, in a few days, a famous hunter who had lost his hawk sent his son to Younger Brother's home to invite him to come to dream at his home. Though Younger Brother declared that he was unable to find things by dreaming, the son insisted, thinking Younger Brother was only being modest. At last Younger Brother was forced to go. When he reached the hunter's home, he received him warmly and promised to give him three pieces of money if he could locate his hawk. Younger Brother lay down on the hunter's *kang* and pretended to sleep. As before, he went out at night and, on the third night, he found the hawk 5 kilometers south of the village. It was in a tree with its leg straps around a branch. The next day Younger Brother described the place where he had "dreamed" of the hawk and he and the hunter rode there where they found it. The hunter happily gave Younger Brother three pieces of money as he had promised.

Younger Brother was now famous throughout the land and the county leader, who had lost his jade ring, ordered two servants to take a sedan chair and ask him to come to his home. Though he was afraid to go, for he knew that he had no ability to find things in dreams, he was more afraid of angering the official. He discussed what he ought to do with his sister-in-law, who made some suggestions. Then he got into the sedan and they began their trip to the county leader's home. After some distance, Younger Brother said loudly to himself, "I now know who stole the ring. And as soon as we reach the county leader's home, I'll tell him." He repeated this again and again. When they neared the county leader's home, the two servants threw themselves before him, confessed to having stolen the ring, and begged Younger Brother not to tell. Younger Brother said that he would not if they would tell him where they had

⁸⁷[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yan Zheng

hidden it. They told them this and a bit later, they arrived at the county leader's home.

For the next 3 days Younger Brother ate and drank well during the day and slept well at night. All the county leader's household moved about quietly in fear of interrupting his concentration. On the morning of the fourth day, Younger Brother announced, "In my dreams, I have located your ring. It is buried at the northeast corner of your home." The ring was thus found and, to show his gratitude, the county leader feasted Younger Brother for another 3 days and gave him many pieces of money.

Some days later the emperor lost his seal and, though many searched for it, it could not be found. A minister had heard about Younger Brother and suggested that he be brought to the palace to locate the seal. The emperor agreed and sent a minister to Younger Brother's home to invite him to the palace. When they arrived and stated their purpose, Younger Brother was terrified for he knew that if he made a mistake the consequences could be very severe. He again consulted his sister-in-law, who told him that he should do exactly what he had done last time for only those close to the emperor would have had access to the seal. Somewhat reassured, Younger Brother then said, "After we have gone about 2 kilometers away, light some firewood. I will say that we must return and that way, I can gain another day."

The next day when they had set out and were about 2 kilometers away, Younger Brother suddenly shouted, "Horrible! Something has happened! We must return." They then returned to the village and found the family's pile of firewood half burned. The emperor's minister was impressed, and decided that Younger Brother had true ability. The next day they set out again and Younger Brother pretended to sleep. When they were about 5 kilometers away, Younger Brother suddenly sat up and screamed, "The courtyard gate of my home is on fire! We must return!" They did return and found just what Younger Brother had "seen" in his "dream." This too, he had arranged with his sister-in-law.

The next day they left again for the palace and Younger Brother said only that he knew who had stolen the ring. When they were about half-way to the palace a minor official in the entourage called him aside. He confessed that he and another man had stolen the seal and hidden it in a dry well. He begged Younger Brother not to tell this to the emperor. Younger Brother agreed. When they entered the palace, many officials lined the entrance to welcome him. The emperor, dressed in his imperial robes, received him seated on his throne. He told Younger Brother that he hoped he could find the seal and he didn't care if it took him 30 days, just as long as he found it. He ordered Younger Brother to be given the best of care while he was at the palace.

Four days later, Younger Brother went before the emperor and said that he had seen the seal in a dry well behind the palace. After some searching, the seal was found there. The emperor gave a state banquet in Younger Brother's honor and also presented him with 10,000 pieces of money. Younger Brother returned to his village where he lived happily with his brother and sister-in-law.

Getting a Flock of Sheep⁸⁸

One day a clever orphan bought a mule, put a coin up its anus, and then led the mule to a rich man's house, and said, "This mule can pass a coin everyday," jerked on the mule's tail and tapped its back. The mule immediately passed a coin. The rich man looked at the mule eagerly and said, "I must buy it! How much do you want?" The orphan agreed to sell it for two silver coins.

The next day, the rich man pulled the mule's tail, tapped its back, and looked expectantly at the mule's anus. Suddenly, the mule defecated all over the rich man's face. Realizing that he had been cheated, the rich man angrily grabbed a hammer and started off to the orphan's home. The orphan had anticipated this and had told his wife to lie on the *kang* and pretend to be dead. He also readied two hammers--a black one and a red one. When the rich man stormed in the orphan said, "I was just thinking of visiting you. I'll go with you, but first, let me rescue my wife." Then he took the red hammer and struck his wife's body several times with it. In a moment, his wife seemed to come alive, breathed deeply, and said, "I've slept such a long time." The curious rich man immediately demanded an explanation. "The black hammer makes living people become dead and this red hammer brings them back to life again. There is no farmwork in winter so I kill my wife and save a lot of food. In spring, I pound her with the red hammer and bring her back to life. These are life-and-death hammers," the orphan patiently explained.

The rich man said that he had to have the hammers and the orphan gave them to him. Once he returned home, he killed all his family members with the hammers. Later, when he attempted to bring them back to life with the red hammer, he found that they were still dead. Enraged, he rushed to the orphan's home where he bound the orphan, tied him up in a bag, and vowed to throw him into a river. On the way to a nearby river, he became hungry and hung the bag on a courtyard gate and went inside the home to ask for something to eat. At that moment a crippled man passed by with some sheep. The orphan saw him through a hole in the bag and shouted, "I was also crippled, but after I was put into this bag I was cured." The crippled man didn't rest until the orphan had tied him up in the bag. The orphan then returned to his home, driving the crippled man's sheep.

After the rich man finished eating, he took the bag, went on to the river, and tossed it into the water. Several days later he decided to visit the orphan's home and steal the orphan's "widow." When he arrived, he was amazed to find the orphan at home with many sheep. The orphan explained that once he had been thrown in the river he had been saved by heaven and granted many sheep besides. The rich man then wouldn't rest until the orphan had tied him into a bag and thrown him into the river where he drowned. Afterwards, the orphan became famous.

Wise Words⁸⁹

An old couple had only a simple son whom they were very fond of and, after much effort, they managed to marry him to a clever woman who did not know her husband was a simpleton until after the marriage. Then she returned home. After discussing the matter with her parents, she decided to separate permanently from her husband. The father of the young man thought it would be best for his son to become more

⁸⁸[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Qin Wei

⁸⁹[TE]: Meng Jinfang; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yang Ying

wise in the ways of the world and said, "Son, here are three gold coins. Take them and go out into the world that you may learn something."

The son started off and soon came to a nearby village where he saw two men standing on a river bank talking. The young man ran over and said, "What are you talking about?" "None of your business," replied one of the men.

"If you tell me, I'll give you a gold coin."

"Well, in that case, we were just saying that there are many fish in the river and it's a pity we don't have a fork to catch the fish."

The young man gave them a gold coin and went on. A short while later he came to a house and saw two men gesturing at the roof and talking. He ran over and again offered a gold coin if they would tell him what they were talking about. One man said, "We were discussing this house. The eaves are curved and the house may soon collapse." After using his second gold coin, the young man started off again and soon noticed an officer coming out of his office, talking to one of his assistants. The young man ran over and promised to give him his last gold coin if he would tell him what he had just said. "I just said, 'I'll go now. See you at court tomorrow,'" the officer said.

The young man returned home, having spent all his coins. Two days later, his father ordered him to go to his wife's home and bring her back. The young man's father-in-law was a civil official and had three married daughters--counting the one who had been married to the simple young man. His other two sons-in-law were educated, whereas the young man was illiterate. When the young man reached his father-in-law's home and was served a meal, his two sisters-in-law teased him by giving him a bowl of food, but no chopsticks. "There are many fish in the river. What a pity there is no fork with which to catch them," said the young man. The two sisters-in-law were amazed and gave him a pair of chopsticks.

But the father-in-law was not impressed and continued to glare, with hunched shoulders, at the young man from where he sat on the *kang*. Noticing this, the young man said, "The eaves have become curved. Maybe the house will fall down after a few days." The father assumed that the young man was talking about him and quickly sat up straight. After the meal, he was ready to return home. The father-in-law's family went with him to the courtyard gate to see him off. "I will go now. See you in court tomorrow," he said. The old parents-in-law were frightened by this and said, "Dear son, wait a moment. Take your wife back now." Afterwards, the wife was content to live with the foolish son-in-law.

The Fool⁹⁰

A mother and her two sons often set traps behind their garden to catch game. One day Elder Brother told Younger Brother to check the traps. When Younger Brother got there he found a pheasant. Thinking that it probably belonged to a rich man he released it. On the second day he found a fox and thought that it was probably a rich man's dog and he let it go. On the third day he found that his mother was caught in one of the traps and beat her to death with a piece of wood. Younger Brother returned home and told Elder Brother that some game had been caught in a trap. When Elder Brother beheld his dead mother he was angry, but since Younger Brother was a fool, he could not be blamed. The two brothers then planned a funeral and Elder Brother told Younger Brother to go notify their sister.

⁹⁰[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Mao Huiqing

Younger Brother set off on a donkey, but when he reached a river the donkey refused to cross. The fool thought, "The donkey is afraid of wetting his shoes," so he cut off the donkey's hooves. The donkey still refused to cross and he thought, "It's afraid of getting its trousers wet," so he skinned the donkey's legs. The donkey refused to budge and he thought, "It's afraid of getting its upper clothing wet," so he skinned the entire donkey. The donkey died and Younger Brother crossed the river alone.

After he reached his sister's home and told her about their mother's death his sister set about preparing a meal. In the meantime, he played with his little nephew who began crying. He untied a cloth around the baby's head to see what was wrong. When he saw the place on the baby's scalp where the skull had not yet closed moving up and down, he thought that it must be a skin problem and sucked it, killing the baby. His sister said that she would go out to pick vegetables from the garden, and asked him to build a fire. Younger Brother found no wood in the house so stepped out into the courtyard where he saw many children playing. When he looked at the children, he saw that their ears resembled oak leaves so he twisted them off and threw them into the stove. A moment later the ears, dripping with blood, began burning and the odor of this issued from the stove. He looked in a pot and saw the contents bubbling. He muttered, "Don't fight!" picked up an ax and slashed the pot, breaking it, and sending the contents all over the kitchen.

When she returned from the garden, his sister found bloody children lying all over the courtyard, her kitchen in terrible disarray, and her infant lying dead in the inner room. She was too angry to say a word. The next day she told him to return to his home. She gave him white mourning cloth and a bag of rice. When he reached the river he noticed the rolling water and thought, "The water is now boiling so I'll add the rice." After throwing the rice in the river he crossed and noticed many reeds swaying. He thought, "The reeds want towels to wash," and tore the mourning cloth into pieces and tied them to the reeds. When he returned home he told everything that had happened to Elder Brother who decided that his brother did not deserve to live any longer. A few days later Elder Brother went to a mountain and readied a large stone. Then the next day he said to his brother, "Go to the mountain tomorrow and catch a red ox which we shall sacrifice to mother." The next day Elder Brother went to the mountain very early in the morning where he heated the large stone red hot. Later, when he saw Younger Brother coming, he pushed the stone down the mountain. Younger Brother thought it was a red ox and, when he tried to drive it home, he was burned to death.

The Wind Blows Bukui Away⁹¹

Those who have lived in Qiqihar know that the wind there can blow without stopping for days at a time. Qiqihar is situated on the east banks of the Nenjiang River. Its original name was Bukui. Local people often say, when discussing the wind, "The wind is blowing Bukui away." A story related to this is commonly told among Dagur: Long ago the present Qiqihar was barren and unpopulated. On the west banks of the Nenjiang River there were several Dagur villages. They had been there for generations and the residents lived a peaceful life hunting, herding, and fishing.

One day a Qing Dynasty official led an army there and a geomancer located a propitious building site. These activities mystified local Dagur. A few days later, a

⁹¹[CL]: Sui Shujin; [CA]: Qiqihar suburbs; [TS]: Zhang Guoqiang

construction site was marked off, posts were set in place, a foundation was dug, and sand and stones were moved to the location. The official announced, "The Qing Dynasty orders barbarians living in mountains and near mountains subdued. A garrison will be built here and an army will guard the border. All those living in this area must leave within three days. Those who do not comply will be beheaded and their heads hung up as an example to others!" Local people were furious and after much discussion, decided to seek the advice of Grandfather Suyi, who, despite being over 80, was clearheaded. They consulted him during difficult times. That evening a large crowd assembled at his home. After listening to various suggestions, Grandfather Suyi presented his own plan: "When the sun goes behind the west mountains and the sunset is red as rouge, a storm is in the offing. We now have an opportunity to move what has been brought here to another place." He proceeded to enumerate in great detail exactly what was to be done.

That night under the light of a full moon, Grandfather Suyi and several young men went to the construction site and memorized the exact location of everything. They then crossed the river to the east bank, marked out the new construction site, and then returned home. Not long afterwards, the windstorm struck and, while the wind was blowing, everything at the construction site was ferried across that night. Three days later the wind stopped blowing and the official and some soldiers returned to the construction site. They found to their astonishment, that the construction site was now on the east bank. The official decided that this was an act of heaven and exclaimed, "Divine mandates must never be defied," and ordered Bukui city built at the new site.

Thumb Boy⁹²

As a poor old couple grew older their health deteriorated and they yearned all the more for a child. They prayed to the gods for help. One day, while the old man was working in the fields, the old woman stayed at home making buckwheat noodles. While cutting dough, she sliced off a thumb. She carefully picked it up, put it on a table, and continued working. A few minutes later she heard a childish voice shouting, "Mother!" She looked around and found a thumb-sized boy standing on the table where she had put the thumb. The little boy said, "I'll take the food you are making to father." After the meal was ready and in a pail, the little boy left with the pail balanced on his head. When he reached the field where the old man was working, he shouted, "Father! Come eat. I've brought food." The old man didn't see anyone, but when he went to the edge of the field, he found a pail of food on the cart. He heard someone call again, "Father, eat." Still, the old man didn't see anything and thought that the voice must be that of a ghost. He quickly drove the cart home. After his wife told him all that had happened he was convinced that the thumb boy was a ghost and said angrily, "I must kill him!" The thumb boy quickly hid when he learned his father wanted to kill him. The old man couldn't find him. He said to his wife, "Since you love this boy, you live with him. I'm leaving for I know he is a ghost and will kill me."

While the old woman put some food in a bag, the boy went inside the bag and was taken by the old man as he left. Some distance from the home, the old man said, "I've left my ghost son behind so there's no need for me to be afraid any longer." "Who did you leave behind? I'm still with you," the boy said from the bag. The old

⁹²[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Jiang Weiqing

man threw the bag on the road and went on. A while later he said, "Now I have surely left my ghost son behind!"

"No! You didn't leave me. I'm still following you."

"Where are you?"

"I'm on your arm."

The old man then cut off the offending arm and went on. A bit later he said, "Now I've finally gotten away from him."

"No! I'm still following you."

"Where are you?"

"I'm on your foot."

The old man cut off his foot and in time, had cut off all his limbs and lay helpless on the road where he said, "Now I've gotten away from him at last."

"No! I'm still with you."

"Where are you?"

"In your heart."

Then the old man managed to thrust a knife into his heart and died. When the boy returned home, his mother was waiting for him at the courtyard gate. Afterwards, the two lived happily together.

The Poor Boy and the Official⁹³

A couple had a 7-year-old son. The husband was an accomplished thief who had never been discovered stealing. One day after supper the father said, "I have stolen things from rich men's homes in order to live and they have never caught me. I dare say no one in the world is my equal in theft." At this moment his son said, "I'm better at stealing than you. I can even steal the soles of someone's shoes as they walk." The two decided to compete in stealing to see who was the most skilled. "I'll steal the eggs from the crow's eggs in the tree in front of our house and the crows won't know. And while I'm about it, let's see if you can steal the soles from my shoes," the father suggested.

The father went to the tree and took off his shoes and hid them under the tree. Meanwhile, the son crept up and quietly cut out the soles and then went back inside the home. After the father stole the eggs and climbed down the tree, he found that his soles were gone. Back inside the home he said to his son, "When did you steal my soles?" "As you walked there. Didn't you feel it?" replied the boy. The father declared that as his son was such an accomplished thief, he no longer needed to steal. Instead, he would depend on his son.

In time a local official heard about the boy and summoned him. "I hear you are a good thief. I want to test your ability. Let's see if you can steal our rich neighbor's pig." The boy replied, "I'm very young and want you to go with me," and then asked two servants to prepare a large bag of ashes. That midnight, the official, the boy, and the two servants went to the rich man's home. At the pigsty the boy told the two servants to open the sty gate just wide enough for the pig to squeeze through. Then he put the bag of ashes at the opening and drove the pig into the bag. Its mouth full of ashes, the pig was unable to make a sound and the boy quickly killed it with a knife. The men then quietly took a large cooking pot from the rich man's kitchen and cooked the pig nearby. As they were eating the boy shouted, "Rich man, the official stole your pig and is eating it." The family was thus awakened. When the rich man

⁹³[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Ma

came out of his home, he found the official gnawing on a big pig bone. "You're an official. Why did you steal my pig?" the rich man demanded angrily. "It wasn't me, it was the boy," the official said. "You helped him didn't you?" the rich man retorted.

After being thus disgraced, the official had a strong desire for revenge. A few days later, he ordered the boy to come to his home again. He said, "You humiliated me on that previous occasion. I have three things for you to do. If you can do them all, I shall not punish you, but if you cannot do them, I shall. First, you must steal my wife's yellow silk trousers today." When the boy returned to his home, he went into the family pig sty with a small bag, scraped some fleas and lice off a pig with a fine-toothed comb, and put them into the bag. Meanwhile, the official told his wife the boy would attempt to steal her yellow silk trousers and ordered her to sleep in them. At midnight, the boy approached the official's home where he found a total of six men guarding the courtyard, the front door of the house, and the bedroom. Fortunately they were sleeping so he easily slipped into the bedroom where a lamp was burning and the couple were sleeping like dead pigs. He put the fleas and lice under the wife's quilt. This made her itch so much that she kicked her trousers off and out from under the quilt. The boy picked them up and when he was safely outside, shouted, "Official, I've stolen your wife's trousers!"

This awakened the sleeping guards, who began to accuse each other of being responsible for the theft. Though he was enraged, he could only vent his anger on his servants. The next day the official said to the boy, "Tonight, you must kill, cook, and eat my yellow cow in my home." That night the official's home was even more heavily guarded, but at midnight all the guards were again sleeping. Two guards were mounted on horseback at the courtyard entrance. The boy picked up the saddles that they were seated on and quietly hung them--still sitting on their saddles--on the courtyard wall. He then quietly entered the courtyard and tied the queues of the sleeping guards together. He walked over to the corner of the courtyard where the cow was. Finding the pen's two guards fast asleep, he carefully pulled the cow out of the pen and killed it. After skinning it, he put the skin on the floor of the official's bedroom and threw the cow's heart and liver under the quilt covering the official's wife. After cooking the cow and eating some meat, he awakened the household with a shout to the official that he had accomplished the second task. The servants hanging on the wall were frightened and the servants who had their queues tied together began quarrelling. When the official got out of bed, his feet touched the slippery hide and he fell. At about the same time his wife screamed, "Have my heart and liver come out? Am I giving birth?" Though the official was enraged, he was amazed that the boy had managed to outwit 10 guards. He said, "You have killed and cooked the yellow cow without our being aware of it. You are wonderful. Now let's see if you can steal my jade ring."

The next midnight the boy returned with a cat and dealt with the sleeping servants as he had the previous night. The official was also sleeping, but the hand with the ring was out from under the quilt. The boy put the cat over the ringed hand and slapped its head. The cat bit the official's hand. The official painfully shook his hand and the jade ring fell off. The boy picked it up, ran outside, and shouted, "Official, I have stolen your jade ring!" Because of their agreement, the official could not punish the boy. When local landlords heard about the boy, they securely locked their courtyard gates and windows. But it was all to no avail. The boy still stole what he wanted.

Heroes

The Bear's Son⁹⁴

One day when a mother and her daughter were gathering firewood a bear ran up, grabbed the daughter, and carried her to his den. Though the mother searched for her daughter, she couldn't find her and, when darkness began to fall, sadly returned home.

When they reached the bear's den, the girl said to the bear, "You want to eat me, don't you?" The bear shook its head. "Well, what do you want?" she asked. The bear pulled her inside its cave, rolled a stone across the opening, and left. Some time later, he returned with rabbits and wild chickens which the girl cooked and ate. That night the bear moved near her and though she did not want to sleep with him, she was afraid that if she refused he would injure her. Some months later she gave birth to a son which looked very much like the mother. In just a few months, the boy was as tall as his mother. He was very strong and he could talk.

One day the mother told her son how she had come to be in the cave and how she hoped to leave. Now that the bear had a son, he no longer watched the cave so carefully and one day, he left to go hunting without closing the cave entrance. The mother and boy escaped as soon as the bear was gone. But not long afterwards, the bear returned. Finding that they had escaped he gave chase and soon caught up with them. When they refused to return, the bear charged. The son jumped on the bear's back and beat his head with his fists. Meanwhile, the mother threw her son a stone from where she was hiding behind a tree. The boy clubbed the bear to death with the stone.

When they returned to the boy's grandmother's home, the grandmother was delighted with her daughter's return and the fact that she had such a strong grandson. Because the boy's strength was very great, the mother and grandmother restricted him to the courtyard, fearing that if he went outside, he might unintentionally harm someone. But one day, after much pleading, the mother and grandmother consented that he might go outside for a time. While he was walking around outside, he heard someone shouting for help and saw an ox running wildly with a cart. He ran over and, though he only lightly tapped the ox's head, it fell dead to the ground. The cart owner then came running up and forced the boy to go before a local official and charged him with killing his ox.

When the official heard what had happened he knew the boy had done nothing wrong and was prepared to let him go home. But two of his assistants were jealous of the boy's strength and whispered to the official, "A tiger on West Mountain often kills people. Let this boy kill that tiger." The official then ordered the boy to kill the tiger.

When the boy returned home and told his mother and grandmother what had happened, his grandmother took out a sword and said, "This was your grandfather's. Tigers sleep for 3 days and nights. Kill this tiger when it is sleeping." The young man took the sword and, mounting a horse, set out for West Mountain where he found the tiger asleep. He cut off its head and returned to the official who so admired

⁹⁴[TE]: Narengua; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhao Chunming

the young man that he desired to give him an important position. But his two jealous aides said, "To the southeast of here lives an evil dragon. Order him to kill this dragon." The official agreed and ordered the young man to subdue the evil dragon. When he returned home and told his latest assignment, his grandmother said, "Dragons sleep 7 days and nights. When they wake, they weep for a moment, laugh for a moment, and then blow out air for a moment. When it weeps, there is a flood. When it laughs, there is fire. When it blows, there is a strong wind. Be careful."

After a long ride, the boy came to a mountain where he saw the dragon sleeping at the top. He climbed up the mountain and ran back and forth along the dragon's back. The dragon woke and asked, "What tiny animal disturbs my dreams?" "I've come here to take your heart and liver," the young man shouted and then ran some distance away. The dragon wept, laughed, and exhaled which created in turn, a terrible flood, fierce fires all across the mountain, and a terrible wind. Each time the young man evaded these dangers. Finally, the dragon decided to inhale. As he was drawing a deep breath the young man held his sword in front of him and as he was pulled into the dragon, the dragon was cut in two and died. The young man took the dragon's heart and liver to the official, who was again persuaded by his treacherous aides to assign the young man a third task: to dispatch a 100-headed monster living in the south.

When he went home his grandmother handed him a sash and said, "This is a treasure handed down from our ancestors. It can expand and shrink." The young man tied it on and left. After riding a long way he came upon a deserted house which he entered. At midnight, two ghosts grabbed his arms. The young man awakened immediately. The ghosts were terrified by his strength. They knelt and begged to become his sworn brothers. The young man knew he would need help when he battled the monster and agreed. Some days later the three came to a house with five rooms. In one room they found much boiled mutton which they ate. That evening at dusk a giant approached. He was so enormous that he blocked out the sky. But strangely, as he came nearer and nearer the house he became smaller and smaller. When he reached the home he was a normal-sized man. The young man thought that his was probably the monster and hid behind a door. When the monster entered the room, he cut off his head, but immediately he grew another. This continued with the young man cutting off 50-60 heads. Then the monster transformed himself into a tiny person and escaped. They pursued him until they came to a precipice. They searched about and found a cave leading deep into the earth. The young man then removed his sash and tied one end to his waist and the other end to a tree.

When he reached the cave bottom, he pulled the sash three times to notify the ghosts, who were waiting for him above, that he had reached the bottom. He walked forward and, after some minutes, he came to a small building. Inside he found a lovely girl. After she learned that he was trying to kill the monster, who had imprisoned her in the cave, she said, "Near here there is a mill. On the millstone are two metal balls. They are the monster's soul. If you take them, you can kill him." The young man found the mill and, as soon as he picked up the iron balls, the monster ran up and pleaded for his life. But the young man, conscious of the terrible crimes that the monster had committed, broke the balls on the mill. The monster howled in pain and after the young man slashed him a few times with his sword, he died.

The girl and young man then walked to the cave entrance where they pulled on the rope to signal the ghosts to pull them up. The girl went first and as soon as she reached the top, the ghosts wanted her for their own. They then cut the sash so the young man could climb out. He turned, walked back into the cave, and came to another building where he found a bird as tall as a man in one room. In another room

he found an old gray-haired man sitting on an earthen *kang*. After telling the old man his experiences the old man said, "Only it can help you. Beg it for help."

After asking the bird for help, the bird said, "It will require 18 days for us to leave this cave. Prepare adequate food." The young man got food from the old man and, with the young man mounted on its back, the bird took off. Seventeen days later, they had run out of food. The bird was nearly too weak to continue so the young man began cutting flesh off his leg to feed the bird. Once they got out of the cave, the bird noticed the young man was bleeding and asked why. After the young man explained the bird said, "Your kindness will be rewarded," and left.

When the young man reached the deserted house where he had first met the ghosts, he found the girl inside with the two ghosts standing around, trying to force themselves upon her. Without a second thought he killed them. Then the two went to see the official. The official gave him an important military position and the young man lived happily with his grandmother and mother.

Behuole dai and Bekunchuo⁹⁵

During the early Qing Dynasty, a couple lived with their newly married son, Behuole dai. They had a servant, Bekunchuo, who had grown up with the son. The two were as close as brothers. One day an order came that two conscripts should be sent from this village, on the west bank of the Nenjiang River, where the family lived. The village head was worried because, owing to an annual conscription, only a few males aged 15-50 remained. There were many widows and orphans. The village's son seemed destined to be conscripted, but after giving it some thought, the village head decided that Behuole dai and Bekunchuo should be conscripted instead.

At this time Behuole dai's father died. Two days later the village head came with the conscription documents as the family was sadly occupied with funeral preparations. There was then no time to build a coffin before the two young men were to leave. They wrapped the corpse in bedclothes and buried it in the backyard with the hope of moving the corpse to the ancestral graveyard after Behuole dai returned from military service. Five years later Behuole dai received a serious wound while fighting in Hubei Province. Thinking that he would probably die, Behuole dai's commander permitted Bekunchuo to escort him back home. During the long trek back home, Behuole dai weakened and finally said to Bekunchuo, "I will die. Please leave me and go back home. Sing this song to mother when you see her:"

Dear mother! Mother!
Yijierwo, yijierwo!
Please hear my song!
Yijierwo, yijierwo!
Marched to Dangyang Town,
Received 30 liang of silver.
Yijierwo, yijierwo!
Marched to Hunan,
Received 70 liang of silver,
Marched to Hubei,
Received 80 liang of silver.
Yijierwo, yijierwo!

⁹⁵[TE]: Xiaobaxi; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yang Ying

*In summer,
 I rolled on green satin!
 In spring,
 I rolled on black satin!
 In winter,
 I rolled on white satin!
 In fall,
 I rolled on yellow satin!
 Yijierwo, yijierwo!
 Every spring brought so many flocks of sheep,
 That I couldn't pasture them.
 Every summer favored me with so many herds of cattle,
 That I couldn't tend them.
 Every autumn brought me many horses,
 Every winter I had so much wealth,
 That I had no place to put it.
 Too many to ride.
 Yijierwo, yijierwo!
 There is a pine planted behind the house,
 Perhaps it is withered.
 Please water it.
 There is a pot at the head of the kang.
 Perhaps it is cracked.
 Please mend it.
 Yijierwo, yijierwo!
 There is a plump yellow horse,
 Don't make it pull a heavy load.
 Please care for it.
 The kurxin eagle in the barn,
 Has never flown away from home.
 Please train it patiently.
 Yijierwo, yijierwo!
 The drawer of the red chest on the kang,
 Has my gold and silver galoha.
 Please care for them.
 Gold and silver are beier words.
 Please loosen the plump yellow horse's reins,
 Let the reins be slack.
 Yijierwo, yijierwo!
 The gold and silver galoha are shaoer words.
 Please unsaddle the plump yellow horse,
 Let it go ahead freely.
 Not matter beier or shaoer,
 Don't think that I'm not at home,
 And give up the serious education.
 Yijierwo, yijierwo!
 There are two elms behind the house,
 Don't think that I'm not at home,
 And forget to hold a memorial ceremony.
 There is a pine behind the house,
 Don't think that I'm not at home,
 And forget to move it.*

Yijierwo, yijierwo!
Dear mother! Mother!
You reared me,
But I shall go first,
And never see you again during my life.
I haven't repaid my parents' love and kindness,
Please forgive your son who will atone for his crimes in the next life.
Yijierwo, yijierwo!

After this song, Behuoledai said, "Tell mother that after my death, I wish to become the *hojoo barken* of Dengteke Mokon. Though I could not care for my family while alive, I'm willing to protect the *mokon* after I die. Let all mothers who have lost sons draw comfort from this. Let all children who have lost their fathers have a good life. Let all widows be happy and secure," and then he died. Bekunchuo found a pine tree on a hill, buried Behuoledai, and half a month later, he returned home. When the old mother saw him returning alone she knew what had happened. Bekunchuo said, "Your son wished to be the *hojoo barken* of our *mokon*. He asked me to sing this song to you. After he sang this song, the old mother, though overcome with grief, sang:

Dear son! Dear son!
You died far away from me,
I stand in the yard to speak to you,
I understand you,
And I shall arrange everything well.
Dear son! Dear son!
When you were in Dangyang, you got 20 liang of silver,
Meaning you were wounded in 20 places.
You got 30 liang of silver in Nanyang,
Meaning you were wounded in 30 places.
Dear son! Dear son!
You got 70 liang of silver in Hunan,
Meaning that you were wounded in 70 places.
Dear son! Dear son!
You got 80 liang of silver in Hubei,
Meaning that you were wounded in 80 places.
Dear son! Dear son!
In spring you rolled on black satin,
Meaning you crawled on black earth.
In summer you rolled on green satin,
Meaning you crawled on green grass.
Dear son! Dear son!
In fall you rolled on yellow satin,
Meaning you crawled on withered grass.
In winter you rolled on white satin,
Meaning you crawled on snow.
Dear son! Dear son!
Every spring you couldn't pasture many flocks of sheep,
Meaning you had many lice.
Every summer you couldn't tend many herds of cattle,
Meaning you had many bugs.

*Every fall you had more horses that you could ride,
 Meaning you had many fleas.
 Every winter you had much wealth,
 Meaning maggots grew in your wounds.
 Dear son! Dear son!
 There is a pine behind the house,
 Your father's grave.
 The pot on the kang means me.
 The two elms behind the house,
 Are your ancestors' graves.
 The kurxin eagle in the barn,
 Is your youngest sister.
 Dear son! Dear son!
 The plump yellow horse is your wife.
 Gold and silver galoha in the red chest drawer,
 Refers to your child.
 Galoha are beier words,
 Means if the child is a boy,
 Your wife shouldn't remarry.
 Galoha are shaoer words,
 Means if the child is a girl,
 Your wife should soon remarry.
 Dear son! Dear son!
 What a bright child you were!
 Even when you were dying, your heart was at home.
 What a good son you were!
 Even when dying you still thought of the village's poor.
 My heart breaks when I hear your song.
 When I realize you are dead,
 Blood pounds in my head.
 Dear son! Dear son!
 Please don't worry,
 Don't worry about anything.
 Heaven will protect us.
 All will live in peace and security.*

Afterwards, the people living there venerated Behuoledai as the *mokon hojoor barken*.
 This god has protected them day and night, they have lived in peace, children are
 healthy, and old people have long lives.

Three Brothers⁹⁶

A father lived with his three sons. The oldest two were ugly and evil. The youngest
 was handsome and kindhearted. One morning the father said, "Last night I dreamed
 of a white horse. It circled the sun three times and then vanished in the waters of East
 Sea. If I could have that horse, how happy I would be!" In order to realize their
 father's wish, the three sons set out. After a long journey they came to an
 intersection. By one road hung a sign which read: "Those desiring good fortune, walk

⁹⁶[TE]: Lualuo; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhu Peiyan

this way." Near a second road was a sign which read: "All things will turn out as you wish." And a third sign read: "Despite many difficulties, one's hopes will be realized." Eldest Brother walked down the first road, Second Brother walked down the second, and Third Brother was left with the third road.

After many days Third Brother reached an ocean and wondered if this was what his father had dreamed of. After a half-month wait, he saw a snowy white horse gallop out of the water, circle the early morning sun three times, and then fly down to the beach and roll in the sand. Third Brother quickly jumped on its back. Though the white horse tried he could not throw the young man. At last he said submissively, "You are my master." After the young man explained why he had come the horse said, "My home is water and when I go to your home, I shall be very lonely. Let me bring the youngest of my ten sisters with us."

At noon, as Third Brother hid near the beach, 10 fairies came to the beach, took off their clothing, and jumped into the sea. Third Brother quietly stole the clothing of the youngest. When they were ready to leave, they could not find the clothing of the youngest fairy. Finally, the older nine flew away, leaving her behind. Third Brother came out, returned her clothing, and explained why he had stolen her clothes. The two jumped on the white horse and flew to the place where Third Brother had parted with his two older brothers. The two older brothers were there, sitting by the road. They envied their younger brother and plotted how to get the beauty and the horse. After urging Third Brother and the fairy to rest, they ran ahead, dug a pit, and covered the top. Then they returned and suggested that they walk for a while. The two older brothers carefully walked behind and, as they had hoped, Third Brother fell into the pit. Then the two older brothers took the horse and beauty and went home. They proudly gave the horse to their father and made no mention of Third Brother.

The fairy wept every day and refused to speak. The horse was also dejected and escaped one night. The two brothers fought over the fairy, despite their father's remonstrations. After a half-month, the fairy could endure the situation no longer, pulled out a hair, and blew on it. The white horse appeared. The two discussed how they might save Third Brother who had now been in the pit for two weeks. After regaining consciousness from his fall, he had tried to climb out, but had failed. Just as he was about to give up hope, the fairy and the white horse appeared and helped him out. When they returned to Third Brother's home, the two older brothers were so ashamed that they hung themselves behind the house. When the father learned what the two elder brothers had done he said, "Your brothers deserved such an end." Afterwards, they led a happy life together.

Seventh Son⁹⁷

Within a government official's area someone died everyday. Though the official dispatched people to investigate the causes of the deaths, no one offered a satisfactory explanation. Finally the official called his sons together. They included a cripple, a blind man, a deaf man, a dumb man, and a fool. Only his youngest son was capable. The father declared that he was ready to resign because he was not able to discover the reason for the deaths. Seventh Son urged his father not to resign. He promised that he would find the reason for the deaths. He asked only for a precious knife handed down by their ancestors. His father agreed and ordered 10 people to go to a place and dig. After 7 days and nights they found the knife. Seventh Son took it and

⁹⁷[TE]: Lualo; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhu Peiyan

travelled due south. In time he came to a dense virgin forest. As he wondered what he should do, he noticed a footprint as large as the body of a 5-year-old child. He knew that it must have been made by a monster. Not knowing what else to do, he decided to seek the monster's help.

After tracking the monster some distance he found a large house. Summoning his courage, he entered and found many small rooms. Suddenly an old woman came in. She had a body as large as a water vat and feet as large as the body of a 5-year-old child. His mission deeply moved her and she resolved to help him.

She had five sons. They hunted during the day and returned home at night. Shortly before her sons returned she hid Seventh Son. When her sons entered the home they exclaimed, "Mother, what is this strange smell? Is there a stranger there?" "No, it's probably the scent of an animal you killed and brought back," she said. A short time later, she asked, "People seem to be dying around here. Can any of you explain why?" Her youngest son said, "People are being eaten by an evil dragon." After her sons were asleep she took Seventh Son out of hiding and said, "If you wish to find the dragon you will need the big hawk that nests in a tall tree east of here."

Some time later Seventh Son found the tree which had a trunk as thick as a water vat and numerous crotches. He also found five twittering little hawks in a nest in the tree. As he observed the baby hawks he noticed a serpent flicking out its tongue toward the hawks. He took out his treasure knife and, after some time, the snake lay dead, slashed into several pieces. As he rested under the tree from his battle with the serpent, the sky suddenly turned dark. He knew that the hawk must be returning. The baby hawks told their parent how they had been saved. The big hawk asked how they could thank him. Seventh Son said that he wanted to go to where the evil dragon lived. The hawk agreed to fly him there, but warned, "You must firmly grasp me around the neck." They then took off. After some time of flying, the hawk was weak from lack of food and began flying erratically. Seventh Son cut off his thumb to feed the hawk. Some time later, he had cut off all his fingers and toes. At last they landed. The hawk noticed that Seventh Son could not walk and asked why. When Seventh Son explained what he had done, the hawk vomited up all his fingers and toes, which rejoined themselves to Seventh Son. The hawk then flew back to its home.

Seventh Son walked on and found a building. He entered and went upstairs where he discovered a three-headed dragon sleeping. Feeling hungry, he went into the kitchen where he took the lid off of a pot and found a dragon, three tigers, and seven snakes inside. He ate some of this cooked flesh and found it quite delicious. Then he returned upstairs where he cut off two of the sleeping dragon's heads. As he was about to cut off the third head, the dragon awoke and the two fought. After a long struggle, Seventh Brother managed to kill the dragon. He cut its body into seven or eight parts. He then began walking back to his home.

Some days later he was terribly thirsty so he stopped in a large village and asked for water, but no one gave him any. When he asked why he was told, "Water is a treasure here. We do not have enough to drink and you, a passerby, certainly shall not be given any!" He was told something resembling a dragon and a snake lived in the village well, explaining why the village did not have adequate water. When Seventh Brother again asked for just a little to quench his raging thirst, an old granny gave him three drops of liquid.⁹⁸ Immediately he felt his body strengthen. He went to the well and looked down. He saw something huge writhing at the bottom. He descended into the well and killed it with his precious knife. All the villagers came. They joyfully drank as much water as they wished and then butchered and cooked

⁹⁸[Perhaps milk from Goddess Wuomie's breasts.]

some cattle to thank Seventh Son.

Seventh Son continued his journey home. That same night he stopped at an inn to spend the night. The inn master warned, "There is one empty room here, but everyone who has stayed there has died." Seventh Son said he would stay there anyway. That night, as he lay on the *kang*, he was careful not to fall asleep. At about midnight, he heard a blast of wind. He saw something fat, tall, black, and resembling a man appeared before him. Holding a black bag, he said, "Bag, bag, put it in." Seventh Son sat up and said, "Elder Brother, if you want to eat me it is very easy. You can do that later. Now, let's drink." Then the two began drinking. After Seventh Son had the ghost drunk he asked, "What is this bag?" "It's a bag for killing people. I have caught 99 people with it. When I catch and eat the 100th person, I'll become immortal. I intended to eat you, but now that we have become so well acquainted, let's become friends instead!" said the ghost.

The two swore an oath and became sworn brothers. The ghost gave the bag to Seventh Son and asked him to catch a person for him to eat. The next morning Seventh Son and the ghost started off and came to a river. A woman with a child on her back was wading across. Suddenly the child fell into the water. Seventh Son quickly pulled the child out, and whispered to the mother that she must leave quickly, or else the ghost would eat her and the child. The ghost was angry at losing such a good meal. "Regardless of whether one is a man or ghost, he should have a kind heart. If you had eaten the mother the child would also have died," Seventh Son admonished. The monster replied, "Tomorrow, I must eat a person. A marriage party will pass by and I want to eat the beautiful bride."

The next morning, a marriage party did approach. As they were about to cross a bridge over the river Seventh Son said, "Don't cross, pass under." The wedding party did so. Now Seventh Son was sure that he would be killed by the angry ghost, but, when the ghost appeared, he was delighted. "Because I did not eat the bride and the woman we met yesterday, the emperor has designated me as an important official. Because this is all due to you, I shall now take you back to your home," the ghost said. When he returned, Seventh Son's father was delighted and later, not a single person was killed in the area where Seventh Son's father served as an official. When the official became too old to serve, Seventh Son took his place.

General Sabusu's Cannon⁹⁹

One autumn 300 years ago there was a war against an old tsarist named Habarof. At that time, Sabusu had been appointed as the first general of Heilongjiang. His forces had a cannon that was so heavy it required 16 horses to pull it to the top of Luntur Mountain, which was called Doshados Peak by the Manchu. It was a strategic site. It was near an old forest and overlooked a river. The mountain was also known as Dragon Head Mountain because of its shape. Once General Sabusu got the cannon to the mountain top, he trained it on Habarof's forces, who had constructed a fortress on an island in the center of the nearby river. After the fortress was shelled, Habarof and his soldiers retreated. But not long after, another Russian force, led by Sijievannof, invaded north Heilongjiang, forcing General Sabusu to retreat. Now that the Russians were in control of Luntur Mountain, they attempted to aim the gun at the Chinese forces. But every time they tried, it automatically aimed itself at the Russian forces. With the help of several strong soldiers, the gun was aimed at some

⁹⁹[CL]: Batubaoyin; [CT]: 1977; [TS]: Nie Lanjun

fishermen in the Heilongjiang River and the fuse lit. But just before firing, the cannon swiveled of its own accord and delivered its charge at the Russian forces. After this happened several times, Sijievanof ordered the cannon destroyed. Though the cannon was pounded with stones, it was not damaged. Later, when the Aihui Treaty was signed, the cannon fired its last charge at Aihui City, knocking Mulaviyef, the Russian representative, unconscious. Afterwards, the cannon slowly began sinking and, at last, vanished into Luntur Mountain.

General Duo¹⁰⁰

During the Qing Dynasty when Qianlong ruled, there was a man known as General Duo Rong. He was noted for his honesty. He was 24-years-old and lived in Eremuqi Village in an outlying area of Qiqihar. Because of his ability, he was sent to Qingdao. Because he fairly punished all guilty of dishonesty, many corrupt Qingdao officials hated him. They secretly prepared a paper charging him with taking money from soldiers' pay, reducing their provisions, and building a large home for himself in his home village. Though Qianlong had always trusted Duo, he sent officials to investigate once he read the paper sent by the corrupt officials. When the investigating officials reached Eremuqi Village, they met a woman dressed in worn-out cotton-padded clothing collecting dung for fuel. After talking to her, they learned that she was Duo's wife and that he had not been home for 18 years. When they went to her home they found that she lived in two old huts on the verge of collapsing. She owned not a single head of livestock. They found the general's old mother living in one of the huts. She was dressed in old sheepskin clothing.

The investigators ordered Qiqihar government officers to take responsibility for the general's wife and mother. When they returned to Beijing and reported what they had found to Qianlong, he brought Duo to Beijing and ordered the treacherous officials who had submitted the false report to be severely punished. Afterwards, Duo was known far and wide as an honest and upright official.

General Duoyin¹⁰¹

Duoyin Village was on an island near Tengke Village in northeast Morin Dawaa. Long ago there was a general's grave on this island. He was called General Duoyin, because he had been born in Duoyin Village. When he was advanced in age, and after having rendered many years of national service, he asked the emperor to allow him to return home. The emperor agreed and added, "You have served the country and people for almost 50 years. Do you have any requests?" General Duoyin replied, "I have only one. I want 40 mules to take back with me. Each mule should have a long rectangular bag strapped around it." Just before the general departed, he filled the bags with dark blue bricks wrapped in white calico. When he set off, he was carried in a sedan carried by eight men and followed by a magnificent contingent of troops and his 40 mules, all in single file.

The people along the way were impressed with the entourage. They supposed that the bags carried by the donkeys were full of gold and silver given to the general in gratitude for his years of service. Among the general's entourage, however, there was an evil official. He secretly sent word twice to the emperor that the general was

¹⁰⁰[TE]: Hegenhai; [CA]: [MD]

¹⁰¹[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yang Xiaoling

leaving with a huge amount of silver and gold. The emperor ignored the first report, but when he received the second, he ordered the general to return to Beijing. When the general returned and the emperor asked him to respond to the charge, the general said, "Though I fought in many different areas, it was only because of your kind heart that I became a general. Even now I am penniless, because I thought only of serving the people and country. I filled the bags with bricks so that the emperor's image would not be tarnished. I wanted people to see how sincerely the emperor cares for an old general. I also wanted to show my villagers what is used for building in the capital." At that moment, word came that the general's bags had been searched and contained only bricks. The emperor, in his kindness and power, ordered that the bags be filled with silver and gold, and had the general escorted home.

Later, the emperor experienced many problems and sent for the old general. He returned to Beijing where he served until his death. The emperor ordered that his body should be taken back to his village in a straight line. There were to be no detours, regardless of the difficulties. The general's body was thus buried on the island and a stone was erected. It was inscribed in both Chinese and Manchu. Many years later, his grave was covered with soil. Nevertheless, people still remembered him. My grandfather told me this story.

Dekma¹⁰²

My father told me that 100 years ago, an old man named Dekma lived in our village. He was famous in Morin Dawaa because he was the chief of several hundred bandits. They often went to Hailar and stole livestock from rich men, and then gave them to poor families. They never stole from the poor. If someone robbed a poor person, Dekma might punish him, and order him to return what he had stolen. For these reasons, the poor liked him while rich people feared him. Dekma was also famous for his horsemanship. His family was very poor. During the time that he was imprisoned, he was cruelly tortured, but he did not cry out. General Yiquoqi then ordered the torturer to use a knife on Dekma, but he still didn't cry out.

Jiyanbuk¹⁰³

I

One year General Yi held a sports match. On the final day of the match, he sat watching some wrestlers. Suddenly a huge stone fell in front of him. General Yi was informed it had been thrown by Jiyanbuk from his village. General Yi asked that Jiyanbuk be invited to take part in the wrestling. Jiyanbuk agreed. His first opponent was a tall strong man named Buku. Jiyanbuk was afraid of offending General Yi and allowed Buku to win the first round. Then he saw Buku gloating, became enraged, picked him up, and tore him into two pieces. Though General Yi was angry, his feelings of admiration for such strength were greater. He rewarded Jiyanbuk with a large sum of money.

¹⁰²[TE]: Aoguide; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Nie Lanjun

¹⁰³[TE]: Aoguide; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Nie Lanjun

II

There was a wind ghost in Jiyanbuk's home village of Kaileretu. Everyone was afraid of it at night. One day Jiyanbuk started off to Nenjiang Town. That night he heard some strange sounds. He correctly guessed that it was the wind ghost. The two began fighting. Finally, Jiyanbuk subdued it. Putting it under his arm, he went on to Nenjiang. When dawn came, the ghost begged to be released. It promised never to harm people again. Jiyanbuk refused. The wind ghost then transformed itself into a long board. When Jiyanbuk reached Nenjiang, he went into a restaurant. The owner saw the board and bought it from Jiyanbuk. After Jiyanbuk finished his business in Nenjiang, he started home. Again the wind ghost caught up with him. This time he couldn't catch it, but when he got back to his village, he managed to catch it with the help of several strong young men. They burned it to ash. Afterwards, Jiyanbuk was known as a hero.

Shaolung and Daifu¹⁰⁴

Shaolung and Daifu are Dagur heroes. Shaolung was Daifu's cousin. He herded for a landlord when they were boys. Shaolung was very strong and tall. Both Shaolung and Daifu were famous in the Qiqihar area because they were good marksmen and horsemen, and fought against landlords. At that time, Wu Junsheng was a military officer in the Qiqihar area. He worked for Zhang Zhuolin and cruelly exploited the people. Wu was known as Big Tongue because he stammered. In 1900, there was a drought in the Hanbodai area that caused the deaths of many poor people. Finally, Shaolung and Daifu rebelled against Big Tongue. Because he tried to arrest them, they did not return to their homes.

Later, Shaolung's wife was stolen by Big Tongue's brother. When Shaolung heard this, he went to the man's home, but he had already fled, leaving only some servants behind. One of the "servants" was Shaolung's wife, but she hid and Shaolung did not find her. He distributed what remained of the man's property and burned his home and buildings. Later, as Shaolung was walking along the banks of the Nenjiang River one night, he heard a woman weeping and calling his name. When she came near she threw herself at his feet and said, "Though I was raped by that other man, our unborn child is yours. Please forgive me," and began weeping again. Shaolung told her to come with him, but Daifu did not agree, arguing that women were not fit for fighting. He said that if Shaolung insisted on taking her with him, he would kill Shaolung. At last Shaolung agreed. The woman then returned home. After she gave birth, she threw the son into a well at her father's urging. The baby was rescued by an old man who raised him. After liberation, someone met Shaolung's son who related this story.

Aqinbu and Wosiwenbu¹⁰⁵

When Aqinbu reached the age of 18, his parents handed him an ax and told him to leave home. After many days of walking he reached an intersection where he met a young man of 20 named Wosiwenbu. Since they were both travelling to seek their fortunes, they became sworn brothers. Aqinbu thought, "The ancients said to be wary

¹⁰⁴[TEs]: Saiyir and Wu Jincai; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Nie Lanjun

¹⁰⁵[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Dai Xiaoming

of people met at crossroads. Still, it seems as though he is not a bad person for he has treated me honestly." Nevertheless, he kept a wary eye on him. Some days later, a whirlwind came near them. Aqinbu threw his ax into it. As the wind passed, a red embroidered shoe fell out, and a trail of blood was left. Aqinbu quietly put the shoe in his pocket and then the two of them followed the blood trace to a cave. They continued on to the capital, where they found a posted notice saying that the princess was lost. Whoever could find her could marry her.

Aqinbu went before the king and said that he could find the princess, but he needed a large basket, a strong long rope, and two pigeons. When the king provided these items the two sworn brothers returned to the cave. Wosiwenbu lowered Aqinbu down into the underground cavern. Once he reached the bottom, Aqinbu released a pigeon to signal to Wosiwenbu. Aqinbu walked into the cavern where he saw a girl dipping water from a river. She was on the opposite bank. Aqinbu called to her and learned that she was the missing princess. She told him where he should go to wade across. Once he got across she said, "The demon that brought me here is often in the guise of an enormous serpent, but it may become a whirlwind and catch people. When it caught me, its middle part was injured. Now it is lying on the *kang* in great pain. I am forced to clean its wound three times a day. Wait for it to sleep and then take the sword which hangs on the north wall and kill it."

The two went to where the demon was lying. Aqinbu hid behind a door while the princess went up to the *kang*. When she returned to the door, she handed Aqinbu the sword and prepared some ashes. Aqinbu cut the serpent into nine sections. Each time he cut, the princess dusted the severed area with ashes. And though the serpent tried to rejoin its body, the ash prevented it. After it was dead, the princess and Aqinbu raced back to the cavern entrance. They released the second pigeon, signalling Wosiwenbu to pull up the basket. Aqinbu insisted that the princess go up first. She agreed, but gave him a red shoe and said, "When we meet again, this will be proof that it was you who saved me." As soon as Wosiwenbu saw such a pretty lady he wanted her all to himself. When Aqinbu was halfway up he cut the rope, which sent Aqinbu plunging to the bottom. After striking the cavern bottom Aqinbu could barely move. Suddenly a mouse ran out and bit him. Aqinbu kicked at it angrily, breaking its leg. The mouse limped over and licked a white stone. It was immediately healed. Aqinbu licked the stone and he also was cured. He walked down the cavern and found a light shining in the distance. When he got near, he saw a house with an old white-haired lady sitting on a *kang*. Her breasts resembled two large leather bags flung over her shoulders and hanging down her back. After telling her all that had happened she gave him milk from her breasts. This strengthened him. She said, "Walk ahead and you will meet a person who will help you."

Aqinbu did so and heard shouting. He looked up and saw a dragon's head protruding from a cliff. "Come to the top of this cliff, take away the magic figures you will find there, and run away," the dragon said. Aqinbu did this. As soon as he threw the magic figures away, the mountain split apart and collapsed. When the dragon was released from the mountain, he became a handsome young man. He said, "I'm the Dragon King's son. A monstrous serpent imprisoned me. How may I help you?" When he learned that Aqinbu wished to leave the cave the young man became a dragon again, had Aqinbu mount him, and flew him out of the cave.

Meanwhile, Wosiwenbu took the princess back to the capital and said that he had saved her. The king gave him permission to marry her. But the princess wished to marry Aqinbu and pleaded illness, thus the wedding date was postponed. Aqinbu did not know that Wosiwenbu had tried to kill him by cutting the rope. When he reached the capital after having been brought out of the cave by the Dragon King's son,

Aqinbu visited Wosiwenbu. He pretended to be happy to see him, but after getting Aqinbu drunk, he killed him and then threw his body into a well. That night Aqinbu's soul changed into a white mouse. He gripped the red shoe and ran to the princess room. The princess followed the mouse to the well where Aqinbu had been thrown. Aqinbu's body was then recovered. The princess ordered it placed under a tent in the palace courtyard. Meanwhile, Aqinbu's soul found the Dragon King's son. He disguised himself as a doctor and went to the palace. When he was taken to the tent where Aqinbu lay, he took out some medicinal powders, blew them up Aqinbu's nose, and Aqinbu immediately came back to life.

The king separately questioned the two men in order to ascertain who had truly rescued the princess. When he was questioned, Aqinbu told his story and offered the princess' red shoe as proof. The princess' account of events accorded with Aqinbu's. Wosiwenbu was unable to tell what happened when he supposedly went into the cave. Consequently, the king ordered Wosiwenbu punished. His body was tied in nine layers of cotton soaked in oil and set ablaze. He burned like an oil lamp. The king held a grand wedding for Aqinbu and the princess. Aqinbu later invited his parents to live with him. They lived happily together.

A Yellow Horse and a Spotted Dog¹⁰⁶

After the 20th year of the reign of the Qing emperor, Qianlong, the government drafted soldiers of every nationality from all over the country to subdue the peoples of Xinjiang. Many young Dagur and Ewenki were drafted and sent there. A Dagur family of Xiwaertu had twin sons and by coincidence, their old mare gave birth to twin colts.

One year the older twin was drafted into the army to be sent to Xinjiang. Before leaving, his parents gave him a yellow horse and a spotted dog. After a long time, these soldiers arrived in Xinjiang. A few years later, the yellow horse and the spotted dog returned home. This was a trip of more than 500 kilometers, which they completed in 8 months.

An Unknown General¹⁰⁷

Mugden¹⁰⁸ was the old Qing capital. It was later moved to Beijing. This move left many imperial relatives in Mugden. They wore satin yellow sashes and, for this reason, they were known as "Yellow Bands." The emperor wanted to make conditions better in Mugden and sent one of his generals there. The Yellow Bands were displeased, because it meant that they could not continue their corrupt activities. The emperor sent five or six generals there, one after another. They all died within a half-month of arriving. The emperor then decided to send General Duxingga, who was one of many famous Dagur generals during the Qing Dynasty. When he and his party arrived, the Yellow Bands invited him to a banquet, but he refused. The night of his arrival, he went from place to place in disguise, asking people what their problems were. After a half-month the general accepted an invitation to a banquet hosted by the Yellow Bands.

¹⁰⁶[TE]: Siqin; Areas Where Told: [MD] and Yili (Xinjiang); [TS]: Yao Xinglian

¹⁰⁷[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yang Xiaoling

¹⁰⁸[The present Shenyang, Liaoning Province.]

As he sat at the banquet table, he noticed white fluid dripping into his dishes from above. Touching it with a silver chopstick, he found the substance turned the chopstick black, a sure sign it was poisonous. He dispatched a guard to the roof to investigate. The guard returned with a report that a huge centipede with eyes like green balls was on the roof. General Duxingga then rushed to the roof and chopped the beast into three pieces with two swords.

Though the Yellow Bands had failed in this attempt, they did not give up. They trumped up charges that the general was a thief, and seizing an opportunity, tried to kill him again. The general had anticipated this and ordered those who perpetrated such crimes to be killed. In the confusion that followed the unsuccessful assassination attempts, many of the Yellow Bands were killed. Afterwards, the people of Mugden enjoyed a calm life. The general personally submitted a report to the emperor, who, though not pleased, did not punish him for he remembered the death of five or six of his generals. He allowed him to continue supervising Mugden. After this, the general's name spread far and wide.

The Pearls¹⁰⁹

During the Qing Dynasty, the emperor required Dagur to give tribute in the form of marten pelts, ginseng, and pearls. Thus there was a need for good Dagur swimmers. After training for 3 years, they were sent to gather pearls from the sea. During this period countless Dagur swimmers were eaten by an enormous serpent. Being chosen as a swimmer was the equivalent to being sentenced to the Netherworld. As the years past, nearly all the young Dagur men had died. A Dagur general could tolerate this no longer. When he met the emperor he said, "Your Majesty, many have died in collecting pearls. I can help collect many more, but I need much birch wood, a few tons of gunpowder, and a lot of people." The emperor agreed and ordered that he be given what he needed.

When the general reached the place where pearls were dived for, he threw gunpowder into the river. The serpent thought that this was something good to eat and devoured it all. The general then lit a bundle of birch wood and threw it into the river. The serpent surfaced to eat the birch and the flames set the gunpowder on fire. The serpent exploded and its body was then taken back to the emperor at Mugden. The general said, "Pearls are inside the serpent's stomach. How can men get such pearls?" The emperor turned pale with fear and no longer asked that Dagur give pearls as tribute.

Sajierdi Khan¹¹⁰

Hachami is in Yiwuqi Village near the Nenjiang River in an area known as Moon Bulb in Chinese. There is a story about this place.

Sajierdi Khan fought in many areas. One time he was defeated by Russians and retreated to Hachami where he wanted to cross the Nenjiang River. It was the sixth month and very hot. Sajierdi Khan asked one of his men, "Has the river frozen over?" Some days later Sajierdi Khan had executed all the men who told him the river had not frozen over. He then asked another of his men who thought that it didn't matter what he answered, for he would be executed anyway. He said that the

¹⁰⁹[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yang Xiaoling

¹¹⁰[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]

river was frozen over. Sajierdi Khan was pleased and led all his men to the river where the surface of the river was covered with turtle shells. Under the shining sun, the shells resembled ice. Sajierdi Khan led everyone across in single file, walking on the turtle's backs, and then asked, "Has everyone crossed?" His guard thought everyone had crossed and said, "Crossed." At that moment, the turtle shells vanished and Sajierdi Khan's son and his guards drowned in the middle of the river.

Now that the prince was dead, Sajierdi Khan wanted to marry his young and beautiful widow. But she steadfastly refused. Finally, because he did not want to kill her, he put her in a cage and had her carried on a horse. Some days later she said to Sajierdi Khan, "Let the two of us compete. If you win I shall marry you, but if you lose I shall remain your honored son's wife. Let us compete in building canals at the same time. You begin in the east and I shall begin in the west. We shall dig from north to south and let us see who reaches Beijing first." Sajierdi Khan agreed. He chose a group of strong soldiers and had the old, weak, sick, disabled, and children stay behind with his daughter-in-law as her workers. Sajierdi Khan's men, because they were young and strong, took an early lead. But over the years, Sajierdi Khan's men became old, while the children he had given to his daughter-in-law matured. In time, his daughter-in-law won the match. This explains why, in a Morin Dawaa village, two canals run parallel to the Re River.

The Official's Son¹¹¹

An official died leaving only a horse named Gold to his wife and son. The son often played with a neighbor's boy. Whatever they played, the dead official's son invariably won. The neighbor noticed this and wanted to kill the official's son. This way, he also could marry the boy's mother and take her property. One day he said to the boy, "When your father was alive he herded three horse herds on South Mountain and three herds of cattle on North Mountain."

When the boy got back home he asked his mother for permission to herd their livestock. She refused, but he insisted so she took out a bow and an arrow. She said, "If you can shoot this arrow to the foot of South Mountain you may go." He easily passed this test, sending the arrow all the way over South Mountain. The next day he set out on Gold who advised, "When we near the herds, two big red horses will run towards us, biting and kicking. They protect the herds and won't let anyone come near. Bridle and saddle these horses. Say to them, 'I am your master,' and then they will obey you. If you don't do this, they will kick us to death."

When they neared the horse herds, the boy did as Gold had instructed and the two red horses obediently followed him. After he counted the herds, he found that they had increased in number three-fold. When he returned home and reported what he had found, his mother was delighted, but his neighbor was disappointed. A few days later he said, "Yelerdengeir monster used to give your father trouble when he hunted. He promised to become relatives with the monster, which would have made hunting much easier for him. If you are brave, why don't you marry the monster's daughter?" Though the mother was reluctant to let him go, fearing that the monster would eat him, she at last agreed, and gave him his father's sword. After journeying for some time Gold said, "Many big black birds will fly at us. Throw then something to eat and then they won't peck us." Soon black birds did attack them. The boy threw out some meat and bread which diverted the birds.

¹¹¹[TE]: Narengua; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Chang Sha

After covering more distance Gold stopped and said, "We have reached the sky's edge. Huge scissors are in front of us. We must retreat 3 *li* and then as I run, you should whip me. In this way, I shall be able to pass through the scissors." They did so, but when Gold leapt between the opening and closing scissors, 3 *cun* of his tail was cut off. He said, "Now I have lost three of my magical abilities." Soon they reached a lake and Gold said, "The monster will swim toward us from the opposite shore. Shoot his middle head and he will die."

Before Gold had finished speaking, Yelerdengeir began swimming towards them. The boy shot an arrow at the center of its nine heads, instantly killing the monster. They journeyed on for some days before reaching the monster's home. Gold advised, "Though the monster is dead, his black wife is still in his home. Tie me to a poplar in the courtyard. This poplar is her soul. If I trample it, you can easily deal with her." When they reached the courtyard, the boy tied Gold to the poplar and went inside, where he found a hideous black woman sitting on a *kang*. Her upper eyelid hung down over her face and her lower eyelid hung down to her breasts. When she heard someone in the house, she pulled up her upper eyelid with a stick, raised her head, and said angrily, "You have rejoiced too early. I have more than ten times my dead husband's power."

The boy also noticed a beautiful young girl sitting on the *kang*. After he explained his mission, she was determined to help him in defeating her monster-mother. As the monster cooked, the girl said, "When mother gives you food, watch what I do. I shall pretend to comb my hair. When you see my comb fall, take up the chopsticks. When my small comb drops, begin eating." The young man did so and the meal was safely concluded. That night the old woman let the two young people sleep together. The girl whispered to the boy, "We must not stay here tonight." When the old woman lay down black air came from her nostrils, but when she was asleep, white air came out. The young couple watched the old woman carefully, and when they saw her exhaling white air, they escaped on Gold. But before they had gotten very far, the old woman had roused, discovered that they were gone, and sent two swords after them. They would only return when wetted with human blood. The girl took one, cut off one of her fingers, and smeared blood over the two swords, which returned to the old woman. Sure that the two had been killed, she happily went back to sleep. But, as she slept, she dreamed of the two escaping on Gold. She set out in pursuit.

When they reached a lake she caught up with them. Gold began battling her and after a long time, neither had won. They rested for a time and agreed to fight in the lake. Gold said, "Watch the water. If black air rises, I have killed her. If red air rises, it means that I have died." The monster and Gold battled in the lake. The young couple saw both red and black air rise. Finally Gold came out of the lake and, in great weariness, lay down. He wheezed, "I am too exhausted to live. After I die, chop off my legs and build a house with my legs and hide. There will be a hole in the northeast corner of this house. If a yellow dog runs out, it is my soul. If a black dog runs out, it is the soul of the old woman and you must kill it." Gold died and the couple did as he had instructed. The next day they found that the small shed they had constructed with his legs and hide had become a large house with a hole in the northeast corner. After a long wait, a yellow dog ran out followed by a black dog. The boy killed the black dog with an arrow. When the couple went outside, they found Gold standing there.

They mounted Gold and rode to the boy's mother's home. When she saw him return with a beautiful wife, she was overjoyed, though she had aged greatly in his absence and now had a head of white hair. She held a grand wedding for the couple and afterwards, they lived happily together.

Evil is Punished, Good is Rewarded

Wealth in the Next Incarnation¹¹²

A kind honest rich man had three married sons. In front of his village there was a stretch of red mud which made travel difficult. The rich man decided that he would build a bridge over the bog and make travel easier. After several years of effort, the bridge was completed, but the rich man found that the construction had been so expensive that he was now impoverished. A few years later he was so poor that he was forced to work for another man.

One day a fortune-teller passed by and the rich man, who had now become poor kindly invited him into his home. He gave him some tea and food and asked about his fortune. The fortune-teller said, "You were rich before, but you lost all your money because of a bridge." After the fortune-teller left, gold suddenly fell from the poor man's hands and from his mouth. But he felt that it was not his, for he had not earned it, and he threw it all away.

Time passed. One day an old man came to the poor man's home dressed in a ragged fur coat. The poor man fed him and, as he was putting him to bed, the old man asked, "Is there a young woman for me to sleep with?" The poor man was embarrassed, but repeated what the old man had said to his three daughters-in-law. The eldest two refused, but the youngest compassionately agreed to sleep with him. The next morning as Third Daughter-in-law arose, she found she could not rouse the old man. The poor man came in and, when he pulled back the covers, found, in place of the old man, a huge piece of gold as large as a man. Several days later, the dirty old man returned again and said, "Do you wish to be wealthy now or in the next incarnation?" The poor man replied that as he was no longer young, he would wait for his next incarnation. Then the old ragged man led him away. Many days later they came to a spring surrounded by high mountains. Even though he seemed very old, the ragged man reached the top of one mountain in a twinkling, while the poor man spent much time and effort in reaching the top. Just as he arrived at the top, the old ragged man gave him a terrible blow on the head with his fist, which sent him rolling back down the mountain.

Meanwhile, the son of a wealthy man had been ill for a long while. As the poor man rolled down the mountain to his death, his soul came out. Just at that moment, the young man also died and his soul left. The poor man's soul then entered the young man's body. The young man suddenly cried, "Didn't I just climb a mountain? Who hit me with his fist? Is this the Netherworld?" Though the poor man could think clearly, he could not understand how he came to be where he was. That evening, his "wife" made up the bed and put him to sleep. He thought, "I'm an old man. How can I sleep with this 18-year-old." That evening his "father" returned and was delighted to learn that his "son" had recovered.

Though several days passed, the "young man" refused to do anything, but lie silently on the bed. His parents finally became angry and demanded to know why he lacked energy and refused to speak. Their "son" replied, "I'm a 70-year-old man," and told them how he had come to be their son. He explained that as he had a home

¹¹²[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Qin Wei

elsewhere, he would return there. The next day he set out, but when he returned to his home his children and daughters-in-law not only did not acknowledge him as their father and father-in-law, but accused him of being mad and pushed him out of their courtyard. He returned to his "parents'" home. They were delighted at his return and the four lived happily together. The poor man had said that he wanted to be wealthy in his next incarnation and Goddess Womie made it come true.

The Lama and the Carpenter¹¹³

One day an evil lama met a carpenter and said, "People should help one another. Build me a house. I pray that the gods will bless you." The carpenter brandished his ax and said, "I will not build a house for you. You can't take away my happiness." The lama vowed revenge. Some days later he visited the king and said, "Last night in my dreams I travelled to heaven. I met our old king and he asked me to give you this letter." The king took the letter and read: "I want to build a temple, but there are no carpenters here. Please send one. Consult the lama as to how the carpenter shall come."

The carpenter was summoned and the king asked the lama how the carpenter should be sent to heaven. The lama said, "It's easy. The old king said that you are to be enclosed in a room which we shall burn. You can waft to heaven with the smoke." "Good. I shall go to heaven tomorrow afternoon," the carpenter replied. When the carpenter reached his home he and his wife dug a tunnel under a shed near their home. The next afternoon the king, his guards, and the lama came to his home. After putting the carpenter in the shed they set it on fire. The king and his retinue returned to the palace where the carpenter was praised for his willingness to build a temple for the old king. For 1 month, the carpenter stayed out of sight. He washed his face and hands with yogurt three times a day, which made them whiter than snow. He then put on a white robe and went before the king. "The old king told me to return to earth and give this letter to you," he said, handing a letter to the king. The letter read: "The carpenter has built a temple for me and you should reward him. There is no lama in the temple. Send one. Have him come in the same way as the carpenter. The lama may return after 3 days. The king rewarded the carpenter with a camel and other valuables and then called the lama. He handed him his "father's" letter and told him to hurry, lest his father worry. The next afternoon, the king and his retinue and the carpenter burned the lama sealed in a room. Though the lama had intended to murder the carpenter, on the contrary, it was he who died.

A Lucky Man¹¹⁴

Two married brothers lived together. Elder Brother's wife disliked Younger Brother and his wife. Finally, she persuaded her husband to divide the family. When Elder Brother told Younger Brother that it was time to divide, he said, "I and my wife shall live in that old shed in the courtyard. We don't want anything else. Heaven will bless us." Elder Brother's wife was delighted with this arrangement. A few days later, Younger Brother went into the mountains and found a large hole with much food inside. After eating all the food he hid behind a tree. Soon two old men came. One said, "There is a strange odor about." The other said, "Nevermind, let's eat." Then

¹¹³[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Qin Wei

¹¹⁴[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Qin Wei

one old man took out two precious boxes from the hole, shook one, and another good meal appeared. The two old men left after eating it.

Younger Brother took one of the boxes home with him and, afterwards, he and his wife led a comfortable life. Elder Brother's wife couldn't contain her curiosity and asked how they came to have such good food everyday. Honest Younger Brother told her everything. He concluded with, "Heaven has blessed me. Another treasure box remains in that hole." Elder Brother's wife did not rest until she had persuaded her husband to go to the hole. When the two old men arrived, they discovered that one of the boxes was gone and guessed that someone must have stolen it. They searched, found Elder Brother hiding nearby, and beat him to death.

The Flood¹¹⁵

One day a fortune-teller disguised as a beggar passed by the home of a rich woman and her son. They kindly hosted him. In gratitude, the man said as he left, "It will soon flood. Pull down your buildings and build a large boat. Kill all your oxen and horses and dry their flesh. Mill your grain. But don't tell anybody else this. During the flood, you may save animals, but don't save any people." The mother and her son did everything the fortune-teller advised. After a few months, heavy rain flooded the land. Safe in their boat, they saw no people, but one day they saw a hive of bees, a mouse, and a swarm of ants floating in the water. They took them all on board. Then they heard a man shouting for help. The son recalled what the fortune-teller had told them, and, as the man tried to climb on board, he pushed him back in the water. But his mother was overcome with sympathy, and ordered him to help the man on board.

The man was older than the son and the mother said that he would be the elder brother and her own son would be the younger brother. After a long while the flood waters receded, and the three found a place to live. One day, while the two young men were walking together, Younger Brother found a jewel which the emperor had lost. Though the emperor had searched for it for a long time, it had not been found. The emperor had proclaimed that whoever found the jewel could marry the 18th princess. Younger and Elder Brothers both wanted to take the jewel to the emperor. Finally, the mother said that Elder Brother was older and should give the jewel to the emperor.

After presenting the jewel, the emperor asked Elder Brother if he had any family. Elder Brother replied that he did not. The emperor then had him live in the palace, and prepared to fix an auspicious time for him to marry 18th princess.

Three years passed and Younger Brother and his mother heard nothing from Elder Brother. The mother worriedly ordered Younger Brother to search for him. After reaching the capital, he learned that Elder Brother was now a high official and was soon to marry 18th princess.

He happily went to Elder Brother's home and greeted him by name. As soon as Elder Brother saw his shabby clothing he was disgusted, and thought that if the emperor learned that he had a family, he might be punished, for earlier he had told the emperor that he had no family. He shouted, "Who are you?" and ordered Younger Brother imprisoned and planned to kill him in some days.

The animals that Younger Brother had saved heard what had happened to him. The ants said to the mouse, "Take us to 18th princess. We will sting her. The next day she will fall ill, and her body will swell. No one will be able to cure her. The

¹¹⁵[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Dai Xiaoming

emperor will be worried and promise to reward whoever can cure her. Younger Brother will say that he can save her and we will then cure her." The mouse took the ants to 18th princess. They stung her and she fell ill with a body that became as swollen as a water vat. The emperor said that whoever saved her could marry her. Meanwhile, the ants went to Younger Brother's prison and told him what they had done. When Younger Brother announced that he could cure the princess, few believed him. Nevertheless, she was so ill that the emperor was willing to let anyone try to help her. Younger Brother took the ants in his pocket and went to her bedside. The ants extracted the venom and the princess immediately recovered. The emperor said that Younger Brother should marry her. As soon as Elder Brother heard this, he was panic-stricken. He advised the emperor, "Let all 18 princesses present themselves and order this man to choose the 18th princess. If he can recognize her, allow him to marry her. But if he cannot, behead him." The emperor agreed, for he was not eager for his daughter to marry such a poor man.

The bees, ants, and mouse he had saved visited Younger Brother. A bee said, "Tomorrow all the princesses will present themselves. I shall sting the 18th princess' forehead. This will make her scream and you must choose her." The next day Younger Brother was taken to the palace. A bit later, the princesses emerged wearing identical clothing and ornaments. A bee flew out and stung one princess on the forehead. She screamed. Younger Brother walked over, took her hand, and said, "She is my wife." Though impressed, the emperor was still not convinced. He demanded of Younger Brother, "Where does your family live? How did you come here? Why were you jailed? How is it that you have the abilities that you have demonstrated?" Younger Brother honestly told all that had happened. The emperor was enraged that anybody could be as dishonest and ungrateful as Elder Brother and ordered him executed immediately.

Younger Brother then married the 18th princess and later, his mother joined him and they lived happily.

The Girl With No Hands¹¹⁶

A couple had a daughter. Later, the mother died. The father remarried, but left his daughter in charge of household affairs. This made the stepmother unhappy. One day, when the father and daughter were attending a wedding, the stepmother killed a cat, skinned it, wrapped it in cloth, and put it into a box belonging to the girl. The girl decided to stay several days at the wedding party. When the father returned home, he found that his wife was angry. She said, "I've discovered something evil, but I can't tell you what it is." Her husband insisted. Finally she said, "Our girl has given birth," and she showed him the cat wrapped in cloth. When he wanted to look at it more closely, she said, "Dagur hunters must never look at an illegitimate child. If they do, they will become blind and unable to hunt." The father felt what was inside the cloth and was convinced that what his wife said was true.

When his daughter came home, he told her what he had discovered. Despite her explanations, he refused to listen. He chopped off her hands and chased her away. She then jumped into a river, hoping to kill herself, but she was saved by Endur. When she regained consciousness, she was lying near the home of a rich family. A female servant of this family discovered her when she came to the river to fetch water and told her young mistress. The young mistress talked to the girl. After learning

¹¹⁶[TE]: Narengua; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Nie Lanjun

what had happened, she felt very sympathetic and talked to her mother. They agreed that Handless Girl could live with them. In time they became so fond of her that they married her to a son of the family. Not long after the marriage, the young man was going to the capital to take an examination. As he left he said to his mother, "After she gives birth, take good care of her."

Three years later, Handless Girl's son was 3-years-old, but there was still no news of her husband. Then the mother gave a letter to her son to a mute man to deliver. The mute man stopped at an inn on his way to the capital, which happened to be run by the evil stepmother. At midnight she stole the letter and read it: "Son, you've been away for several years. Your wife has given birth to a lovely son. We hope you can return soon." Realizing that Handless Girl still lived, the stepmother changed the letter to "Son, don't return. Your wicked wife demands expensive food and clothing and has given birth to a ugly baby." When the letter-carrier gave the letter to Handless Girl's husband, he read it. Though he was surprised, he wrote "Look after the child well. I shall return."

The letter-carrier took the letter and, on his way back, stopped again at the inn of the evil stepmother. She again opened the letter and changed it to: "I hate both my wife and son. Drive them away." When the mother and daughter read this letter they were surprised and wrote in reply: "Why are you so disloyal? Your wife is very kind and your son is very clever. Return home at once." This letter met the same fate as the previous letter. The evil stepmother changed it to read: "Your wife has become ever more evil and your son wants to drink human blood every day." The husband answered: "When I finish the exam, I shall return home immediately." This was changed to read: "Force them to leave at once."

The sister of the young man angrily wrote: "You have a good wife and son. Why do you wish them to leave? You must quickly return." This was changed by the evil stepmother to read: "Your wife spends too much money on food every day. We have no affection for them." To this the young husband responded: "I shall return within several days." When the evil stepmother saw this, she changed it to: "Force them out." When the mother and her daughter read this, they lost hope. Handless Girl knew that something was wrong and at last, she was shown the letters. She decided to leave, put the baby on her back, and walked away. After several days, she reached a river and after drinking some river water, she and the baby fell asleep. When she awakened, she found that she had been helped by Endur. She now had hands. She met an old man by the river and, after telling him her story, he took them to his home. Some time later, when the boy was playing at the old man's home, a young man came up. The child greeted, "Father!" In fact, it was the child's father who was searching for his lost wife and child. The family was thus happily reunited. After an investigation, the evil stepmother was proved to be guilty of the misunderstanding and executed.

The Rich Man Becomes a Calf¹⁷

A rich man ran roughshod over other villagers. A widow and her son living east of this man were poor, but they did have some property. They learned the rich man had land to sell so they talked to him, and signed an agreement allowing them to purchase a field. After they paid for it, the rich man said, "I'll give you the agreement a few days later." But a few days later when he visited the widow and her son, he told them

¹⁷[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Chen Yuhua

that they had not paid for the field. When the mother and son protested, he waved the agreement and said, "If you paid, why is this paper still in my hands?" The mother and son were thus forced to pay again, but the rich man still refused to give them the paper. The rich man repeated this three times in as many years. The mother and son were finally left with nothing but a few cows. Four years later the rich man suddenly died. Soon afterwards, a cow belonging to the mother and son, delivered a talking calf which said, "I am the rich man's soul. When I went to the Netherworld, I was reincarnated as a calf. Tell my son to come here. I have something important to tell him."

The rich man's son was angry when they told him. He assumed that they had made up this story, but he at last consented to come and see the calf. When the calf saw him it said, "Child, you must not do as I did. I was wrong. Return home, get the agreement, and give it, along with money and property, to this mother and son." The mother and son accepted the payment, but when they were offered the agreement they said, "We do not want it. Sincerity is what is important. It cannot be controlled by what is written on paper." When the calf heard this it was so ashamed that it dashed at a tree in the courtyard, struck it with its head, and died.

The Hunter and His Sister¹¹⁸

Long ago a famous hunter named Zhaosi lived with his beautiful younger sister, Changlihuakatuo. Zhaosi was fond of Changlihuakatuo, and built a two-story building with a bedroom on the second floor near his own home for her. When he returned from hunting he divided whatever he had brought back with her. This made the oldest two of his three wives jealous. One day, when he had gone out hunting, First Wife said, "Zhaosi is not fair. He only likes Changlihuakatuo. If there were no Changlihuakatuo, he would give us the fur and meat that he now gives her." Second Wife said, "I've shared the same idea for a long time. Let's kill her." Third Wife said, "I want no part of such plans."

First and Second Wives took some gold and silver *galoha* to Changlihuakatuo's home and shouted, "Let down the ladder!" Changlihuakatuo looked out. Seeing her two sisters-in-law below, she let down the ladder. When they came into her room, the wives said, "Changlihuakatuo, let's play with these anklebones. We'll throw them up, catch them in our mouths, and then take them out through our navels." Changlihuakatuo said that she was not sure how to play this and suggested that the two wives should play first. Each wife tossed an anklebone into the air and caught it in her mouth. Changlihuakatuo opened her mouth and, as she was about to toss an anklebone in the air, First Wife threw an anklebone down her throat. Changlihuakatuo could neither swallow it nor breathe. She seemed to die. The two wives happily put her body on the bed in the room and cheerfully returned home.

When Zhaosi returned home that afternoon he discovered that his sister was "dead." After 3-4 days had passed, during which he felt like neither sleeping nor eating, Zhaosi had a carpenter build a three-layered red coffin. In the first layer he put a coat made from marten and lynx pelts, in the second he placed usual clothing and gold and silver ornaments, and put Changlihuakatuo in the inner-most layer. He placed the coffin on a sled pulled by two deer and said to them, "When the iron chain pulling the sled breaks, you may leave the coffin." The deer nodded three times and left. After pulling the sled for many days, the chain broke one midnight, just as they

¹¹⁸[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Dai Xiaoming

passed the third home of a village. The sound of the breaking chain awakened the old childless couple who lived there. They went outside and saw what they thought was a cabinet. They took it inside their home and opened it. They were delighted to find the precious coat and silver and gold ornaments, but even more delighted to see the girl. She did not look at all as though she were dead. Everyday they propped her into a sitting position on the *kang* and at night, they put her in a lying position.

A villager named Harandehan had a son named Harenide. One day the son's hunting falcon landed on the old couple's roof. When Harenide went inside the home to ask for permission to go up on the roof and get his falcon, he saw the beautiful Changlihuakatuo sitting on the *kang*. When he returned home he didn't rest until his father, through a matchmaker, had at last persuaded the old couple to allow his son to marry their "daughter." In fact, the old couple did not want anyone to marry her. They only agreed because of the matchmaker's constant visits. They decided that on the wedding day they would say that their "daughter" had died halfway to the groom's home and that would end the matter.

When the wedding day arrived, Changlihuakatuo was put in the bridal sedan, taken to the groom's home, and seated on the south *kang*. Her "mother" sat by her. After the wedding feast, it was the duty of the new daughter-in-law to rise and see off the departing guests, but Changlihuakatuo still remained sitting on the *kang*. Enraged at this impoliteness, Harenide slapped Changlihuakatuo on the back, which made her cough up the anklebone. She drew a deep breath and said, "Oh, I've slept for such a long while!" Hearing her "daughter" speak, the "mother" said, "My daughter fell ill on the way here and has not eaten anything all day. Please quickly give her a bowl of millet gruel." This was soon prepared and Changlihuakatuo ate two small bowls.

A second day of feasting was held the next day and Changlihuakatuo's "mother" told her how they had found her. She added, "My name is Ertireken and my husband's name is Atirekan." Changlihuakatuo said, "I'm Zhaosi's younger sister and my name is Changlihuakatuo."

Later at his home, Atirekan thought, "My wife has been gone for 3-4 days. Probably something bad has happened because we sent a dead girl to the groom's home." Just then a cart with his wife drew up outside his home. She told him all that had happened. They both rejoiced to have such a beautiful daughter and such kind-hearted and wealthy in-laws.

A year passed and Changlihuakatuo gave birth to a son. One day she asked a neighbor girl to care for her son while she attended a neighbor's wedding. Before she left for the wedding, she taught the neighbor girl to sing this song:

Zhaosi's nephew, rockaby, rockaby!

Changlihuakatuo's son, rockaby, rockaby!

Harandehan's grandson, rockaby, rockaby!

Harenide's son, rockaby, rockaby!

Meanwhile, Zhaosi had set off in search for his sister whom he could not forget. After searching for a long while and finding no trace, he happened to walk by the neighbor's home, and heard the neighbor's child singing. He entered the home. After talking with the neighbor girl, he understood everything that had happened to his sister. After a happy reunion with his sister he asked her to visit his home. They then returned home alone to deal with his wives.

Zhaosi ordered his wives to confess. A short time later, two carts arrived, one bearing his sister's foster parents, and the other bearing his sister and her husband and child. The sight of Changlihuakatuo terrified the older two wives. The third went

quietly to cook. After they had eaten, Zhaosi called his three wives. He said to his sister, "Who tried to kill you?" "First and Second Wives. I did not see Third Wife," she replied. Zhaosi asked his older wives how they wished to die. "I want to be pulled apart by four horses. I know what I have done is wrong," said First Wife. Second Wife said, "I am willing to commit suicide," walked behind the home and hung herself. Zhaosi dealt with his first wife as she had requested, said goodbye to his sister and her husband, and then invited the old couple to live with him as his foster parents. They lived happily together.

The Singing Wine Pot¹¹⁹

When a poor boy fished he always sang some folksongs (*zhanda*), which were so attractive that fish swam near to listen. In this way, the boy always managed to catch many fish which he took home to his mother. The only daughter of a rich man, who lived nearby, liked his songs. As the days passed she fell in love with him, though she had never seen him. She desired more than anything else to see him and finally fell ill, took to her bed, and refused to eat or drink. Finally, she confessed that she wished to hear the boy sing songs to her.

The rich man had the boy brought to his home. He told him to sing from behind a screen so that the girl could not see him. Finally, the girl peeped through the cloth and, to her disgust, beheld a young man with a head covered with diseased skin, red eyelids, a pockmarked face, and who was as short as a wooden bench. She immediately told her father to never have him come again. But the boy caught a glimpse of the beautiful girl and was now deeply in love with her. As he pined away, he told his mother that, before he died, all he desired was to just have one more look at the girl. The mother went to the rich man and explained why her son was dying and his last request. The rich man then asked his daughter, but she refused to go near him.

When the mother returned home and told this to her son he said, "After I die, remove my heart, bind it in red cloth, and bury it under the threshold. Several days later, mix clay with earth and my heart and make a wine pot. This pot will sing when wine is poured inside. If anyone wishes to buy it, you may sell it so that you will have money for food." The mother did exactly as her son had instructed. The wine pot that she made sang folksongs, which sounded like the boy's.

One day a man passed by, heard the wine pot singing, and didn't rest until he had bought it. He went from place to place. Soon the singing wine pot was famous. The rich man heard of the singing wine pot and invited its owner to his home. As they drank, the pot began singing. The rich man's daughter was attracted and sat near the wine pot to hear its songs. Suddenly the pot stopped singing and said, "I am the heart of the boy you first forced to sing to you and then ordered away. After seeing you, I became ill and wished only to see you one more time before I died. But you refused. If I had seen you, I would not have died. Today, I shall have my revenge." Then the pot exploded, killing the girl.

¹¹⁹[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Chang Sha

Filial Piety

The Mother Donkey¹²⁰

A young couple took very good care of the husband's mother. Just before she died, the mother said, "You have shown me great respect. After I die, I shall repay you." One year later, the couple's donkey gave birth to a small talking donkey. The couple realized that this was the embodiment of the mother. The donkey liked corn and asked them to plant some. The couple also built a hut where they placed quilts and the donkey lived there.

One day when the donkey was eating corn in the cornfield the couple had planted, she heard some thieves discussing how they would rob the couple's home. The donkey rushed home and told the son what the thieves had said. She ordered him to kill a pig and prepare much liquor. The next day, as the donkey was again eating corn in the field, she overheard the thieves planning their robbery in detail—who would go in first, and so on. She ran to her son and said, "The thieves are already east of the village. Hurry and welcome them." He found the thieves and said, "My seven elder brothers, please come to my home." "How did you know we were coming?" the thieves asked in astonishment. "Just before my mother died she said that she would become an animal. She then became a donkey. She told me that you were coming," the son explained. Then he took them into his home where his wife had food and liquor waiting.

The son called the donkey in who said, "You should not do evil. If you do, you will be punished in the Netherworld," and then fell dead to the ground. The seven bandits fell to their knees, kowtowed to the donkey, and promised to never do evil things again. The son and the thieves made a coffin, put the donkey inside, and held a funeral. Afterwards, they built a much larger home and lived together. The thieves never again did evil.

Respect the Elderly¹²¹

A 100-year-old grandmother lived with her grandson, his young wife, and their baby. The old lady was toothless and wanted milk. Consequently, the wife nursed her as well as the baby. After some time the mother weakened and her milk became less. She said, "We have grandmother with us now and, if we do not look after her well, she will die. We won't always have her, but we can have another child. Grandmother must not go hungry. Let us bury the child." The husband agreed. The next day the couple went to a mountain where the husband began digging a hole. In the process he dug out ten pieces of silver. When they returned home and told the grandmother what had happened she said, "Endur has blessed us. My greatgrandson was very fortunate." Afterwards the family lived well.

¹²⁰[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Chen Yuhua

¹²¹[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Chen Yuhua

The Hunter's Three Sons¹²²

An old fortune-telling hunter had three sons. Third Son wondered why their father could tell others' fortunes, but never their own. When he asked his father why, his father said that he would explain later.

During the next Spring Festival, the sons came home and found their father drinking with a big club at his side. "First Son, take this club and go to South Mountain. Don't be afraid regardless of what you see," the father said. First Son took the club and set out for South Mountain, which was about 5 *li* from their home. When he had gone 3 *li*, he noticed a blue light emanating from lantern eyes. Suddenly the thing opened a huge mouth and flicked out a red tongue. Terrified, he raced home. The father gave the club to Second Son, who had the same experience. Then the father gave the club to Third Son. He walked toward South Mountain and on the way, came to a house. He entered and found an old gray-haired man sitting on the *kang*. After telling him what his father had asked him to do, the old man said, "I shall help you and walk behind you," and the two set out. When Third Son saw the strange creature described by his brother, he gave it a mighty blow and it vanished. He then returned home.

When Spring came the father fell deathly ill. He summoned his sons and said, "After I'm dead, put me in an iron coffin and carry it on your shoulders. Don't stop until it is too heavy to move. When that happens, dig a hole, go inside, feel around, and take whatever you find," and then he died. The sons did as their father had commanded. When summer arrived, the two older sons wanted to stop their journey. Third Son insisted that they continue on. At last, when they started up a mountain, the coffin was so heavy that they could not continue. They dug a hole in the side of the mountain. First and Second Sons felt about in the hole, but found nothing. When Third Son felt about, he found a gold pea. He thought, "Old people say that a gold pea is Altan Barken (Gold God). And if you find one, you'll find seven." He continued to search and found a total of eight peas in the corners of the cave. He went out of the cave and told his brothers he had found nothing.

As they started back home they passed by an inn. Third Son suggested that they stop and eat. They went inside and Third Son ordered much food. The two elder sons were afraid, because they had no money, and only ate a little. Then they quietly left. After Third Son ate his fill, he gave the inn-keeper one of the gold peas. Though the inn-keeper gave him all his change, he still owed him money. Third Son said it didn't matter and left. On the way he met his two brothers who said, "They must have beaten you!" Third Son replied, "No one would dare beat me because our father was much respected."

When night fell, they stopped at a landlord's home and asked to spend the night. The landlord said, "There is a room in the south of the courtyard, but it is haunted. You may stay there if you want." When the three brothers entered the room they found it was richly decorated. That night First Son slept on the south *kang*, Second Brother slept on the room's north *kang*, and Third Son slept on the northwest *kang*. Third Son did not sleep. After making sure that his two older brothers were fast asleep he took Altan Barken out, tapped it, and said, "Tonight, keep watch!" and then he slept.

At midnight, the door opened. Altan Barken said, "Don't enter! Heaven sent this man." The other replied, "Regardless of whether heaven or earth sent this man, I

¹²²[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Ma Zhijun

must enter!" Altan Barken then said, "How ungrateful! After the landlord's grandfather and father became rich, they built a pool in their garden and put carp in it for many years. You are one of those. Now you have become a carp demon. You have killed many who have slept here. You have also made the landlord's daughter ill. Tomorrow, I shall have people capture you and take the three books of heaven from your head." The carp demon begged Altan Barken not to do this and then quietly left. Third Son had been awakened by this, though his two elder brothers had not, and Altan Barken told him how to kill the carp demon.

The next morning when the landlord came to collect the corpses of his three guests he was amazed to find that they were alive. Third Son said that the landlord's daughter was ill. He suggested what might be done to save her. When the two older brothers heard their younger brother say this, they thought it was foolishness. They said that they wanted to leave. Third Son gave them money and they left. As soon as the two older brothers were gone, Third Son asked the landlord for some lime, 30 hooks, 40 pitchforks, and yellow, green, and red silk. The next morning, four carts carried what had been prepared to the garden pool. After the lime and hemp were thrown into the pool, the carp jumped up out of the water and was caught. It was about 7 *chi* long and was dying. Third Son then told everyone to close their eyes. He chopped off the carp's head, wrapped it in the silk, cut open the carp's chest, took out its heart, and drained the blood from the heart. This blood was then given to the ill young woman, who was immediately cured. Deeply grateful, the landlord gave his daughter to Third Son in marriage and held a grand wedding banquet.

After some days, Third Son announced that he had a gift for the emperor and would go to the capital to present it. After several months he reached the capital and asked to see the emperor. When he came before him he said, "I give you three books of heaven." An official standing nearby took the gift, put it on a table, and unwrapped it. When they saw the carp head, they were surprised. Then an aide strode forward. He removed a large gold box and a key from the head. He opened the box with the key and found three books inside. The emperor then bestowed the title of "gifted scholar" on Third Son and an important official post. Later, Third Son invited his brothers to the capital where they lived happily together.

Ungrateful Children¹²³

It was only with much difficulty that a widow was able to rear her three sons and see them all married. She then lived alone. The sons cared nothing about her. When she visited them, she only stayed a few days for they gave her poor food. One day a fortune-teller learned of her difficult life and ungrateful children. He told her to fill a pillowcase with sand, buy a balance, and then when she visited her children, to weigh the sand late at night. Later her sons and their wives assumed that she was weighing gold. She then lived with her sons in turn. They gave her good food and treated her well. When she finally died from illness, her sons greedily ripped open the pillowcase and were stunned to find only sand.

¹²³[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Su Qinghe

Ginseng Spirits

Ginseng Girl (I)¹²⁴

A 7-year-old son enjoyed studying, but his parents were too poor to send him to school. He stood outside the classroom everyday and managed to learn many Chinese characters. When the teacher noticed that he was eager to learn, he went to the boy's home and offered to pay half of the boy's school fee, if the family would pay the other half. The father appreciated this, but explained that the family did not have enough food to eat so finding money for school fees was impossible. After some time, the other children, who were all from rich families, were so cruel to him that he stopped listening outside the classroom.

One day as he was playing outside, a man on a white horse rode up. The boy called him "uncle," surprising the man. In fact, this was the boy's maternal uncle. He had not seen his sister--the boy's mother--in many years and had set out to find her. When he found her at home, he suggested that he take the boy to his home and offered to provide for his education. The boy's parents agreed. A year later, the boy wished to visit his parents. His uncle consented and provided him with money and a horse to make the return journey. On the way, he stopped at an inn. At midnight, as he was going outside to the toilet, a blast of wind carried him to the front of a building. Suddenly the wind stopped blowing. A pale woman appeared. She led him into a small room and locked the door. He was kept there for many days.

One day, the pale woman said, "Today, I shall leave. Here are the keys to the house, but don't open any doors." As soon as she left, he went into the courtyard and opened the east gate where he found a dense primeval forest. He felt it would be impossible to escape through such a forest and locked this gate. He went to the north gate and unlocked it, but quickly relocked it, for there were only birds and beasts there. He then opened the south gate and found, to his horror, countless skeletons. When he opened the west gate, he found a vast expanse of water. He felt as though he was standing on a high bank. He wondered how he might possibly escape and then noticed people on a boat. He shouted, "May I go with you?" "Yes," they shouted back. "Wrap your head in cloth, close your eyes, and jump. We will pick you up out of the water." He wrapped his head in cloth and jumped. When he landed, he found he was standing in a grassy area. The sea had vanished and so had the boat and the people.

He began walking and, in time, came to a two-story building surrounded by a high courtyard. He knocked on the courtyard gate and a beautiful girl came out. He told her that he wished to stay the night. She led him to her mistress, who was as beautiful as a fairy. She was attended by seven beautiful girl servants. The young man was puzzled, and wondered if they were demons or humans. The women warmly entertained the young man and showed much interest in his account of what had happened to him. The next morning, a woman came to the building and began cursing loudly. His hostess said, "The pale woman has come here. She is actually a spider sprite and intended to eat you after first fattening you. I shall save you." She and the spider sprite fought for 3 days and nights. During the battle, the young man's

¹²⁴[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: Morin Daawa; [TS]: Zhao Junhui

hostess injured the spider sprite who fled. The young man married his hostess and, 1 year later, they had a son.

One day the young man's wife took out a mirror and told the young man to gaze into it. He did so and saw a tattered cottage. He realized that this was his home. He realized that he had been gone for more than 10 years and decided to visit. The next day, just before he set off, his wife warned him to beware of large inns. On his way home he stopped at an inn and, after meeting a friendly black-faced inn-keeper, he told him everything that had happened. The inn-keeper said that he didn't think his wife was a kind woman, that she was, in fact, a ginseng spirit. Though she might appear kind now, it was only a matter of time before she ate him. The young man recalled the strangeness of such a building in the middle of nowhere and was convinced that she was probably an evil ginseng spirit. The inn-keeper suggested that they capture her. The next day, when they reached the home of the beautiful young woman, the young man began to have second thoughts about capturing his wife. She had been very kind to him and he did not want her hurt. The inn-keeper guessed his emotions, and, after drugging him, forced him to kneel at the courtyard gate.

When the beautiful young woman appeared she knew why they had come. She exclaimed, "How ungrateful! I saved you from that white spider sprite. Now you have brought a black spider sprite here to hurt me." The young man realized that he had been deceived, but because he had been drugged, he could not move. He watched in horror as the black spider sprite invoked his magic and transformed the beautiful young woman and her seven lovely servants into their true forms--one large ginseng root and seven smaller ones. He wrapped the roots in silk and, after the young man had recovered from the drug, the two returned to the inn where the inn-keeper put the roots in his cellar. The young man then returned to his parents' home with his son. His parents were filled with joy to see their son again, but they were in ill health and died a few days later.

The years passed. One day, when the child was 30-years-old, he asked about his mother. His father told him everything that had happened. The young man resolved to find his mother, dressed himself as a beggar, and set out for the black spider sprite's inn. When he reached the inn, the black-faced man agreed he could stay for a few days and earn his keep by doing work around the inn. The young man proved to be hardworking and the black-faced man urged him to stay. Some months later, he told the young man that he wished to adopt him. The young man agreed.

Because the young man was so obedient, hardworking, and responsible, the manager trusted him completely. One day when the black-faced man was about to leave to attend a relative's wedding, he gave the young man 100 keys. He told him not to open any doors with them. As soon as the black-faced man left, the young man began opening doors to rooms of the inn with the keys. After using 99 of the keys, he still had not found his mother. As he walked about the main room of the inn, he heard a hollow sound and realized that there was a cellar underneath. He dug away soil from the dirt floor and found a door. He unlocked it with the 100th key and found a staircase leading down. He walked down and found something glowing in the dark. He went over and found the glow was coming from eight ginseng roots.

He unwrapped the roots, which immediately became women again. Thus the son was happily reunited with his mother. The young man relocked the cellar door, threw the keys on the *kang*, and they went to the mother's home. When the black spider sprite returned, he guessed what had happened. This was confirmed when he discovered that the ginseng roots were missing. He went to the young man's home and found only the young man's father, who said he had not seen his son for many days. The black spider sprite forced the father to go with him to the ginseng spirit's

home. When they arrived, the mother and son berated the father for being heartless. The spider sprite had wrapped a drugged-soaked cloth around the father's forehead. He was unable to move and was forced to kneel. When the son saw his father in pain, he removed the cloth and his father could then stand. He explained what had happened and begged his son and wife to forgive him. The black spider sprite and the ginseng spirit then began fighting. The outcome was not clear until the father began shouting encouragement to his wife. She then killed the black spider sprite which reverted to his true form--a wheel-sized black spider.

Ginseng Girl explained why she had been so interested in her husband when they had first met years ago: One of his ancestors had dug ginseng in the mountains long ago when she had been only a small ginseng root. Therefore, she had been left behind. For this reason, she felt a debt of gratitude to the young man. Her family and that of the black spider sprite were mortal enemies because the latter ate ginseng to prolong their lives. Afterwards, they lived happily together.

Ginseng Girl (II)¹²⁵

Two brothers were married and lived in the same home with their wives. They earned their livelihood by digging ginseng. Elder Brother had a son while Younger Brother was childless. Within several years, Elder Brother died. One year as they were going to a ginseng area, Elder Brother's nephew became ill. Younger Brother put him in an inn, gave the inn-keeper money, and told him to only send him back home when he was well and had someone to go with. Younger Brother then left to dig for ginseng. The inn-keeper gave the boy a room and, after some time, his health improved.

One midnight, as the boy slept, a black monster shoved at the inn's courtyard gate, trying to get through. Finally, it managed to slip through and poked its head into the boy's room. The boy woke up, picked up an ax in the room, and cut off the monster's head. The monster fled and the boy went back to bed. The next morning the boy found a trail of blood and followed it to a large fallen tree with its top part broken off. The tree was about 10 *zhang* (33 meters) long and its roots thrust into the sky as high as a house. The boy cut off the branches, piled them on the roots, and set it on fire. As the tree burned, it crackled agonizingly. The boy left and reached the inn after darkness had fallen. That midnight the boy was still awake, full of thoughts about what had happened that day. Suddenly a pretty girl holding a lantern came into his room and said, "I've come to thank you. You saved me. For years, that big tree stood in my doorway. Only now can I see sunshine again." The two talked throughout the night. The girl came three nights and then invited the young man to her home, which was near the large tree that he had burned. The next day the boy told the inn-keeper that he would return home with some people of his village. He added that his uncle would pay the inn-keeper whatever was due him. Then he set out for the girl's home.

He was amazed when he reached the site of the burned tree. The once desolate spot now sported green trees, wild blooming flowers, and grass. In the midst of this beauty where the tree's roots had once been, stood a jade building. The girl he had met came out and invited him inside. That night, after worshipping heaven and earth, they were married.

They lived together happily for 3 months. Then the boy said he wished to return to

¹²⁵[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Wang Xiujun

his home. His wife, Ginseng Girl, agreed, but said that they first must do three things. The first was to go north. "Close your eyes, and get on my back," she said. He did so and, in a flash, they reached their destination. Green herbs grew everywhere. "These are ginseng, dig as many as you like," Ginseng Girl said. In a moment, the two dug a big bundle of ginseng roots, which they bound with silk of five colors.

Next, Ginseng Girl took her husband to the base of a cliff. She chanted an incantation and a door in the cliff wall swung open. In the darkness, they found a pot about one *zhang* (3.3 meters) in diameter radiating light. The pot was boiling. Ginseng Girl tossed a piece of meat inside, which immediately increased to many pieces of meat. Ginseng Girl explained that it was a treasure pot with treasure water. Whatever was put inside multiplied. They then put some treasure water into a container and left.

The next day Ginseng Girl took her husband to a mountain top where three pines grew. A moment later they noticed a little boy dressed in red squatting under a tree. He removed gold and silver *galoha* from a small red wooden box and began playing with them. Ginseng Girl told her husband to run to where the little boy was. He did so, so frightening the little boy that he ran away, leaving his *galoha*. Ginseng Girl's husband put them in the red box and then put it in his pocket.

The next day they gathered their treasures and went to the boy's home. His family was delighted with his return and his beautiful wife. Two weeks later a group of villagers visited. The young couple warmly received them. They cooked 16 meat dishes for them. As the guests were leaving, the couple gave them ginseng and money as gifts. After they were gone, Younger Brother asked how they were able to treat the guests so. The young couple explained everything that had happened. The uncle accepted this. Afterwards, the family never wanted for food or clothing, and they often helped the poor.

Lessons in Love

The Snake Father-in-law¹²⁶

Two years after her husband's death, a poor widow tried unsuccessfully to engage her only son. Finally, she gave her son her remaining silver. She said that he must find a wife by himself. After many days of walking, the son came to a remote area. Night fell. He noticed a light glimmering in the distance and ran toward it. He found it was a dilapidated cottage of an old woman, who invited him to spend the night there.

The next morning he took a shoulder pole and two buckets and went to fetch water for the old lady. At the well, he found a beautiful young woman who had a strangely distended abdomen. When he returned with the water, he found that his silver was missing. The old woman asked if he had met anyone at the well, and then suggested that he go to the well the next day and ask the girl if she had seen the silver. The next morning he went back to the well. He did not see the girl, so he entered a nearby courtyard that he thought might be her home. She came out, greeted him, and brought him inside. After a pleasant conversation, during which she neither denied nor admitted taking the silver, she asked him to marry her. He agreed, but he found that his parents-in-law were harsh taskmasters, requiring him to fill three large vats with water before he set about other daily work. Regardless of how hard he tried, he was not able to fill the vats, though he labored until midnight. To make things worse, at night as he lay by his wife trying to sleep, he felt as though he was lying on a narrow board, water was flowing underneath, and he was surrounded by many serpents.

After two weeks of this he could endure it no longer. He went to the old woman's home and asked for advice. She said, "Here are three needles and a paper of seven colors. Fold the paper into a lantern, and when you finish fetching water and prepare to go to bed, light the lantern. After you lie down, stab these needles into your wife's body. She will first scold you, and then she will plead with you to remove them. But you must not pull them out until she vows to be faithful to you." The young man did exactly as the old woman said. That night he stabbed his wife with the needles. After a long while, she pledged wholehearted loyalty. The next morning she said, "You must say

*There's nothing people can do,
People may do any work,
Big vat, big vat, quickly fill,*

and after you fetch water three times, the three big vats will be full." The young man did this and the vats were full after only three trips to the well. A few days later, his father-in-law said, "We no longer lack water now that you keep the vats full, but we do need firewood. Behind the garden there are three trees. Cut them down and chop them into firewood." When the man explained this to his wife, she said, "Chop each tree only one time, and then run away. Don't look back. Once you enter the garden, you will be safe." The young man did this. As soon as he entered the garden, he

¹²⁶[TE]: Narengua; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Sun Yanyan

turned and looked back. He was horrified to see that the three trees had become three serpents.

The next day the young man's father-in-law said, "You have been with us for a long while now, but we have not yet cooked a delicious meal for you. Tomorrow, your mother-in-law will cook cakes for you. You must eat them all." When the young man repeated this to his wife she said, "Regardless of what may happen, you must not eat the cakes." The next day his father-in-law called him to the main room of the home and offered him cakes. Finally, realizing the young man was not going to eat the cakes, the father-in-law called in several strong young men. They grabbed him and forced a bit of one cake down his throat. The young man managed to struggle away to the room that he shared with his wife. When he told her he had a stomachache, she scolded him for eating even a bit of the cake. She ordered him to lie on the bed and slapped him on the back. A moment later, he spit out several big fleas.

The next day his father-in-law invited him to the main room of the home for a meal of noodles. Before he went, his wife whispered, "Those noodles are really snakes. One noodle is one snake. If you eat them, you will die." The previous day's events were repeated. After the young men forced a few noodles down him, he rushed back to his room. His wife made him hang upside down, and he escaped death again by vomiting out several snakes.

The next day his father-in-law came to his room and said, "I want you to take this letter to your sister-in-law." After his father-in-law left, the young man's wife gave him three eggs. She told him to bury one nearby, the second one halfway to his sister-in-law's home, and the third one very near his sister-in-law's home. Then she told him what he should do and say the next day when he delivered the letter. The next day he took the letter to his sister-in-law's home, burying the eggs along the way. As soon as he gave it to her, he turned and raced away. His sister-in-law and her husband gave chase. When he reached the egg near their home he said, "It will soon dawn, the cocks will crow." His sister-in-law said to her husband, "Cocks have crowed the first time, what shall we do?" Her husband said it didn't matter, and they continued pursuing the young man. At the halfway point, they neared the second egg and the young man said, "It is dawn. The cocks crow." Just at that moment, cocks did crow. The sister-in-law's husband said, "It is still not entirely light. We must catch him." When they neared the third egg, the young man said, "It is now light. The cocks have crowed several times." By this time, it was light and the sister-in-law and her husband had to return.

When he returned to the room he shared with his wife, she said, "We must now escape. My parents will kill us if we do not." She caught a hen and they fled. Some time later, when they were far from the home, the young woman's father realized that they had escaped and sent a flying sword after them. When the young woman saw the sword approaching, she put the hen on top of her head. When the sword passed by, it cut off the hen's head. After being stained with blood, the sword flew back. When the young woman's father saw that the sword was stained with blood, he was satisfied, thinking that he had killed the young couple. The couple walked for 3 days and nights and reached the young man's home where they lived happily with the young man's mother.

Testing the Wife¹²⁷

Genge lived near the Naven River. He took a second wife because his first wife was barren. The second wife gave birth to a boy and a girl. For this reason, Genge loved the second wife more than the first. His first wife understood this, for she was honest and kind. She continued to love her husband, and treated the second wife as though she was her younger sister.

One day when Genge, his cousin, and his friend were hunting, the cousin asked if his first wife loved him. Genge assured him that she did. His cousin said that he should not be misled by surface appearances, and suggested a test, whereby her love could be truly tested. Then the cousin and friend returned wailing to Genge's home. Genge's first wife ran out and asked what had happened. The two men said that Genge had died suddenly. The second wife did nothing while the first wife prepared a meal for the two men. After serving the meal she said, "Since Genge is dead, weeping is useless. Now I'll tell you a story. There once was a heroic hunter who, in the course of hunting with his falcon, grew tired and thirsty. He couldn't find water anywhere. But finally, he found water streaming down a tall tree. When he tried to drink the water, his falcon flapped his wings, preventing him from drinking. The third time this happened, the hunter flew into a rage and killed his falcon. He happened to glance upwards and saw an enormous serpent. The "water" was really the serpent's dripping venom. He understood why the falcon had flapped his wings. He returned home weeping because he had killed his faithful falcon.

"Now let me tell you a second story. There once lived a couple who had a son. The man left to work outside the home so that he might earn money to support the family. Now that she was alone with the child, she had to do all the work of the home by herself. When she had to leave the baby, it was watched by her faithful cat. It shoed flies away from the child with its tail, and fed the child by putting food into its mouth. When the child wept, the cat comforted it. One day as the woman worked in her garden, a weasel ran up and bit off one of the child's ears. The child shrieked, waking the cat, which quickly killed the weasel. Hearing the baby's wails, the woman rushed in and saw the cat licking the child's bloody face. Thinking that the cat had killed the child, she took it outside and killed it. When she went back inside, she found the weasel. She realized how wrong she had been in killing the cat and was filled with remorse. Now this second story is finished. Bring back Genge's body and we shall bury him."

When the two returned to Genge, and told him what his first wife had said, he worriedly said, "How terrible. We must return at once. Her story means that since I don't believe in her honesty, she prefers to die." When they reached Genge's home, Second Wife was weeping inside the home. First Wife had hung herself behind the home.

Halebare Mountain¹²⁸

Daoluodi and Guoruledi were good friends. They lived near Halebare Mountain, east of the Nuoming River. The latter had a clever beautiful wife. The former was not married and often came to eat at his friend's home. In time he fell in love with the wife and wanted to kill his friend. He said, "Let's look for bird eggs," and the two

¹²⁷[TE]: Jin Guide (75-years-old); [CA]: South Village, Hailar; [TS]: Su Qinghe

¹²⁸[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Chen Yuhua

rode off together. Half a day later they came to a mountain top. Daoluodi said, "There is a hole half-way down the mountain where a bird nests. Who should take the eggs?" Guoruledi said that he would and Daoluodi offered to lower him down the mountain side the hole with a rope. As Daoluodi was doing this, he let go of the rope. Guoruledi plunged down the mountain into a tree. Some time later he regained consciousness and managed to climb into the hole where the bird nested.

The nest held two eggs which he tended. A few days later, they hatched. He tended the nestlings, and the three became good friends. Three months later, the birds had become much bigger. They flew out and brought food to him. Some time later, he mounted one of the birds and was flown out of the hole. He returned home, but found only a vacant building full of spider webs. A man told him that his wife and Daoluodi had left. He then realized that Daoluodi had tried to kill him.

The Carp Repays a Debt of Gratitude¹²⁹

A poor boy earned very little working for a rich family. One summer a flood rushed into the rich man's courtyard. As the family moved about to combat the water, the boy stepped on a carp, whose scales were strangely upside-down. The rich man was delighted with such a find, and ordered the boy to take it to the kitchen. As the boy carried the carp toward the kitchen, he noticed that it was weeping. Moved, he threw it back into the water. A short time later, the floodwater receded.

The carp was Dragon King's third daughter. When she returned to Dragon King's palace she told how the young man had saved her. Dragon King said that she was in the young man's debt. Meanwhile, when suppertime came, the rich man was angry when he found no fish soup, and demanded an explanation. The boy said he had stumbled on the way to the kitchen and had dropped the fish.

When New Year's Eve came, the boy returned home to celebrate the Festival with his mother. That midnight, mother and son heard a sound. When the boy went outside to investigate, he found a beautiful girl standing in the courtyard doorway. "May I spend the night here? As I was going to my grandmother's home, I lost my way," she said. "We are poor with not even so much as a *kang* mat. It would be better if you went to a rich home," the boy replied. "I'm afraid of dogs at the homes of rich people. If you don't let me stay here, I have no place to go." The mother, who had heard the conversation, told her son to bring the girl inside. After a few minutes of conversation with the mother, the girl said, "I would like to be your daughter-in-law." The old woman replied, "You are from a rich family and could not endure our poverty." The boy angrily added that she should not make fun of them by such a suggestion and, after ordering her to leave, roughly pushed her to the courtyard gate. She shoved the young man, which sent him sprawling. Taking a hairpin and pressing it against his throat, she said, "Do you want me or not? If you don't, I'll kill you. I've done nothing to earn your enmity and yet, you have treated me very rudely." The mother had followed them out. She and her son both realized that the girl was sincere, and the two married. Later, after the mother and son were fast asleep, the girl went outside and waved her headdress. Immediately a three-roomed building sprang up. In each there were mirrors, clear glass windows, and furniture. In the kitchen, there were all the necessary utensils.

Now that the poor family had become a rich one, the boy no longer needed to work for the rich man. Previously, he had begun work for the rich man on the sixth day

¹²⁹[TE]: Narengua; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Sun Yanyan

of the new year, but this year, after 16 days he still had not appeared. Therefore, the rich man sent a servant to his home ordering him to return to work. The servant arrived and explained why he had come. The boy said, "I am not willing to work for the rich man this year. If I owe him work time, I shall compensate by paying him money."

When the servant returned and described the boy's improved circumstances, the rich man refused to believe it. The next day he visited the boy. He found him dressed in silks and satins and was amazed with the luxurious home. When the young beautiful wife served him cigarettes and tea, he lustfully grasped her hand. She stepped back, forcing him to release his grip. When he looked into his cup of tea, he saw a fish swimming about, which so startled him that he dropped it. The cup shattered on the floor, further embarrassing him.

After the boy had served a sumptuous feast the rich man returned home completely smitten over the beautiful wife. He became so ill that he didn't leave his bed. Though many *yadgans* were called, none could cure him. The rich man had seven wives, for if a family could not repay the money that they owed him, he would take a beautiful girl from their home in compensation. Consequently, the youngest of his wives was younger than his oldest daughter. As the rich man's health declined, his eldest wife pressed him to tell her why. At last he explained that he could not stop thinking of the boy's beautiful wife. She suggested that he exchange his youngest wife for the boy's wife.

The boy was soon invited to the rich man's home. The rich man suggested that he would give him several of his wives for his wife. The boy refused, but the rich man insisted again and again. When the boy returned home he told what had happened to his wife, Carp Girl. She said, "Tomorrow, tell the rich man that you will take his youngest wife in exchange for me. She is beautiful and the same age as you. Do not feel sad about this. As I told you before, I am not a mortal. My father, Dragon King, ordered me to return soon. The rich man's youngest wife would be a good wife for you."

The next day the boy told the rich man that he would trade his wife for the rich man's youngest wife. The rich man immediately recovered and ordered a sedan sent to bring the beautiful young wife to his home. As the boy rode with his wife in the sedan she said, "When we reach the rich man's home, they will provide a banquet. When the vegetable dishes are all but one on the table, he will surely ask for the last dish. At that instant, a cabbage will spring up from the ground by the kitchen stove. The cook will cut it. At that moment, a flood will rush into the courtyard, drowning the rich man and his family. When the rich man asks for the last vegetable dish, take his youngest wife and escape." When they reached the rich man's home, exactly what Carp Girl said came true. When the flood came, Carp Girl jumped into the water. She became a carp and swam away, while the rich man and all of his family, except for the youngest wife who had escaped with the boy, drowned. After the flood waters receded, the boy and his mother moved into the rich man's home. His new wife knew where the rich man had stored his gold and silver and, with that money, they repaired the damage done by the flood and afterwards, they led a very happy life.

Yearning Swans¹³⁰

Two villages stood on opposite banks of the Nenjiang River. A family with a lovely daughter lived in East Village, and a family with a handsome son lived in West Village. One spring, a strong wind carried away the two children as they played together, and dropped them in front of a cave. They went inside and followed a point of light to a large room where an old white-haired man sat on a *kang*. He smiled and said, "I have brought you here to study. I shall be your teacher." Afterwards he taught them how to read and write. For the next 3 years, the two played together as brothers, for the little girl told the old man and boy that she was a boy.

One day they became homesick. The old man said, "Take this pot to West Spring, but after you fill it with water, don't open it." After they filled the pot with water they curiously opened the lid. Suddenly, a small yellow dragon flew out and up into heaven. Frightened, they returned to the spring and filled the pot with water before going back to their teacher. When they gave him the pot he said, "You cannot deceive me. I saw a yellow dragon flying to heaven. I wanted it to take you back to your homes, but now that opportunity is gone. You must wait another 3 years." Three years later they fetched another pot of water. After they gave it to their teacher, he put a harness over the top. When the dragon inside flew out, it was caught. When the old man took the dragon outside, he said a few words. The dragon became much larger. The old man said, "You may now return home. But this dragon will only take you halfway. You will have to walk the remainder of the distance. Walk due south and you will reach your homes."

Not long afterwards, the dragon left them on a barren hill with a twisting path leading south. As they started down the path, the girl wanted to tell the boy that she was not a boy, but she was too embarrassed. She asked, "Elder brother, why do trees grow tall and strong on the shady side of that mountain, but short and thin on the sunny side?" The boy replied, "Water slowly leaves on the shady side, but quickly where the sun shines strongly." A bit later she saw a pair of birds flying together and asked, "Why do birds fly in pairs?" The boy answered, "If one flew alone, it couldn't find its home." Then she noticed some wild creatures running in pairs and asked, "Why do wild creatures run in pairs?" The boy replied, "What a foolish question! They are afraid that they might be eaten by bigger creatures, so they dare not walk alone." Then it began raining and the girl asked, "Why does it rain?" "There are many springs in the mountains. The sun shines on the springs and the water becomes steam and floats in the sky. The dragon that lives in the sky swallows this steam. If the dragon ejects this steam, it rains on earth," the boy said impatiently.

When they reached their villages, the girl told the boy that he must visit "him" as soon as possible. The boy agreed. When the girl arrived home after an absence of 6 years, she dressed in girl's clothing. As word spread that this family had a beautiful girl, many men came to woo her, but she refused them all. One suitor was from a rich and powerful family. The girl's family engaged their daughter to him, though she disagreed. After some days, the boy from West Village visited and discovered that his "boy" companion was actually a beautiful girl. The girl told him that she loved him and added, "Why do you visit now? My parents have already engaged me to another man." When the boy returned home, he fell seriously ill. After the family learned the reason for his illness, they wished to send a matchmaker to the girl's home, but the boy restrained them with, "It's no use. Her parents are attracted to

¹³⁰[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yao Xinglian

wealth and power and we are poor. After I die, bury me by the road." He soon died. When the girl learned this, she wept without pause. On her wedding day she refused to dress, despite her mother's pleas. Finally she said, "I will dress, but when we pass by the grave of the boy from West Village on our way to my groom's home, we must stop. I shall burn sacred paper before his grave." Her mother finally agreed. The bride's entourage at last started out for the groom's home. When they passed by the boy's grave, she walked to it, took out sacred paper, and wailed, "If you are a clever spirit open the grave." She repeated this again and again. Suddenly, the grave and coffin opened, she leapt inside, and then the grave and coffin closed. When the tomb was dug up, two yearning swans flew out to heaven.

Brother Beast

The Hunter Who Understood Animals¹³¹

One spring a hunter fell into a pit as he was hunting in a forest. He looked around and found a light glimmering and approached. To his horror he found it was a huge serpent which wagged its head and seemed ready to devour him. He quickly hid. The next morning he saw many serpents in the pit touch their tongues to a white stone and then return to their places. The hunter was now very hungry for he had not eaten in two days. He touched his tongue to the white stone and not only was he no longer hungry, but he could understand the serpents as they conversed. One large serpent said to a group of smaller serpents, "This hunter is kind. He fell in here accidentally and has not hurt us. Therefore, we shall not hurt him. Tomorrow, we shall take him out of here."

The next day, the large serpent said to him, "Hunter, do you know where you are? This is serpent country. You have touched that white stone and, from now on, you can understand what birds and beasts say. However, you must never tell others that you can understand what creatures say. If you do, you shall die." The serpents then helped him out of the pit.

Meanwhile, his family had searched for him, but not finding him, they assumed that he was dead. When he returned home his family was amazed. After he told what had happened to him--with the exception of being able to understand the language of animals--they realized that 1 day in serpent country was equal to 1 year in man's world. Some days later he heard two birds talking. One said, "A horse will soon give birth on East Mountain. Let's fly there and eat the placenta." The hunter then went to East Mountain where he found a mare that had just given birth and some birds waiting nearby. The mare said to the foal, "Climb on my back and I'll take you home." The foal did so and the hunter followed them home. On the way, the foal said, "Mother, I'm afraid of the dogs at home." The mare replied, "Don't worry. You're on my back."

One night some time later the hunter and his wife had just gone to bed when they heard something. The hunter listened carefully and realized it was two rats. One said, "The masters are asleep. Let's eat some yogurt from this bucket. I'll eat some first. You hold my tail and don't let go." After some moments, the rat that had been eating yogurt said, "How delicious! Now you eat some." The other rat said, "Hold my tail tightly," and began eating. A few moments later the rat that was holding the other's tail let go, and dropped his companion into the bucket. The hunter kindly removed the rat from the bucket and set it free.

The hunter's wife found that her husband was quite strange. He might suddenly laugh while sitting alone over something he had overheard birds or other animals say. When she asked him what had made him laugh he refused to explain. She continued pestering him for an explanation and at last he said, "I can understand what animals say," and told her about his experience in serpent country. He added, "Now I have broken my promise. Tomorrow I shall meet misfortune." The next day he and his wife decided that he should hide in a water vat. But later that same day many serpents

¹³¹[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Qin Wei

entered the home, surrounded the water vat, slithered inside, and after some time, left. When the wife went near and lifted the cover, she found only her husband's skeleton inside.

The Orphan Who Understood Birds¹³²

One day as a poor orphan hoed in a field, a wind blew up amidst thunder peals. A black cloud bristling with lightning swirled around the orphan who had no place to run or hide. Suddenly, a little boy ran up and cried, "Don't be afraid, I'll protect you," and soon the black cloud blew away. "Let's be brothers, come to my home," the little boy said. The orphan followed the little boy to an underground cave which was the little boy's home. The little boy gave him a plate of lice which the orphan could not eat. Then the little boy said, "Just shut your eyes. It has a good smell." Finally, the orphan managed to eat it all. Then the little boy brought a plate of fleas and a plate of lice eggs which the orphan also managed to eat. The little boy said, "Now, you can understand the language of birds. I shall also give you a golden box which will grant you whatever you desire. Your life need never again be miserable."

The orphan returned to his home and the next day, remembering that his field needed to be turned, took out his box and said, "Golden box, please send a man to help shovel the field." Just as he finished, a man appeared who, after turning the field, vanished. Afterwards, he led a comfortable life, asking the box for whatever he needed. One day, as he was out walking, he heard an owl say, "A rich can't find his horses. Actually, they are about 30 *li* from the village." The orphan found the rich man and, after some searching, they found his horses. The orphan became famous for this. Others did not understand the language of birds but he did and he also had the golden box. He never wanted for anything to eat or wear and lived a good life.

Younger Brother and the Tiger¹³³

In a hunting party of eight there were two brothers. Younger Brother was appointed to be the cook. About 3 months after they set out, a tiger began to come around their tent at night. The hunters thought that the tiger must be particularly angry with one of them so they put their hats out one night. They agreed that the owner of the hat that the tiger took must be the person that the tiger hated. The next morning they found that Younger Brother's hat was taken. The other seven hunters returned home, leaving Younger Brother behind to deal with the tiger, who seemed to have a score to settle with him. That night, the tiger came to the tent and stuck his paw inside, which had a thorn in it. After Younger Brother extracted it with his knife, the tiger left. Later he returned with wild animals that he had killed, and later, he continued to bring prey to Younger Brother.

Consequently, Younger Brother never wanted for meat and also, skinned and dried the skins of the animals the tiger brought him. Three months later, after the two had become good friends, Younger Brother said, "Tiger, you have taken very good care of me. Let us become sworn brothers." The tiger nodded in agreement. The two built a fire and Younger Brother and the tiger kowtowed to heaven and became sworn brothers. When 3 months and 10 days had passed, Younger Brother said, "I miss

¹³²[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Yang Huisen

¹³³[TE]: Larou; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Chen Yuhua

Elder Brother and want to go home." He collected the dried animal skins he had saved and much dried meat, tied it into a bale, put it on the tiger's back, and then they set off for Elder Brother's, which they reached in half a day.

Meanwhile, Elder Brother thought Younger Brother was surely dead and held a funeral for him. When he saw Younger Brother he was delighted. That night, the tiger was invited inside and slept by a window of the home. Half a month later, the tiger indicated that he wanted to leave. Younger and Elder Brothers went with him into the mountains where they parted. Afterwards, the tiger continued to bring the family game.

Adventure and Other

Brave Young Hunter¹³⁴

A khan had two beautiful daughters. Not long after they reached marriageable age, he engaged them to the sons of an emperor. Then they suddenly vanished, and all efforts to locate them failed. One night, as the khan's wife lay agonizing about the fate of her daughters, she had a dream and, 1 year later, she delivered a son. The boy was extraordinary, for he grew 1 *chi* the first day, 2 *chi* the second day, and 3 *chi* on the third day. He was also very clever, learning whatever he was taught and showed a particular fondness for the *pipa*, a two-stringed musical instrument.

One day the khan said, "Son, playing the *pipa* all day is poor preparation for the future. I had hoped that one day you would find your elder sisters." The boy assured his father that he needed nothing but the *pipa* to use in his search for his sisters and, a few days later, he set off. After many days of travel, he reached a river where he saw two trees fighting each other. After playing the *pipa*, the two trees stopped fighting and listened. Then the boy asked them why they were fighting. They replied that they were fighting over three treasures--flying boots that would take the wearer anywhere, a table that would provide any sort of food, and a cap that made the wearer invisible. The trees had agreed that they should each receive one treasure. Now they were fighting over the third.

The boy suggested, "There's an egg in a nest in that willow tree. Whoever brings me the egg first shall get two treasures." The trees agreed, gave the boy the three treasures, and then each tried to be the first to get the crow egg. In the meantime, the boy escaped with the three treasures. He journeyed on, and eventually reached a vast expanse of water. After eating food provided by the table, he donned the boots and flew over to the other side where he found a cave which he entered. There, to his amazement, he found green hills and clear water. When he walked near a house, he saw a pretty young woman washing clothing in a river. He learned that she was his elder sister. She said, "There is an old man who is short and fat. He has a long sharp beard. When he sleeps, he hangs his beard everywhere in the room. If you can get the knife he hangs on the wall, everything will be fine, but you must be very careful for the slightest sound will wake him." The two entered the room and found parts of the beard hung all over the room, including a piece on the knife. The boy grabbed the knife, and, a second later, cut off the old man's head. After dying, he reverted to his original form, a rat demon.

The boy took his sister on his back, put on the flying boots, and, after crossing the sea, they ate eight small and eight large dishes of food. Then the boy asked about Second Sister. "She is in the Undersea Kingdom, very far from here. Her husband is a water ghost. To save her you must find the queen who manages the sea water ghosts. She lives in Daughter Country," Eldest Sister said. The boy put on his flying boots once more and eventually came to a river. A carp guard appeared and asked what he wanted. The boy said that he wished to see his sister. The guard called his sister's husband and, a short time later, he appeared. His eyes were like copper balls, he had innumerable feet, and his belly was just like a drum. His name was Yece. He

¹³⁴[TE]: Laluo; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhu Peiyan

led the boy to his sister and in the meantime, prepared a banquet, which at the boy's insistence, was comprised of food grown on earth. Yece ate so much that all he could do was lie belly-up. Soon he was fast asleep.

His sister told him that the only way for him to save her was to find Queen of Daughter Country and get her help. She pointed in the direction where he could find her. With the help of the flying boots he soon reached this country, which was inhabited only by females. He met the queen, who was startled to see such a handsome young man. She told him that only if he married her would she give an order telling the water ghosts to free his sister. The young man agreed and, with his bride, he collected his two sisters and returned to their parents' palace. The khan and his wife were delighted to see their three children once more. They were especially delighted to see that their son had brought back such a lovely wife. They held a wedding banquet to which all the people of the land were invited that lasted 3 days and 3 nights and to which they invited the common people of the land. The two daughters later found good husbands.

The Flax Pole Wife¹³⁵

Two brothers lived together. Elder Brother was married while the younger had never married because he was foolish. He was unable to do anything except cut firewood. Consequently, Elder Brother's wife fed him only when he brought firewood to the home. One day, as we walked back home with 13 bundles of firewood on his shoulder, a cart pulled by a badly frightened donkey dashed toward him. He grabbed the reins and halted the cart. A long while passed, but the cart owner did not come. He looked in the cart, saw a small package, and opened it. Inside was a beautiful small knife, which he hid in his sash. A short while later the cart owner came up, thanked Foolish Brother, and searched about in the cart. When he found his knife was missing he guessed that Foolish Brother had taken it. He offered him first some money, and then one of his daughters as his wife if he would return the knife, which had been given by an emperor to his grandfather. Foolish Brother understood neither what money or a wife was, he only knew that he liked the knife and refused to return it. The cart owner finally gave up and drove his cart away.

When Foolish Brother returned home with the 13 bundles of firewood, his sister-in-law rewarded him with much to eat. As he happily ate his fill, Foolish Brother related what had happened to him that day. As soon as she learned that he had refused money for the knife, she flew into a rage. When his brother returned and learned what had happened, he was so angry that he threw an ax at Foolish Brother. It grazed the right side of his forehead, rendering him unconscious. Thinking that he was dead, the husband and wife threw him in a ditch near the village. Some time later, Foolish Brother regained consciousness and slowly crawled to his aunt's home. Though she was poor, she cleaned his wound, and fed him for a month until he regained his strength. She explained that he must leave for her cruel husband was soon to return.

He walked away from the village, and, in time, came to the home of a rich man, who compassionately brought him inside and fed him. When the rich man's son learned that Foolish Brother was 15-years-old, he shouted that he now had an elder brother. The rich man took a liking to Foolish Brother and adopted him. Later, the rich man engaged a man to teach his two sons. Several years passed and the rich man

¹³⁵[TE]: Narengua; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhu Peiyan

arranged his son's marriage, but did not look for a wife for Foolish Brother. This upset the rich man's son and, in order to pacify him, the teacher made a flax pole doll, and clothed it in colored paper. The rich man's son called it his sister-in-law, and offered it food everyday. On the tenth of the third moon, the rich man's son offered the doll a pipe of tobacco. To his surprise, the doll took the pipe and said, "Younger Brother, you smoke first," and walked away from the flax pole framework. The teacher and the two young men were astonished. The teacher was so frightened by this that he left and never returned.

The young woman showed every concern for Foolish Brother and the two seemed happily married. After some time she said that she would like to return to her home. Fearing that Foolish Brother and his wife might meet with difficulty, the rich man son's accompanied them. After they had travelled a ways, they reached a home and the wife greeted those living there as family members. Though they seemed to recognize her, they also seemed very surprised. That night, when the family went to bed, everyone seemed especially apprehensive. No one slept. At midnight, they heard a sound. Both the mother and youngest daughter of the family screamed. When a lamp was lit, the only thing that remained of Foolish Brother's wife was the flax pole framework.

Foolish Brother related how she had come to be his wife. At that moment, the father of the family noticed Foolish Brother's knife. He realized that this was the young man who had stopped his run-away donkey cart years before. He explained that after he had returned home after losing the knife, he had related what had happened to his family. Not long afterwards, his eldest daughter had fallen ill, died, and her soul had gone looking for Foolish Brother. When she found the flax pole doll, her soul entered it. Such people can only live for one year. When that time was up, she had returned to her parents' home so that Foolish Brother might marry her younger sister. Foolish Brother returned the knife to his father-in-law, married the family's younger daughter, and lived happily afterwards.

Living Treasure¹³⁶

A rich man lived by the Nenjiang River. But despite his vast wealth, he and his wife had no children. He had a poor younger brother whom he treated very cruelly. He never shared any of his wealth with him. One hot summer day the rich man and his wife ordered two servants to put chairs and a table under a large shade tree in the village and serve tea. The rich man's younger brother passed by, saw them, and when he reached his home said, "My elder brother and his wife are sitting happily under the village shade tree. They certainly seemed happy. It is true, money is useful." "Money isn't the only thing that is valuable," his wife said. "Tomorrow, we'll show them that we're happier than they are."

The next day the wife ordered First Son to take a table, Second Son to bring a teapot, Third Son to bring two chairs, Fourth Son to hold the teacups, and Fifth Son to bring a tablecloth. The seven then went to the village shade tree. First Son began boiling water. Once it boiled, Second Son poured it into the teapot. Third Son poured it into the cups and served it. Fourth and Fifth Sons fanned their parents. The couple cheerfully drank the tea. When the rich man heard that his poor younger brother was under the shade tree he and his wife went to look. They said, "Though he is poor, he has five sons. They are living treasures. Our gold and silver are lifeless and not

¹³⁶[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Su Qinghe

as precious." Thereafter, villagers said, "Money is dead, but children are priceless, living treasures."

The Smoker¹³⁷

After 1 year of marriage the husband smoked so much that he became so lazy that he and his wife did not even have enough food to eat. He was known as Heavy Smoker. The couple decided to move to the wife's mother-in-law's home 20 *li* away. They set out and by evening, though they were near their destination, the wife was exhausted. She had never walked such a long distance before and, in addition, she was carrying a heavy bag. Just as the wife was declaring that she could not move another step, an oxcart stopped behind them. Heavy Smoker asked the driver if his wife could ride in the cart. The driver thought that the wife was beautiful and invited the couple to ride. Heavy Smoker handed the driver his tobacco pipe and asked him to smoke. Some time later, the driver dropped the pipe on the ground, stopped, and told this to Heavy Smoker. As soon as he got out of the cart to get the pipe, the driver lashed the ox which ran down the road, leaving the dazed husband standing alone.

Meanwhile, Heavy Smoker roamed about, stopping wherever he could find work. More than 1 year later he unknowingly came to the home of the man who had stolen his wife and asked for work. He was given a job weeding, along with many other laborers. He was a good story-teller and, because of the interest this created among the workers, the leader of the weeding group agreed that Heavy Smoker should tell stories while the other members of the group did his share of work. After his arrival, the weeding group was much more energetic.

The ox-cart driver's sister was 16-17, and, when she heard of the new laborer's story telling ability, she asked him to come to tell stories to her and her brother's wife, whom he had stolen from Heavy Smoker. On the night that he came, the ox-cart driver was out of the home, collecting rent. As soon as Heavy Smoker's wife saw him, she recognized him as her husband, and hid in the kitchen so that he would not recognize her. The next day she secretly met him and the two planned an escape. Heavy Smoker's wife went to the ox-cart driver's mother and said, "I want to visit my mother. I'll need two carts. I want my sister-in-law to go with me. I also want that story-telling worker to go with us to drive one of the carts." The old woman agreed.

The next day Heavy Smoker's wife filled the carts with valuable things and they set out. After travelling for 3 days and nights, they reached the couple's previous home. Heavy Smoker's wife talked to the ox-cart driver's sister and she agreed to become Heavy Smoker's second wife. When the ox-cart driver returned home, he found that he had lost a wife and his sister. After 1 year of searching, he found his sister, who, by this time, had a child. She told him to leave immediately, which he did. Heavy Smoker and his two wives lived happily together and afterwards, Heavy Smoker never smoked again.

¹³⁷[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhang Liming

The Cruel Mother-in-law¹³⁸

After her son left the home to take an official examination, an old mother treated her daughter-in-law very cruelly. The young mother often thought of killing herself, but when she thought of her two young children she did not, and continued to treat her mother-in-law with respect.

One night she was especially depressed and went out behind the home, ready to hang herself from a tree. Endur happened to be patrolling the sky and saw a whiff of white air moving upward. He looked downward and saw the young mother. The white air was proof that her son would become a great man and that she was a good mother. Endur assumed the form of a general, rescued her, and took her away where they lived together.

When the next morning came, the mother-in-law shouted that her daughter-in-law had run off with another man and gave the children to a servant of the home to care for. "Feed them until they are good and fat. I want to eat their hearts and livers," she told the servant. After a half-year, the old mother saw that the children were fat. She called the children and said, "Go look for my brother. He's an old man who always carries a wine jar. Bring him here." The children easily found the old man and brought him back to their grandmother. She explained that her daughter-in-law had run off with another man and only when she had eaten the children's hearts and livers would her anger abate. She handed her brother a sword and told him to take the children outside, kill them, and bring back their hearts and livers. She added, "Only human blood will stick to this sword." The old man silently took the sword and led the children to a remote place. He told them to run because their grandmother wished him to kill them. A short time after the children left, he killed a pig, which he found in an eastward direction, and a dog, which came from the west. He cut out their hearts and livers, but blood would not stick to the sword. He cut off a toe and smeared blood on the sword. When he returned to his sister, she was convinced that the children were dead.

Meanwhile, the two children reached a crossroads. Exhausted and lost, they slept underneath a tree. While the boy was sleeping, a white-haired old man appeared in a dream and said, "Don't go with your sister. If you do, you will be in danger," and then he slapped the boy's head. The boy woke up, but soon went back to sleep. The old man appeared to him a second time, and he again ignored him. The third time when the boy woke up he felt a lump on his head. He realized that he should do as the old man had ordered and left. That morning, Endur told the girl's mother to gather medicinal herbs near where the little girl was. When the mother drew near, she heard weeping and discovered her daughter. Thus the two were happily reunited and returned to Endur.

In the meantime, the boy came upon an old man resting by a cart. The boy went up and asked for food because he was very hungry. The old man said, "There is a piece of bread in that bag. You may eat half of it." When the boy looked inside the bag he found only a small piece of bread and wondered how it was enough. But after eating half he was full. He asked for water, and the old man gave him a water bottle, but said to drink only half. Though he felt this was too little to quench his thirst, he found that he was no longer thirsty after drinking it. The boy learned the old man was going to the capital, and asked if he could go with him. The old man agreed. The boy offered to pull the cart with the old man sitting inside. The old man laughed

¹³⁸[TE]: Narengua; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Ma Yanping

and told the boy to sit inside. Not long after the boy sat in the cart, he fell asleep. When he woke up he asked where they were. The old man said that they were in the capital and then vanished. Suddenly it began raining and the boy quickly stepped under the eaves of a shop. The shopowner saw him and asked him to come inside. After the boy explained who he was, and who his father was, the shopowner said, "Your father forgot what was right and wrong. He lived here for nearly 2 years, but never paid me the rent he owed. This year he became the king's son-in-law. He passes through the streets every noon in a sedan. Stand in front of his sedan and see if he recognizes you."

At noon the boy looked out and saw a sedan being carried by eight men. The boy darted out of the shop, knelt in front of the sedan, and shouted, "I've come to see my father." When the father peered out and saw the boy he thought, "I lied to the king by telling him that I was not married. Now that my son has appeared, I'll be found out and executed." He ordered his men to beat the boy, who lost consciousness. Thinking that he was dead, the men threw him under a bridge. The shopowner observed what happened. Finding that the boy was still alive, he brought him back to his shop and cared for him. Some days after the boy recovered, the shopowner suggested that he visit the palace garden and talk to the king's daughter. The next day the boy slipped inside the palace garden, and, when the princess walked by, he jumped out from behind a tree where he was hiding and told her everything. The princess took him inside the palace and hid him in a closet. When her husband came home she said, "Before you married me, did you know that I had a child? Now that we have lived together for a time, I think that you should meet him." She walked over and brought the boy out of the closet. Her husband's face paled when he beheld his own son. He knelt and admitted that he had a wife and children and begged his wife to present the case to the king and ask for forgiveness. But his wife said that he must see the king alone. He did so and the king forgave him.

The boy then happily lived with his father and stepmother, but often thought of his sister. One day as he was playing in the streets, he met the old man who had brought him there. When the boy told him what had happened, and how much he missed his sister, the old man said, "Don't worry, you'll meet her again. There is something about to happen that is much more important. A country wishes to invade your country, but nobody here knows it yet. They will soon bring a watermelon and ask how many seeds are inside. If your country guesses correctly, they will return to their own country without invading. Now remember that there are 100 seeds in that watermelon." Soon news came from the border that a country was planning to invade, but if the number of seeds inside a watermelon could be guessed they would not invade. Though the king consulted many people, nobody was willing to guess. The boy was so sure that the king agreed that he could go guess. When he reached the border and saw the watermelon, he said that there were 100 seeds inside. When the watermelon was cut open and the seeds counted, this proved correct and the enemy forces withdrew. The king was delighted with this and made the boy a general. Not very long afterwards, the king died and the boy became the new king.

A short time later, his mother and sister came to the palace. The mother said, "I want to invite your grandmother, her brother, and our servant here for a banquet." Two days later, all were assembled for the banquet. The mother of the two children offered everyone a toast in turn. When she reached her mother-in-law's brother she said, "You were kind to my children and I will never forget you. I wish you a long life." When she reached her son's stepmother she said, "I thank you for your generosity. Without you, my family could never have been reunited." Finally, she stood before her mother-in-law and said, "You are cruel-hearted. I kindly cared for you, but you beat me and drove me to suicide. You also lied to my children, telling

them that I had run away with another man." The old woman was speechless and wanted to leave, but when she stood, she died and fell to the floor. The mother was then carried away on clouds. Afterwards, the young king lived with his father, stepmother, and sister. He managed the country well.

Nephew and Uncle¹³⁹

A mother fell ill and her married daughter returned home to care for mother. Knowing that the old woman had little time to live, her daughter and son had a coffin made. Shortly before their mother died, the son went hunting, leaving his sister alone with their mother. A nine-headed monster suddenly appeared, ate half of the sister, and then fled. When the brother returned he thought his sister looked disgusting with only half a body. He said, "I don't know whether or not the coffin we've made is long enough for her. Please lie in it. If it's long enough for you, it will be long enough for mother." When she lay in the coffin, her brother fastened the lid and threw it in a river. His mother soon died and after burying her, he lived alone.

Meanwhile, the coffin drifted for nine days and nights before washing ashore. During the time it drifted, the young woman gave birth to a son. As soon as the boy was born he could speak and had great strength. A year later, still locked in the coffin, the mother explained all that had happened. The son kicked the coffin lid off and they built a hut out of the coffin boards. The mother also made a small bow for the boy which he used to hunt birds. Later, he wanted to kill bigger game and made a bow from a plum tree. He proved a skilled hunter and they built a better hut of hides from the animals he killed.

One day as the boy's uncle was hunting in the area he came upon the hut. When he entered he was amazed to see his sister. "You sent me off to see the King of the Netherworld, but he didn't agree that my time had come so I'm still alive," she said. She told him about his remarkable nephew. "If he had real ability, let him find that monster and get back the other half of your body," her brother said before leaving. When her son returned from hunting, the mother repeated what the boy's uncle had said. The boy went looking for the monster and, in time, he found it. The monster was quite afraid of the boy's strength and said, "Some years ago I ate half your mother's body. Now I'll vomit it up. Take it back home and join it to your mother." The boy said, "Although I could kill you, I won't because you have done what I asked. I may also need you to do something later." The monster replied that it would do whatever the young man ordered.

The young man's uncle visited the next day. When he saw that his sister was whole again he realized that when his nephew was older he might kill him. He said, "I have three tasks for my nephew. If he can do them, I shall not harm him. If he cannot, I shall kill him." Although the boy's mother protested that this was unreasonable, her brother insisted. He said, "Tomorrow, my nephew must have a wild boar for me." When the boy returned from hunting, his mother told him what his uncle had said. The next morning he found one taller than a horse and shot it with an arrow. He said, "I don't want to kill you. If you'll come to my home, I'll later release you." The boar agreed and followed him to his home, where the boy tied it to a tree near their hut.

The uncle was amazed when he came later that day and saw a boar as tall as a camel tied to the door. He deduced that his nephew had captured such a fierce animal

¹³⁹[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Jiang Weiqing

for the purpose of killing him. He said to the boy's mother, "Your son must plant 900,000 trees around here and capture 500,000 creatures from Taihang Mountain and put them in the trees. He has 3 days to accomplish this task." When the boy came home from hunting his mother told him this latest task. He went into the courtyard, kowtowed, and beseeched heaven's help. Then he found the monster and asked for its help. The monster took the boy to Yinger Mountain where the monster petitioned the god of Yinger Mountain to lend them 500,000 creatures. The next morning the hut was surrounded by trees which were full of birds and other creatures. The son tied a lion on the right side of the home's courtyard gate and a boar on the left side. "Make 10,000 cloth bags and fill them with chili powder. Shortly, these shall prove very useful," he told his mother.

At noon on the third day his uncle came with some men. He was certain that his nephew had failed, and was ready to kill both his nephew and sister. But the lion so frightened the men that they were afraid to enter the courtyard. They also noticed that every bird had a cloth bag tied to its leg. The birds shook the bags and a cloud of chili powder descended on the men, blinding them. The boy's uncle shouted for help and the boy then came out and led them inside. After they had washed their faces the boy ordered them to return. As soon as they went out through the courtyard he loosed the lion and boar. The men were then ripped to bits. Afterwards, the boy and his mother lived a happy life.

Grandmother Ghost¹⁴⁰

A 99-year-old woman nursed her grandson's wife. One day a lama came to the home and asked to spend the night. The grandson agreed, but explained how poor the family was. The lama said that it didn't matter. That night the lama did not sleep, he chanted scriptures. At midnight, as he had expected, the grandmother leapt from where she was sleeping, and rushed to a chest from which she took many *haniks*. She brought them to the kitchen stove and said to them, "Do you want to eat a male or female pig?" The dolls chirped for a moment, and then the old woman rushed to the storehouse, brought a little boy to the kitchen, and slapped him on his buttocks. The little boy cried out. She then left him and went outside to get some wood. The lama grabbed the boy and put him where he was sleeping. When the old woman came back inside, she found the boy was gone. She searched about, but dared not go near the lama's bed. At dawn, she went back to where she had been sleeping and pretended to sleep.

A short time later, the lama told the grandson and his wife what had happened and began chanting at the old woman. She was upset, and wanted to run away, but the lama caught her and put an incantation on her body, which prevented her from escaping. He said, "She is a living ghost and has eaten seven of your sons. In all, she has eaten 99 children. If she eats one more, she will become a spirit and we will not be able to deal with her!" The lama ordered the young couple to pile up wood, the old woman was thrown on top, drenched with the blood of a male dog, and burned. The lama then opened the chimney exposing the skulls of 99 village children.

¹⁴⁰[TE]: Laluo; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Su Qinghe

The Vulture's Spirit¹⁴¹

Once an old man and his wife had two sons and a daughter. The daughter was talkative and her parents were very fond of her. When she was 7-years-old, she stood on the chimney every day and shouted, "Let the spirit of a vulture enter my body!" Afterwards, one of the family's chickens was killed every night. Each chicken had died from being strangled and its blood had been drunk. The mother of the family blamed her sons wives for this, even though they denied it. The two daughters-in-law decided to find out what was really happening, and hid at night near the chickens. At midnight the little girl came outside, rolled on the ground, became a vulture, killed a chicken, drank the blood, rolled on the ground, became a little girl again, and went back into the house. The women told their husbands what they had seen. The next day the two men told this to their parents. Their parents flew into a rage and ordered them to leave the home. Taking their wives and putting a few possessions on a cart, they moved about 12 *li* away from their parents. Half a month later, the sons decided to visit their parents. They quietly approached the home and looked through a window. They saw their sister sitting in front of a large red cabinet. She pulled her head off, threw it up in the air, and said, "If the face lands up, the brothers have arrived. If it lands face down, they have not arrived." Frightened, the brothers fled. The girl chased after them. Fortunately, the brothers had brought their hounds with them, which killed the vulture-spirit girl. The brothers then made a large fire and burned her corpse.

The Kaikuo Stone Tablet¹⁴²

Kaikuo Village is on the upper reaches of the Nenjiang River. A stone tablet is on a mountain more than 3 *li* northeast of the village. The Kaikuo region is the most beautiful of Dagur areas. It is near mountains and a river. East of the village there is a colorful stone hill and, to the northwest, there is a forested mountain. In this place there arose a dragon son of heaven who made yellow gold. He made Emperor Qianlong of the Qing Dynasty so afraid that he sent people to build an inscribed tablet which suppressed this son of heaven. The gold also vanished.

An old man living in Kaikuo Village had a son and daughter. One day a fortune-teller passed by and the old man asked him to tell his fortune. "You will be a great man and your future is good. If you do not leave home for 100 days, the country is yours," the fortune-teller predicted. Afterwards, the old man remained at home. The details aren't clear, perhaps he counted wrong, anyway, he lost a day in his count. On the 99th day he went out to his garden and chopped down a poplar tree. He stuck the branches of the tree into the earth, and arranged them in several battle formations. Then he pretended to be a battle marshal. When he looked up, a yellow dragon appeared and flew above him. Seven colored clouds rose about the dragon. Believing that his time had come, the man knelt and prayed to heaven for blessings and success. Then a colored current of air rose to the sky, shaking the emperor's palace. The imperial astrologer said that in the upper reaches of the Nenjiang River there was a propitious location from which the colored air current had originated. He said, "If you don't want a son of heaven to arise there, you must build a stone table to suppress it. If not, your rule is endangered."

¹⁴¹[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Chang Sha

¹⁴²[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhang Guoqiang

The emperor immediately ordered his officers to the area. When they reached Kaikuo Village, they dug a very deep hole in the mountain just northeast of the village. In the hole, they placed a crown, an imperial robe, and various other objects and covered it with soil. They put a stone tablet on top of this, and placed a large stone tortoise at the base of the tablet inscribed in both Chinese and Manchu. The inscription read: These characters suppress this region for 200 *li* around.

Phoenix Mountain was in the same region and the tablet near Kaikuo Village could not suppress it. The emperor was afraid a heaven princess might arise there and he ordered a Queen Temple built. Afterwards, that area was noted for the beauty of its women.

After the stone tablet was erected, the old man felt depressed and fell deathly ill. He called his son and said, "After I die, put my nude corpse in a coffin. Secretly bury it in the pig sty. Don't allow anyone to open it." His father soon died and the son died exactly as his father had instructed. Several days later the father's daughter visited. When she heard that her father had died, she demanded to see his corpse. The son was unable to refuse her demand. He removed the coffin lid. As soon as she saw her father's nude corpse she didn't rest until her brother had put a pair of trousers on it.

After she left, the family's black dog began acting strangely. At midnight, when the dog-star [Ursa Major] arose, the dog jumped on the roof of the home and slept. When dawn came, it jumped down. This went on for several days. The next time the daughter visited the home, she noticed this and said, "It is an ill omen for the dog to sleep on the roof. It must be killed." Though the brother didn't agree, his sister found a neighbor who willingly killed the dog. Then a new star, blazing with color, rose in the sky. The imperial astrologer noted this, and tracked the star to above the old man's coffin. When it was opened, they found that the corpse had gone eastward down an underground river. When the corpse was found at a juncture of the underground river and the Nenjiang River, most of it had become a dragon. It had many dragon scales. They hacked it into nine pieces.

The old man might have become a son of heaven, but he violated the taboo of being nude when he was buried. The trousers negated his good luck. Consequently, when he was found, the trousers were around his ankles, and his feet could not become those of a dragon. The black dog had jumped onto the roof to prevent the star from being observed by the imperial astrologer. Once the dog died, the light of the star was revealed.

Why Gold Was Not Made in Kaikuo Mountain¹⁴³

Many years ago a man from inland China came to a village south of Kaikuo Mountain. He believed that the mountain had much treasure, but he didn't know how to find the key which would open the mountain. He guessed that the key was in the village. After circling the village several times, he approached a vegetable garden where an old Dagur woman was picking peapods. The man said, "Old mother, I've very thirsty and want to eat a cucumber." The old woman readily agreed, and told him to pick the one he wanted. The man chose the largest but, rather than eating it, he hurried away, astonishing the old woman.

A hunter had noticed the man circling the village and, finding this odd, followed him as he made off with the cucumber. When he reached Kaikuo Mountain, he

¹⁴³[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhang Guoqiang

pointed the cucumber at a cliff and murmured something. Suddenly, with a boom, a hole appeared and the man walked inside, followed by the hunter. After walking a long distance, a glimmer appeared. As they approached, the light became brighter, and then they came upon a mill wheeling by itself, milling a white substance.

When the man from inland China saw this, he said sadly, "Truly regrettable. The gold is still raw. I came too early!" Then he turned and left, followed by the hunter. When they came out of the hole, the entrance slammed shut. When the hunter later told people about what had happened, everyone blamed the inland man for destroying the good luck of Kaikuo Mountain. If he had not come at that time, the mountain would have made gold.

Cheqire Cave¹⁴⁴

Along the lower reaches of the Gan River there was a cave about 40 *li* from Gaxina Cave. Dagur called it Cheqire Cave. Three steep mountains, which were joined together, faced the cave. Words were carved on the cave walls. Half of the characters resembled the Eight Diagrams and half were evil-dispelling incantations. Long ago these mountains were used to suppress Monkey King by Guanyin Bodhisattva. For this reason, the three mountains were tall and connected. The writing on the cave also suppresses ghosts and other evils.

Gaxina Cave¹⁴⁵

Long ago the Gaxina Cave area was a good hunting area, but a monster came and killed much game and the hunters who tried to hunt there. One day Endur found the monster. The two decided to see who should have the cave. They began with a test of archery. The target was a cliff top 40 *li* away. The monster shot first, but because he lacked strength, his arrows fell halfway to the mark. Endur's aim was true and his arrows made deep holes through the cliff top. Realizing that Endur's strength and archery skill were better than his own, the monster fled in terror. Endur pursued, forcing him into the sea. Afterwards, the Gaxina area was governed by Endur. Hunters were free to go there in peace. The bloodthirsty monster never dared return.

¹⁴⁴[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhang Guoqiang

¹⁴⁵[TE]: Qiker; [CA]: [MD]; [TS]: Zhang Guoqiang

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