

Banishing of Illnesses into Effigies in Monolia

By

WALTHER HEISSIG
University of Bonn, Bonn, Germany

The banishing of an illness or of the evil spirits that cause sickness has been treated within the last decades. In 1944 some remarks were published on a shaman from Eastern Mongolia who performed a ritual banishing in 1943 (Heissig 1944: 53; 1966: 87–90. Manijab 1957: 50–55). Some forty years later the Hungarian scholar A. Sárközi described a lamaistic attempt to incorporate similar notions into a ritual book called *Nüke böglekü sudur*—“The Sūtra to Block Up an [Earth]-Hole” (Bese 1978: 52). She showed clearly the shamanist background of this exorcism which forces the evil spirit into a hole in the ground and buries it. Although camouflaged heavily with Buddhist expressions, this booklet has preserved faint traces of the shamanistic practice of banishing the spirit-cause of illness and bad luck into a hole. The hole is then pressed down “with a pebble” (Sarközi 1984: 325–339; 1985).¹

A similar notion is preserved in a shamanist invocation from the Darkhan-Banner of the East Mongolian Khortsin,² called *čidkür nom-uyadqaqu* “Pacifying the Demons,” which had been noted down around 1970.

The shaman tells the spirit banished into the ground:

A Stone of ten thousand *chin*³
I press upon your head, spirit!
I press into your heart,
The iron *p'urbu*⁴-nail, Spirit!

One Stone of thousand *chin*
I press upon your forehead,

I press the peg with the handle of cypress-wood
 Unto your breast,
 I shall kill you like a goat⁵

The information which I had obtained in 1943 from the East Mongolian Kūriye-Banner about such rituals of exorcism mentioned the making of an effigy out of dry grass, its burning in the desert, as well as the burying of boiled eggs, a needle and a comb, together with the skeleton-heads of a horse and a dog (Heissig 1944: 53). This is corroborated by some unpublished reminiscences of a Mongol about shamanism in the Kūriye-Banner from the year 1982:

. . . at the end of the night. after the shaman had chanted for five nights, striking his drum for the 'suppression,' he went into the desert. Clothes formerly worn by the ill person, some of his belongings, cooked rice and millet, boiled eggs, etc., were placed into a hole in the ground prepared some time ahead. On top of it was pressed a thick, flat boulder, bound in the middle into two halves with black and white thread. Then [the shaman] spoke:

Demons and devils all,
 Open your ears and listen:
 After your seed of sin has been brought to an end,
 It is buried in that hole!
 When women grow beards,
 At such inconceivable time might it come out (again)!
 When donkeys grow horns,
 At such a contravention time might it shift!
 When cooked rice sprouts,
 At such fruitful time it might get out (again)!
 When chickens come from boiled eggs,
 At such forceful time it might get free!

[The shaman], while uttering such words jumped back and forth on top of the hole that contained the suppressed objects, intertwining the black and white threads and putting a spell on them⁶

In 1943 my informant had similarly explained that the demon banished into the earthhole has been mocked by the shaman that it might come out only when cooked eggs hatched, meat grows again on the bones of the horse's skull, and boiled millet again sprouts (Heissig 1944).

Such mocking carried out over the buried items seems to have been widely practiced. It is reported in another stanza that a nail buried by the Khalkha-Mongols because it threatened cows and horses who might swallow it is apostrophized by declaring that it could come out of the ground only when the horns of a goat reached the sky, the tail of a camel reached the ground, a hare grows horns and a calf tusks (Tatár 1984: 322).

How widespread such a notion is is illustrated by some lines from one of the most ancient spells used in Hungary for banishing the demon that causes sickness in a horse while it is ploughing.

Listen. I give thee an order!
 Like a stone docs not root in the ground,
 Like it never comes into buds,
 Shalt thou not take hold in this horse, nor
 Shalt thou multiply (Dömötör 1981: 211)

The use of an effigy made out of grass and dressed in clothes formerly used by the afflicted person is mentioned in some of these spells. As reported in 1982, an incantation from the Darkhat-Banner of the Khortsin describes the appearance as well as the use of such a scapegoat-effigy:

[It has] a handkerchief in great style,
 [It has] a black shirt of shiny cotton.
 It has beautiful, regularly shaped eyebrows,
 It has six silvery earrings,
 It has ripe, beautiful lips,
 It has cheeks red like kidneys.—
 Both the old and the young
 Give such an [effigy] man away for ransom!

To be freed from severe sufferings
 We hand over [such] a life [like] effigy,
 Having soot-black eyebrows,
 Having a glossy⁷ hat in style,
 Having a shirt of green silk—
 Is it perhaps worse than that of the spouse of the lord?

We hand over the bodily likeness of
 A man suffering of swellings;
 Having a shirt of blue silk—

Is it perhaps worse than that what we give to a girl?

Having a handkerchief of red silk—
Is it perhaps different from that of the heads of the family?—
We hand over this skillfully made body
To part with troublesome pain.

We hand over this likeness
Having a wide, beautiful shirt—
Is it then different from that of a human maiden?—
To part with active obstacles!⁸

The same ritual is reported from the Daghur, an ethnic group living in the Heilungkiang province in close neighbourhood to the Khortsin-Mongols. Although this group is no longer considered Mongol (Fei 1980: 101–102), yet, because they are closely related with the Tungus-Manchu-speaking Solons, they are indeed culturally interdependent with the Mongols. Their language is strongly influenced by Mongolian and religious similarities indicate shamanist traditions common to the Khortsin, the Barghu-Mongols, and the Daghur (Erkimbatu 1982: 541). The Daghur call the banishing into an effigy *joliγ tamalaqu*, a dialectical variation of Mong. *daγulaqu* meaning 'to chant.' The human effigy is made of bounded dry grass and a human face drawn on paper or a rag is attached to it. This figure is dressed in clothes particularly cherished by the ill person. After the shaman has exorcised the demons and devils (*ada čidkür*) that caused the affliction and banished them into the effigy, it is carried to a deserted place far from human habitation. In a well-to-do settlement the effigy rides bareback on a unsaddled two year old ox (*γunan*) or a four year old cow (*dönen*). Poor people used to carry the effigy by seating it on the axle of a cart (*tergen-u tenggelig*). While it is being carried, the shaman chants and beats his drum. Having reached its destination in the desert the effigy is stripped of its clothes. Together with the draught-animal these are presented as an offering to the shaman (Mendüsürüng 1983: 269–270). The disposing of the effigy is accompanied by the following chant of the shaman:

Stay for two or three nights
In the upland,
Stay for one night only
In the plains!
Put the eggs of a bustard

Into the pot,
 Put goose-eggs
 Into a big cask.
 Take for a drink
 The water from the lake,
 Take for food
 The meat of a duck!
 Move cautiously
 When endangered by a dog,
 Be wide awake
 During the perils of the night.
 Move away
 Riding bareback on the axle tree,
 Move on
 Riding this two year old calf, bred here!
 In my turning around shamanizing
 I say 'get well, get well!'
 In my turning round and round shamanizing
 I say 'get along, get along!' (Mendüsürüng 1983: 270).⁹

The beginning of this final shamanist incantation uses words similar to those in Mongolian epics and fairy tales when a traveling hero gives orders to his bride and kinsmen for spending the nights and resting at specially marked places on their way home.¹⁰ The same phrases are used in other shamanist incantations from Northern Mongolia of the Ongyon (helpful spirit) Ulayan tayiyal qayičing at the Dayan degereki site near Lake Höwsgöl, saying:

Lodging for the night at a rock big like a sheep,
 Resting at noon at a cow-sized boulder (Damdinsüren 1959: 129).¹¹

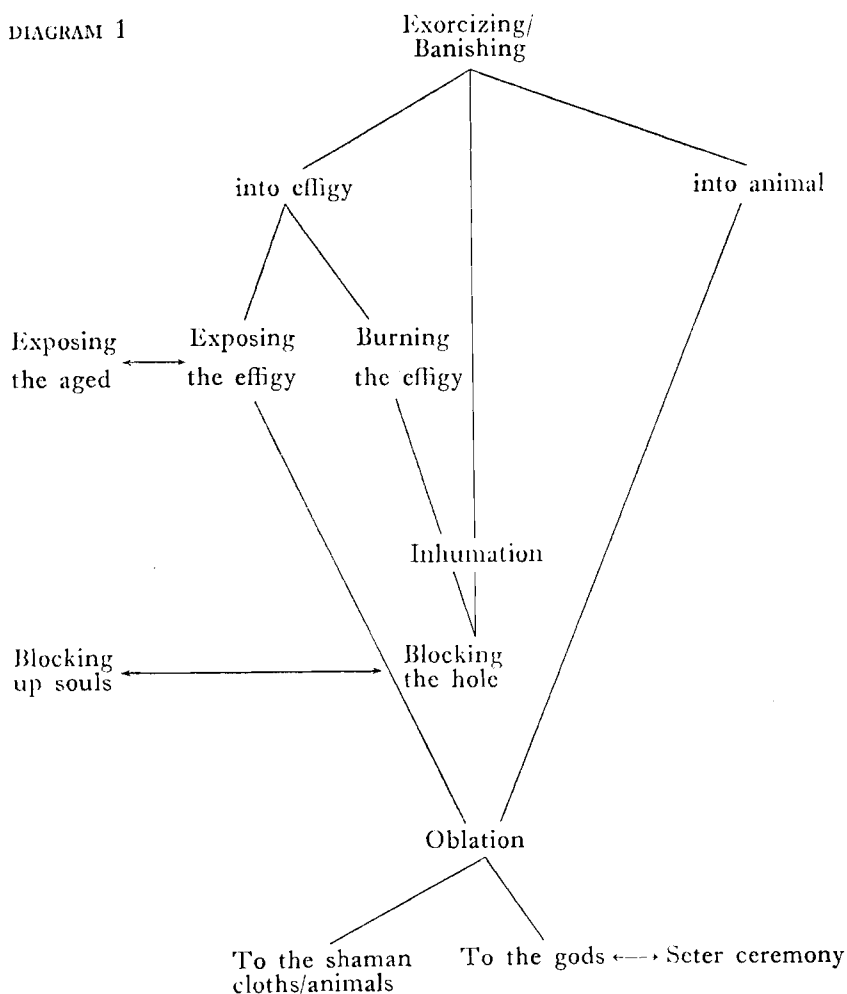
In another shamanist incantation by the late Dagwa zajsan, noted down 1957 by F. Bischoff (Bischoff and Kaufmann 1976: 311–325) in the Bulghan-District of the Mongolian Peoples Republic, the same stereotype is used.¹²

The Daghur effigy ritual does not mention any banishing of the evil into an earth-hole. It rather conveys the impression that the effigy containing the exorcised evil is left exposed in the desert, an action very much in connection with the old Mongol legends about exposing the old and decrepit in the desert (Heissig 1968: 243–246; Dam-bijalsan 1981). The effigy-banishing of evil seems to be connected

with the seter-ritual of the Mongolian nomads in which living animals, adorned with colored streamers in their manes, were consecrated as unbloody oblations to the gods and set free (Rashidonduk 1969: 270–272; Heissig 1979: 394–398).¹³ Declaring animals “holy” and setting them free in an unbloody offering did take place in the Uighur oasis in Turfan in the 8th century.¹⁴ The scapegoat-ritual, which is a transposition of these “unbloody” offerings, is yet still practiced by shamans in Western Tuva. There the affliction of the sick person is banished into a horse, that, decorated with stripes like in the seter-ceremony, was then consecrated to the gods and set free to return to his herd (Vajnsštejn 1984: 360–361).

The notion of banishing evil can be expressed graphically as follows:

DIAGRAM 1



The question remains whether or not the substitution of the effigy or the scapegoat-animals are not much older than the notion of unbloody offerings. To answer this question more material from Central Asia and particularly from Mongolia is needed.

NOTES

1. For another Lamaist text of offering an effigy clad in the clothes of the sick, see Heissig and Sagaster 1961: 64.
2. Administrative center in Tunghiao; Chinese colonization began there 1784 (Lattimore 1935: 206-212).
3. Chin. 斤, ca. 0.6 Kilogramm.
4. Lamaist ceremonial dagger.
5. Unpublished sound-recording:

Tümen jing-un čilaju-yi
Terigün-ü degere čini darun-a simesü
Temür purbu qadaγasu-yi
Jiruken deger-e čini qadan-a sünesü
Mingγan jing-un čilaju-yi
Mangnai degere čini darun-a
Mayilasun eši-tei qadaγasu-yi
Ebčigüü-degere čini qadan-a
Imaγa adali alačay-a čimayi-yi . . .

6. . . . ečüs-ün nige söni darulγa kikü ber kenggerge-ben deledtügegseger kegere tala-du kürčü. ebedčiten-ü emüsügšen debel qubčasu. edlel-ün jüil ba boluγsan badaγa čaγan amu. činaγsan öndege jerge-yi uridčilan beledkegsen güne nüken-dü kijü. degere-eče ni бүдүгүн qabtaγai čilaju-bar daruju. qara čaγan utasu-bar süljin uriyaγad. čidkür simnus-ten бүгүдегер

Čiki talbin sonosču bai!
Nigül-ün üre čini dügüreged
Nüke dotor-a daruγdajai!
Emes-tü saqal urγuqu
Esereng čaγ-tu γarγay-a!
Eljigen-dü eber urγuqu
Eldeng čaγ-tusulalay-a!
Boluγsan budaya soyuγlaqu
Bayaliγ čaγ-tu γarγay-a!
Činaγsan öndege-eče čobuγa γarqu
činggelig čaγ-tu sulalay-a!

gejü yariγsaγar darulγ-a daruγsan nüken degegür nasi časi üsürün qarayıju. köndelen γoltu süljildün uyaγsan qara čaγan utasu-ban tarnidun güyün-e . . .

7. *Gilger* < lit. *gilüger*

8. Dayangču-yin alčıγur
Dabuu-yin qara čamča
Jirum sayiqan kömüsge-tei.
Jirγuγan mönggün süike-tei
Bilbari sayiqan uruγul-tai

Bögere-yin ulaγan qačar-tai
Kögsin jalayu qoyaγula-yi
Ene kümün-i jolin-a.

Kö qara kömüsge-tei
Gilger malaγar jang-tai
Noγoγan torγan čamča-tai
Noyan-u qatun-ača door-a uu ja?
Nojid jobalang ača salun-a ged
Amin joliγ tusiyan-a!

Köke torγan čamča-tai
Kümün-ü ökin-ača door-a uu da?
Kübečü jobaγsan kümün-ü
Beye-yin čilege-yi tusiyan-a!

Ulaγan torγan alčiγur-tai
Uruγ-un qudayai öger-e uu da?
Ursiy jobalang-ača salun-a ged
Uraliy kümün-i tusiyan-a!

Örgen sayiqan čamča-tai
Ökin kümün-eče ögere uu da?
Üile barčid-ača salun-a ged
Ere kümün-i tusiyan-a!

We have to point to the thematic interdependency as shown in the incantation by Ügedelegüü böge (Manijab 1957; Heissig 1966). A. Sárközi (1985) shows, that similar texts make clear that the dresses of the joliγ-(scapegoat-) figure must correspond to the social level of the sick person.

9. Öndür γajar-tu
Öngjijü yabu.
Qotoγar γajar
Qonoγlaju yabu
Toγoday-un öndege-ber
Toγoγa-ban ki.
Falaγun öndege-ber
Fang-iyen ki.
Naγur-un usu-bar
Umda-ban ki.
Nuγusun-u miqa-bar
Günesü-ben ki.
Noqai maγutu-yi
Üimegüljü yabu.
Noyir maγatu-yi
Serigejü yabu
Tergen-ü tenggelig-i
Jayidalaγad yabu.
Tejigegsen biraγu-yi
Unuγad yabu
Ergin ergin bögeleküt-dü mini
Edi edi gen-e

Dakin dakin bögelekü-dü mini
Tayarana tayarana gen-e . . .

10. E.g. in the Uriyanghai epic *Ezen ulaan bodong* (Lord Red Boar) (Rinčinsambu 1960: 122; Poppe 1975: 136); *Zuruq šarqal moritai Zula aldar xân* (Khan Zula aldar with the Picture Bay Horse), (Urumči 1980: 210). More than twenty five passages of this kind are known.

11. 445: Qonin šilaju qonoγ-tai
Üker šilaju üde-tei.

12. Line 180 of the tape-recording:
Üher šuluun üde tejhen
Honin šuluun honogtajhan.

13. The custom is still observed at certain places in the Autonomous Region of Innermongolia, China. In summer 1984 the author saw halter and collars, made from straw and decorated with stripes (*jalama*) of various colors which had been used in April for horses and sheep in such a consecration ceremony, deposited at the pedestal of the middle cairn (*obō*) at Bayan oboγa in Abaghanar-Khosighu. In Tibetan prayers to the fire mention is made of a goat being consecrated to the God of Fire and of the consecrated animal being subsequently released as a kind of unbloody sacrifice (Kuznecov 1977: 207-211). Furthermore, there is proof that unbloody sacrifices of animals existed already in pre-Islamic Arabia as well as among reindeer herders of North Asia and Central Asian nomads (Henninger 1950: 179-190). For this purpose white animals were preferred (Michajlov 1980: 163).

14. Information by Professor A. von Gabain.

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