

new information on the Gioklen shamans, the *porkhan*. He characterizes their shamanism as being of a "Turkic-type," although it has "Iranian-type" elements that are interwoven with ancient indigenous strands. The paper by Taizhanov and Ismailov deals with shamanism and the demonology of the Karamurts, an ethnic group of the Uzbeks. According to a legend, Karamurt had seven daughters (*etti momo*) who appeared to be the great-grandmothers of people in a village that once bore the name of Etti Momo. The two authors tell that these *momo* have been taken into the demonology to serve as spirits for priests, medicine men, midwives, and shamans of different categories. It is noteworthy also that shamans of the *bakshi* category likewise appeared as Islamic mendicants. Karmysheva describes with much ethnographic detail the funeral mourning ritual of the Uzbeks. Referring particularly to funerals of the aged and the serving of a ritual soup with seven internal organs from a ram, she tries to show that there was a widespread belief that the soul of the sacrificed ram accompanied the deceased to the other world (relics of which belief are found also among the Tadjiks and others, including the modern Zoroastrians of Iran). She thinks that the complicated funeral mourning ritual with the cult of the sheep derives from ancient agricultural rituals. Vasil'eva shows how children used to be guarded from every evil with ornaments that are still thought to retain their original magical function as charms or amulets. One thing such ornaments are thought to ward off is the effects of the evil eye, the fear of which is quite strong among the Turkmens.

The most distinctive characteristic of the farmers in the region is belief in "Dikanbaba," a guardian of agriculture who might be a god that dies and revives as nature does. This is one of the persistent themes throughout the book.

We can highly appreciate all the articles in this book, which is the second publication on the same theme, following upon the collection "Pre-Islamic Beliefs and Rituals in Central Asia" (Moscow, 1975). Each article enriches us with fundamental information about various strands of the religious life of Central Asians, reminding us of those polychrome carpets with numerous nuances, which require long hours of careful work. At the same time the articles are complementary in theme and contents, so that this rather small book is like a treasure trove of data about another Islamic world, one that is different from those of the Near East or South Asia. Moreover, for a Japanese reader the book is of particular interest because much in this volume reminds us of customs and beliefs we are familiar with. We wonder whether they are derived from the common spring of Buddhism. And I am sure that every reader would find in the descriptions something common to his or her own culture and would feel affinity with the Central Asians. Too bad we cannot pass through a time-tunnel to meet with them and discuss our findings!

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TIBET

KASCHEWSKY, RUDOLF and PEMA TSERING, editors and translators. *Die Eroberung der Burg von Sum-Pa. Aus dem tibetischen Gesar Epos* [The capture of the fortress of Sum-Pa. From the Tibetan Gesar epic]. Asiatische Forschungen Band 94. Band I: Übersetzung und Indices, x+173 pages. Band II: Faksimiles, xiii+206 pages, including 184 facsimile plates. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987. Cloth DM168.— (the set), ISBN 3-447-02519-0; ISSN 0571-320X. (In German)

This is a text and translation of one of the many Gesar sagas in Tibetan and Mongolian. Gesar is the foremost Tibetan epic hero, a pastiche made up of a Buddhist protector, legendary warrior, and mythological figure all at once. His conquest of the Sum-pa country described here has many elements found in other written Gesar cycles, but, as with many of the latter, also shows an essentially oral structure (e.g., the main characters' speeches are in verse, highly stylized, and apparently "archaized," although probably they are very old in their patterns and dramatic presentation). Unlike some versions, however, Gesar is not the central figure here, and is not even crucial to the plot; he is an impersonal agent, as we shall see.

In this story, the king of Khra-mo Gliš, Gesar's uncle, has to find a wife for his son, and chooses Flower (Me-tog), the princess of Sum-pa, although he knows it will mean war with that country and its inevitable annexation; he does this without consulting Gesar. Numerous characters from each country then make their appearances, and a plot involving wicked ministers of the Sum-pa king and the gathered warriors, ministers, and allies of Gliš plays itself out in stages. First, the princess is abducted and sought for; battles ensue, but the principal Sum-pa characters survive. The Sum-pa king then plots revenge, which precipitates the inevitable apocalyptic battle, in which the Sum-pa forces are destroyed and the Sum-pa kingdom is annexed to Gliš.

There are numerous ways to analyze an epic. Of course, it is an entertainment, and still today performed by bards, especially in Ladakh; study of this aspect of Gesar is a neglected area. Gesar should also be examined in connection with other Central Asian epics (e.g., *Manas*, *Alpomish*), and this is beginning to be done. Epics also inevitably have much to do with religion, popular and "official," and Gesar deserves attention also for these contents. This Sum-pa story, for example, tells us something about local mountain worship (as ascribed to the Sum-pa, in section 12); about Gesar in this version as an agent of the Dharma, when Padmasambhava appears to him and makes him an instrument whereby the Sum-pa's pollution through past evil deeds will be purified (sec. 114), for which action Gesar gives the order (sec. 127); and, about how Gesar's aunt (*a ne*, as interpreted by the translators) had become a dakini in Padmasambhava's paradise (sec. 245). More interesting than these data, however, are names such as the tent "Circle of the Sun" (sec. 40), "Pure White Sky God" (sec. 209), and "King of Lightning in the Heavens" (sec. 215), which strongly suggest an atmospheric/sidereal mythology of great age may underlie at least part of the Gesar complex. The central tension, that Sum-pa is a country of the Bon religion, and therefore averse to Buddhism, gives us no clear data about whatever role Bon may have played in the ancient Sum-pa (a yet vague geographical entity) kingdom, and indeed we should not expect (but still wish for) such detail from a dramatic work. All religious motifs in Gesar stories, however, should be studied to give us both a view of popular religious beliefs and glimpses into mythological complexes now largely or completely lost. In structure, volume one contains the translation and volume two a very clear reproduction of the printed-cursive (*dbu med*) text. Volume one also contains inventories of personalities, etc., of the Sum-pa and Gliš kingdoms, and an index of motifs. Volume two also contains a vocabulary of unusual terms from the text. They are sufficient, but could have been more complete, especially those in the first volume, since what constitutes a motif is subjective, and Tibetan terms were not used there. However, all in all this is an excellent effort, and just the presence of such indexes makes it much more valuable than many earlier efforts that did not include such resources.

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