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Sugimoto Yoshio

Nanzan University, Nagoya

AZOY, G. WHITNEY. *Buzkashi, Game and Power in Afghanistan*. Symbol and Culture Series. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982. xi+147 pp. Figures, photos, index. Hardbound US \$17.50, ISBN 0-8122-7821-6.

Buzkashi is an exciting game played on horseback in the northern steppes of Afghanistan. "Buz-Kashi" literally means "goat-pulling," but they now use a beheaded calf carcass, and two teams of energetic and proud riders from the great equestrian tradition perhaps derived from the Mongols try to catch hold of this and throw it into a particular spot.

This is what I saw several times in Quandūz and Kābul during the period between 1964-67, and since then have had much interest but little knowledge of its real significance or details. This welcome publication by G. W. Azoy not only gives us more complete details on both the traditional and modern forms of buzkashi, but clearly shows how the game is interlaced with power politics on both the local and national level.

Actually the type I saw played more or less as a sport is rather new in origin. Generally called the *garajai* type, contests are generally organized by local or national governmental bodies in order to give the people "fun" and thus to create a sort of sense of integration. Buzkashi games from the other, more traditional genre, called *tudabarai*, have been sponsored by local Khāns at occasions such as rites of passage, and also used to enhance their "names," or personal reputations over their *gaum* or their own social group by successfully controlling the disputed contests of the "unruly" Afghan *chapandāzan*, or the buzkashi horse-riders. In Chapter 4, "Buzkashi in Provincial Town and Capital City," Azoy also gives a vivid description of the troubles which took place in the Qundūz buzkashi in 1977, which was sponsored by the *wali* or the governor of the Province, and clearly shows us that such troubles are quite critical to the governor's authority, for the buzkashi inevitably involves a struggle for reputation and political leadership.

We may then simply think that this sort of game can be easily manipulated by officials for certain political purposes, but this is not the case; such manipulations have constituted an overall minority even during the recent communist regimes. Sponsors are generally unaware of their own ultimate motives, and their *mehmān*, or guests, also enjoy the venerable and spectacular game, bound together by their temporarily shared separation from mundane life.

This is one reason that buzkashi has been regularly and actively played even during the recent seasons of coups and counter-coups in Afghanistan, but we do see here the analogy of game and politics, which is the main theme of Azoy's work. As F. G. Bailey has noted, politics is a processual struggle with players, prizes, rules and referees (*Strategems and Spoils*, as quoted by Azoy, p. 17). In a similar context, Azoy quotes

some other interesting works by Clifford Geertz (on the Balinese cock fight), James Peacock, Victor Turner, etc., and has succeeded in putting the work within both sociological and anthropological frames. This volume rightly occupies a part of the series "Symbol and Culture," edited by J. D. Sapir, C. Crocker, Peter Metcalf and others.

Even the reader not greatly interested in anthropology will find this work quite readable as both a clear-cut document or ethnography of the traditional Afghan game, and as a vivid and current description of the modern history of Afghanistan, which especially deserves our attention in these times. Even after he had to leave the country in 1978 Azoy incessantly collected materials and information, thus providing an incisive analysis of the modern political dynamics of Afghanistan. It is interesting to read that, in the middle of the turmoil, Azoy asked a friend what he thought would happen. "You ought to know by now," he said to the author, "You have been studying all about it. Now the buzkashi is about to begin" (Prologue).

He has also succeeded in creating a quite "Afghan" atmosphere in the volume by introducing many technical terms and particular ideas in the Afghāni-Dari language. This allows him some precision in transmitting ideas, but it might also detain some more casual or non-specialized readers from time to time, who will have to consult the index and find the relevant page(s) to remind themselves of the particular idea represented by one of these words. The preparation of a glossary to supplement the well-done index would greatly help such readers.

It is also regretted that Azoy did not go into details about the origin, or a little of the older history of the buzkashi game. Though everyone knows that the origins of such traditional games are always obscure (in the case of buzkashi, it may not simply go back to Alexander's or Chenghis Khan's time as one may tend to hope), the author could have tried to trace the literary references in medieval, if not ancient, and later sources written in Chinese, Persian, Arabic or others. This might seem to be too tedious a job to an anthropologist, but most of the important works have been recently translated into European languages.

Still, there is no doubt that this work has greatly enlightened us, and can be widely recommended to historians, anthropologists and general readers alike. It was such a pleasure, at least to me, to recollect my memories of the Uzbeki Chapandāzan in Qundūz in happier days.

Konishi Masatoshi A.

Rikkyo (St. Paul's) University, Tōkyō

AMONOV, RADZHAB and others, editorial committee. ISIDOR LEVIN, DZHALIL RABIEV, MIRRA YAVICH, compilers. *Kulliyoti Fol'klori Tojik/Svod Tadzhijskogo Fol'klora* (Compendium of Tajik Folklore), Vol. I: Masalho va Afsonaho dar borai Haivonot/Basni i Skazki o Zhivotnykh (Fables and Tales concerning Animals). Rudaki Institute of Language and Literature, Academy of Sciences of the Tajik SSR. Moscow: Nauka, 1981. 389 pp. Hardbound, Rbls. 3.60.

In his preface to the second revision of Anti Aarne's *The Types of the Folktale*, written in 1960, Stith Thompson observed that "even today there are large areas almost completely unexplored, such as Arabia, Iraq, and Iran." So far as the last-named is concerned, the situation, though unsatisfactory, was not in fact quite as bad as Thomson suggested. European scholars like Arthur Christensen, Henri Massé,