TEMPLE OF IMRA, TEMPLE OF MAHANDEU: A KAFIR SANCTUARY IN KALASHA COSMOLOGY [1]

By PETER PARKES

> In Presungul there is a distinct atmosphere of religion . . . there is an iron pillar which is said to have been placed in its present position by Imrá himself, and a sacred hole in the ground, to look down which is certain death . . . . Most important of all, the valley possesses a famous temple of Imrá, renowned throughout all Káfiristan. (Robertson, 1896: 379–80)

This article examines the mythical significance of the famous Afghan Kafir 'Temple of Imra' described in Robertson's *Káfirs of the Hindu-Kush* (1896: 389–92) within the cosmology of the Kalasha ('Kalash Kafirs') of Chitral in northern Pakistan.[2] It is known as the 'Temple of Mahandeu' in Kalasha tradition, and stories about this sanctuary play an important role in the exegesis of all Kalasha rites. It is, indeed, a focal symbol of Kalasha cosmology: the site of an *axis mundi* linking heaven and earth with the underworld of the deceased, and the primordial domain of major deities. After examining narratives about this temple, I shall discuss several problems in the comparative religions of the Hindu Kush that such traditions help to elucidate. In recognition of the pioneering scholarship on this subject by Wolfgang Lentz (1974) and Lennart Edelberg (et al., 1959), I present here some Kalasha perspectives on an extraordinary Kafir sanctuary (cf. Jettmar, 1986: 50–51). But in discussing its significance in Kalasha cosmology, I also address broader questions about our present conception of religious knowledge in the Hindu Kush, particularly on the comparative 'mythology' of the Afghan Kafirs and of their Dardic-speaking neighbours in northern Pakistan.

Kalasha 'mythology'

> Dort, wo eine vorislamische Religion erhalten geblieben ist, so etwa wie bei den Kafiren, gibt es meistens Mythen, die die empfundenen Gegensätze zwischen den Mächten der Welt dramatisch verlebendigen. Die . . . Darstellungen der Kalash-Religion sind am solchem Material relativ arm. (Jettmar, 1975: 337).

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[2] The present article draws upon earlier treatment of Kalasha historical traditions in an unpublished Oxford B. Litt. dissertation (Parkes, 1975), also treated in my forthcoming *Kalasha religion* (Oxford University Press). Comparative ethnography on Kalasha religion may be found in Siiger (1956, 1963), Jettmar (1975: 325–98), Loude (1980), Loude and Lièvre (1984), Parkes (1983, 1987b, 1990).

The Kalasha, called 'Kalash Kafirs' by their Islamic neighbours, practise a religion that appears closely related to that of the 'Kafir' or non-Islamic peoples of eastern Afghanistan before their conversion to Islam at the end of the nineteenth century. Many Kalasha deities are cognate with Kafir deities (Morgenstierne, 1951; 163–6; Parkes, 1986), and many features of their respective ritual practices appear identical. But one notable contrast is an apparent poverty of religious mythology among the Kalasha.

Robertson himself complained of problems in eliciting a coherent cosmology from the Kafirs of Bashgal, who 'seemed to know so little about their own theology' (1896: 377). Yet Robertson collected a fair number of religious myths concerning the nature and personal attributes of Kafir deities: stories such as the primordial creation of the world by the sovereign deity Imra; the stealing of the sun and moon by demons, and their recapture by the heroic god Moni; or the warrior exploits of the martial deity Gish (Robertson, 1896: 381–8, 400–1). Similar myths from Bashgal were subsequently collected by Georg Morgenstierne (1951; 1968), and from Prasun (Parun) by Georg Buddruss (1960; 1974) and Lennart Edelberg (1972), as summarized by Jettmar (1986: 36–78). Most intriguing are synopses of still unpublished myths recorded by Buddruss in Prasun (cited in Snoy 1962), which have all the hallmarks we expect of mythology: [3]

> These myths deal with primeval events at the beginning of time ... they relate in detail the actions of the gods, whose aim was to render the 'valley' [world] inhabitable by man, how they restricted the rule of the god of ice to winter, how they brought light and water into the 'valley', how they instituted the cult ceremonies of the Prasun clans by giving them their proper 'idols', and how they invented agricultural instruments. (Buddruss, 1974: 31).

Buddruss further argues that such Prasun myths have unquestionable analogies with Vedic mythology, suggesting an archaic Indo-Iranian heritage that uniquely survived in this region (Buddruss, 1960; cf. Fussman, 1977; Jettmar, 1986: 130–33).

Among the Kalasha of Chitral, however, such myths are uncommon. Despite their worshipping deities similar to those of their Kafir neighbours, whose equivalent names for gods are commonly known (Morgenstierne, 1932: 38), one finds only fragmentary traces of such religious mythologies. In fact, Kalasha gods seem barely differentiated by personal attributes beyond the epithets used in their prayers: e.g., the 'powerful' goddess Jach (*bālima Jaç*), the 'great' god Sajigor (*ghōna Sajigōr*), or the 'wise' god Mahandeu (*kušāla Mahandēu*). With minor exceptions, all such deities are conceived in similar imagery. Seen in dreams (*isprāp*), or in the revelations of *dehār* shamans, Kalasha deities are conventionally portrayed as princely lords (*mulāwa*) dressed in flowing white gowns and usually seated on horseback. There seems to be little conceptual interest in specifying more personal qualities of the divine, such as we find in the religious myths of the Afghan Kafirs. Thus Kalasha deities might be compared with the 'faceless icons' of Balinese worship characterized by Geertz (1973: 388): it is important to know the traditional rites specified for

[3] cf. Bascom's (1965: 4–5) definition of myth as 'prose narratives which ... are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past. They are accepted on faith; they are taught to be believed; and they can be cited as authority in answer to ignorance, doubt or disbelief.... Their main characters are animals, deities or cultural heroes, whose actions are set in an earlier world, when the earth was different from what it is today.'

their worship, which ensure contractual protection by gods against evil spirits of misfortune (*aphāt-balā*); but there seems to be little knowledge of, or interest in, the personal nature of particular deities.

Such apparent disregard for mythology is not uncommon in non-literate religions. Recent ethnography has repeatedly demonstrated that complex cosmologies, entailing elaborate ritual symbolism, may exist in the absence of mythical exegesis (Barth, 1975; Brunton, 1980; Finnegan, 1970: 332; Sperber, 1975: 18); and our very notion of myth has also been questioned as a peculiarly literate, Hellenistic and hence Euro-centric construct (Detienne, 1986). Yet religious practice clearly calls for *some* kind of conceptual legitimation, in the form of collective tradition or personal experience; so one would expect most peoples to possess some kind of 'mythology', at least as defined in its broadest sense, that is, as discursive knowledge that purports to account for religious belief.[4] Where, then, can one locate such knowledge among the Kalasha?

The Kalasha have in fact a large corpus of narrative traditions about their ritual practice. These are primarily embodied in lineage histories (*wasiāt* 'testaments' < Persian-Arabic) recounting the famous deeds of patrilines of ancestors, generation by generation, down to living elders. Such stories are primarily drawn upon for the composition of oratorical speeches (*iṣṭikēk*) and praise songs (*nom-nomēk gřhũ*) recited in honour of lineage elders at ceremonial feasts and seasonal festivals. They are therefore mainly concerned with the heroic and festal renown (*namūs*) of lineal ascendants stretching back eight or nine generations to the apical founders of exogamous lineages (*kam*). Part of this renown, however, concerns the special relationship of lineal ancestors with the supernatural or 'hidden world' (*ghaipī*) of the gods and *sūči* spirits of the mountains, usually mediated through the revelations of famous *dehār* shamans of former times, who instructed ancestors to institute specific rites. Hence the majority of seasonal rites performed by Kalasha communities, which tend to be segmentally partitioned among their constituent lineages, may be traced to the original performances of particular lineal ancestors. These legends concerning ritual are, however, located within a distinctly 'historical' framework of lineage traditions. Despite miraculous happenings and reported visions of the supernatural, which continue to occur, such events do not refer to a primordial 'mythical' era such as we find in the religious traditions of the Afghan Kafirs.

Ancestral legends indeed rarely extend much more than four or five generations beyond the normal depth of Kalasha lineages, which usually segment through permissible intermarriage after seven or eight generations of descent from a common ancestor (Parkes, 1984). It is at this point, around twelve to fourteen generations from living elders, that one encounters a quasi-mythical 'stratosphere' of genealogical knowledge. This is the heroic era of the great Kalasha kings, Rajawai and Bulasing, from whom several lineages in Bomboret valley trace descent. Rajawai, ruling from his 'castle' (*koṭ*) at Batrik village in Bomboret (fig. 1), is said to have commanded southern Chitral, together with neighbouring parts of Bashgal valley in Kafiristan. Bulasing, ruling from another castle at Uchusht, on the southern edge of the present town of Chitral, held dominion over the northern part of the district (cf. Wazir Ali Shah, 1974: 70).

[4] See Bascom's definition of myth as a distinct type of prose narrative cited in note 3 above. Evans-Pritchard (1963: 8) also distinguishes between 'myth' and 'history' in relation to their respective emphases upon repetitive or successional notions of time. Cf. Cohen (1969), Kirk (1970), and especially Finnegan (1970: 360 ff.) on similar, not unproblematic, definitions of myth as a distinct narrative mode of legitimation.

Under these two kings, almost all major institutions of Kalasha religious culture appear to have been introduced, notably through the inspired revelations of the great shaman-prophet Nanga Dehar. As we shall see in the narrative text reproduced below, Nanga Dehar is related to have accompanied Rajawai on his frequent expeditions into Afghan Kafiristan, visiting its most holy shrines, such as the great 'temple of Mahandeu' in Prasun (*Wetdēš Māhandelhān*). There Nanga Dehar discovered in trance that the gods of Kafiristan, forseeing its eventual conversion to Islam, wished to be transported to the Kalasha valleys so that they might continue to receive their proper sacrifices. Nanga Dehar therefore arranged for altars to be built for these gods, and he instructed lineage ancestors in the proper performance of religious rites, thus establishing the foundations of Kalasha religion rather as Moses did with regard to Hebraic religion. Nanga Dehar is, indeed, sometimes referred to with Islamic titles of 'prophethood' (e.g. *paiyambār*); but he more properly represents the archetypal *dehār* shaman, a ritually pure man (*ōjiṣṭa muč*) with access to the hidden world of the gods and *sūči* spirits that enable him to perform miraculous feats (cf. Friedl, 1966: 18–21).

Similar legends also recount the downfall of Kalasha sovereignty in this era, which seemingly occurred through the regal hubris and ritual misdemeanors of Rajawai: he committed incest with his daughter, and mistreated captive women from Bashgal, forcing them to dance naked on a sacred mountain pass into Bomboret, which incurred divine anger (cf. Wazir Ali Shah, 1974: 78–9). Rajawai and Bulasing were then attacked by more powerful *Raīs* rulers commanding the Kho tribes of northern Chitral, who drove Bulasing to seek protection with Rajawai in Bomboret, until the Kalasha were reduced to tributary subjection under the *Raīs* dynasty and their *Katūr* successors, the Mehtars or princes of Chitral until recent times. The 'golden age' of Rajawai and Nanga Dehar thus establishes both mythical precedents for contemporary society and a historical theodicy for its misfortunes. Many narratives surrounding Nanga Dehar have evidently 'mythical' motifs, as shown in passages cited below. Yet the overall framework of legendary traditions relating to the era of Rajawai and Bulasing remains broadly 'historical' rather than 'primordial' in quality. Indeed, there are corroborative Chitrali accounts of these Kalasha kings which suggest that they may well have been actual rulers in Chitral around the fifteenth century (Ghufran, 1962: 37, 40).

The Kalasha thus have continuous and largely consistent historical traditions stretching back thirteen or fourteen generations to Rajawai and his contemporaries, when their religion seems to have been founded almost at once by Nanga Dehar. A curious curtain of silence then falls upon earlier history. There are ritual references to a mythical homeland of Tsiam (*Ciām*), whence Kalasha soldiers first arrived in Chitral under their legendary commander Shalak Shah, whose four sons established original settlements there.[5] Tsiam is also the sacred homeland of the sovereign deity Balimain, who now visits the Kalasha valleys once a year at the solstitial climax of the midwinter Chaomos festival. Yet apart from whimsical stories about Tsiam and its dog-headed menfolk (Schomberg, 1938: 76–7), and prayers to an ancestress 'Howyashi'

[5] cf. Siiger (1956: 33); Loude and Lièvre (1984: 187–90). Shalak Shah is commonly said to have been a commander in the army of an 'Alexander' (*Sekandār Mokadās*) from Tsiam, often vaguely located to the north of Chitral. The name of this mythical homeland might be identified with the place-name *Śyāmāka* mentioned in Buddhist hagiographies (Tucci, 1977: 63), rendered in T'ang Chinese chronicles as *Shē-mi* or *Shang-mi*, and probably referring to Chitral or nearby regions (Jettmar, 1977: 416). Cf. the Prasun names *Šim-gel*, *Šimai-gul* for Chitral (Morgenstierne, 1949: 285).

that occur in a mock exodus of women to Tsiam at times of bad weather, there is scarcely any comprehensive mythology about this original homeland. Far more important as a source of ritual exegesis are legends concerning the 'temple of Mahandeu' in Wetdesh or Prasun valley in Afghan Kafiristan.

Ramasen and the Temple of Mahandeu

> It is said that once a man had lost his ram and while searching for the goat the man found him on the hillside led by a shadow. The shepherd did not see the actual person but followed the shadow to Verun [Prasun] village. There the shepherd came into a large room where all the Dews [gods] were sitting. When he named his ram, Saradanz, the gods did not return it to him but gave him a stone to be placed in a Malotsch [shrine] and told him to entreat the stone if any goat was lost ... The name of the shepherd was Masen. (Hussam-ul-Mulk, 1974b: 82).

The narrative reproduced here is a version of one the most widely cited *wasiāt* traditions concerning Nanga Dehar and Raja Wai. In Bomboret valley it forms an important part of the genealogical traditions of the Baramuk-nawau lineage of Anish village, whose early ancestors, Ramasen or Masen[6] and Sharazen, it primarily concerns. In Rumbur valley, where the following version was collected, it provides an account of the establishment of three primary sanctuaries. The Kalasha text of the story, with interlinear translation, is appended at the end of this article. Here I give a rather free rendering of its content, incorporating some explanatory details from other variants (see fig. 1):

> Ramasen was staying at his winter goat stable in the Acholgah valley [between Rumbur and Bomboret] together with his brother Sharazen. One evening, as he was taking the kids out of their pen to suckle with the nanny-goats, he said to his brother: 'Sleep here in the stable! I will go to our stable at Ṗasuala, on the other side of the valley. In the morning I will return to give milk to the kids.'
>
> Early next morning Ramasen rose and returned to the stable. He saw his brother Sharazen still asleep. Thinking he would give milk to the kids, he lit a torch of resinous pinewood, placing the light on a stone. But as he began taking the kids out, the torch blew out. He gathered the glowing embers together, blowing on them to relight the torch. Again the light was extinguished: in the dark, the *sūči* spirits had called out a nanny-goat called Gorika [the white coloured], throwing a kid to suckle beneath her. So when Ramasen relit the torch, he was surprised to find the kid suckling by itself, although his brother was still asleep. Puzzled, he took out other kids to suckle. But then he noticed that this kid had miraculously grown: it had become a he-goat with entangled horns [*ṣiŋ-kumbřēřa*, a special sign of the sacred].
>
> Ramasen then kept this strange he-goat together with his main herd, taking them up to their mountain pastures [at Don-son in Acholgah]. There he appointed Sharazen to look after the goats in the pastures while he returned home to his village in Anish. At Anish they also kept six stud he-goats (*buṣ-bīra*) for the herd, and later they brought down the sacred he-goat to join them in the valley.[7]
>
> One day, the herding boy for these he-goats reported to Ramasen that

[6] Ramasen < *ra Masēn*, 'rich Masen'. *Ra*, *ra-muč* (< Skt. *rājan-*) is a title of festal rank confirming wealth in livestock, equivalent to Kati *ro*, *ara-moč*.

[7] Uncastrated stud goats (*buṣ-bīra*) are kept apart in the valleys during summer in order to ensure their mating (*bīra-mišāi*) in the pastures in autumn.

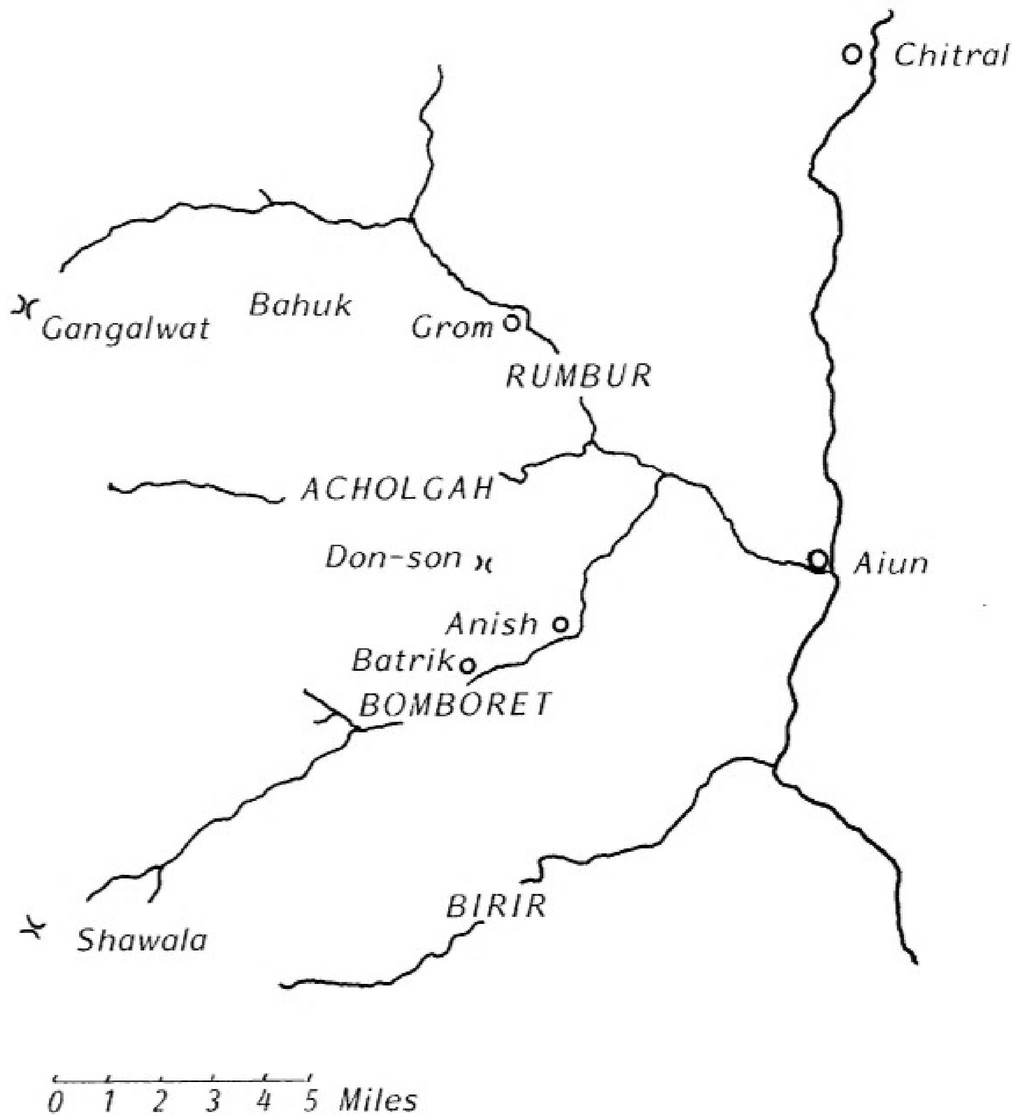

FIG. 1. *The Kalasha Valleys in Chitral: showing places mentioned in the legend of Ramasen and the Temple of Mahandeu.*

they had run off, climbing high above the village. Ramasen ran after them, following the footprints of the he-goats until he reached Don-son pasture. His brother Sharazen had not come back from herding the goats, but Ramasen met their herding-partner Janak and explained what had happened: ' The he-goats ran off from the village and I chased after them here ', he said. ' I will now go to our camp [at Don-son]; but you return to the valley and go straight to the court of Rajawai [at Batrik village] and inform him of what has happened.' So Janak went to Rajawai, and the king gathered his army and came up to Don-son [to pursue whoever might have raided the goats].

Ramasen meanwhile waited at the camp in Don-son: the main goat herd had returned there, but his brother Sharazen was missing [together with the seven he-goats]. So he proceeded onwards, to the ridge at Bahuk lake, and then on to the Gangalwat pass [leading from upper Rumbur to Bashgal Valley].

Rajawai and his army then came to the Gangalwat pass, together with his *bhāira* slave-craftsman Barwazi. They made a camp on the pass. Then Ramasen told Rajawai that he had seen the shadows of his he-goats over on the Ruamun mountain pass in Bashgal (fig. 2). He told Rajawai to send back his army to Bomboret. Ramasen then set off to the Ruamun pass, accompanied by Rajawai and Barwazi.

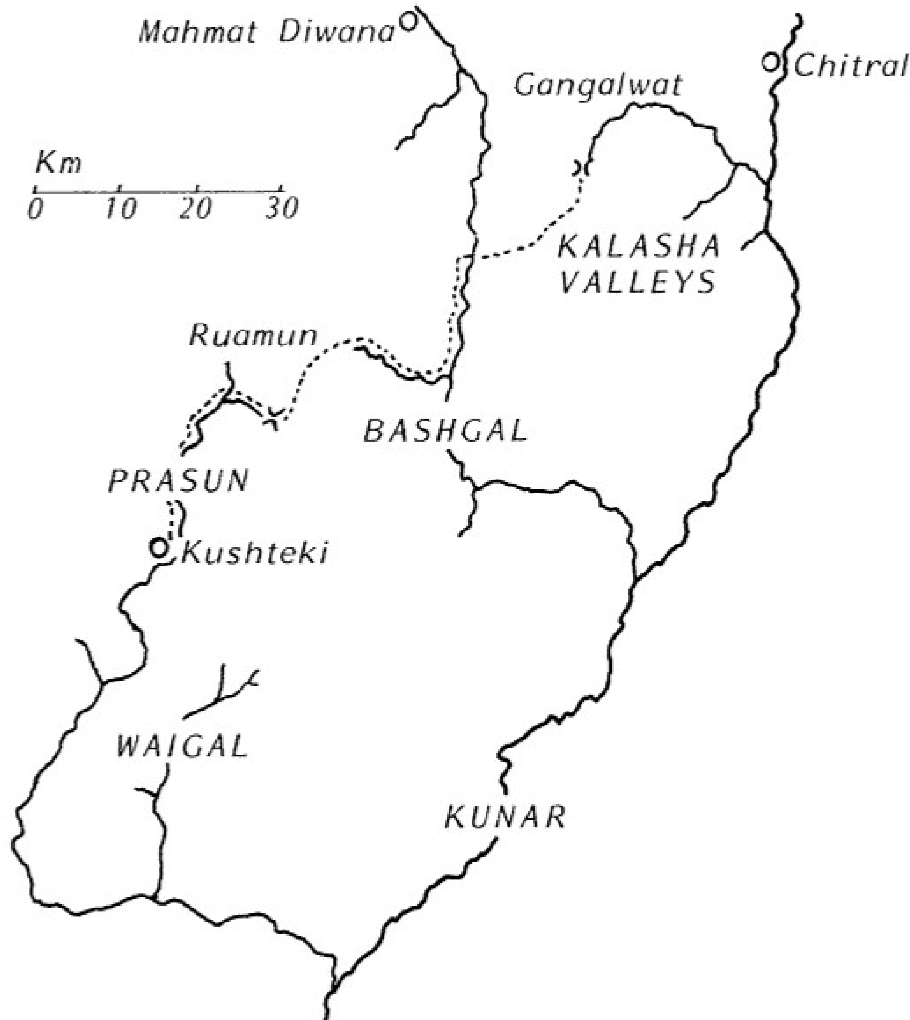

FIG. 2. *Ramasen's Route to the Temple of Mahandeu in Prasun.*

Together they crossed Bashgal, and climbing over the Ruamun pass, they came down to Prasun (*Wetdēš*): to the ' temple of Mahandeu ' (*Wetdēš Māhandel-hān*). On the roof of the temple, they saw the six missing he-goats looking down on them; but that sacred he-goat with entangled horns was not there.

They left the he-goats on the roof, dragging a bull and slaughtering it at the temple gateway in order to enter inside. Entering the temple, Ramasen saw his brother Sharazen standing beneath the main sanctuary covered with holly-oak [like a sacrificial victim]. The shaman Nanga Dehar had also suddenly appeared inside the temple.

Nanga Dehar came into trance and Ramasen enquired about his missing he-goat. ' Your he-goats are those out there [on the roof], neither more nor

less!' exclaimed the shaman. Nanga Dehar then called out 'Sarazen!'.[8] The sacred he-goat suddenly leaped down from a recess in the wall of the temple, and at that moment the other he-goats came down from the roof. Ramasen then made a prayer and sacrifice before coming out of the temple.

Coming out of the main gateway of the temple, he passed round to another gateway on its left side and entered again: here was the Underworld Pillar (*parilõi thũř*). He set Barwazi to copy the sacred designs (*õjiṣṭa čoṭ*) on the Underworld Pillar.

While Ramasen and Rajawai waited outside the temple, Nanga Dehar emerged with two objects in either hand: a branch of holly-oak in one hand, which he gave to Ramasen; a dagger in the other hand, which he gave to Rajawai. They then returned to Bomboret, crossing back by the Gangalwat pass. [At Gangalwat it was discovered that two men had been sleeping there: one man slept facing towards Bomboret, the other facing towards Rumbur. About those sleeping (gods) the news was revealed to Nanga Dehar . . .][9]

At Gangalwat pass Nanga Dehar arrived with three arrows in his hand. One arrow was marked with white thread, one arrow was marked with black thread, and one with red thread. Nanga Dehar told Rajawai to dip these arrows in the blood of a sacrificed goat and to shoot them into the air. Drawing a bow, Nanga Dehar said: 'Wherever you find the white-threaded arrow, there you should keep the dagger [as a sanctuary for the god Sajigor]. Where you find the black-threaded arrow, there make a *bašāli* house [for women during menstruation and childbirth]. Where you find the red-threaded arrow, there you should plant that holly-oak branch' [as a shrine for the fertility goddess Jach].

Thus they came to search for the arrows. They came to the place of Sajigor, and there they found the white arrow. Sacrificing nine he-goats and five cattle there, they established the altar of Sajigor. They found the black arrow on the other side of the valley, at the place of the great holly-oak tree at the *bašāli*, and there they established the *bašāli* house. They searched for the red arrow, and found it at Jach's ridge in Acholgah, and there they planted the holly-oak tree for Jach. So they established these shrines in Rumbur and then they returned to Bomboret. They instructed the local Dangarik[10] people to make sacrifices at these places . . .

The story recorded here is, in fact, only the opening section of a lengthy narrative concerning the original Kalasha settlement of Rumbur. Its aboriginal 'Dangarik' people are said to have made improper sacrifices at these shrines, so Rajawai later sent a man from Kandirisar village in Bomboret, one Banguta, son of Boyal, to establish the first Kalasha settlement in Rumbur. From Banguta was born Adobok, and from Adobok's sons and grandsons derive all major clan and lineage groups in Rumbur (see Parkes, 1984). The story of Ramasen thus provides a convenient prolegomenon to all lineage histories in that valley, frequently referred to in praise-songs for lineal ancestors and recited extensively in funeral and festal oratory. It should also be noted that this is only one of many variants of the story of Ramasen told in Rumbur and Bomboret.

[8] Sarazen is a characteristic name for goats of mixed-grey colouring (*sāras-gřũřa*), resembling the sacred juniper (*sāras*). The similar name of Ramasen's missing brother Sharazen (cf. *šāra*, markhor) may be due to their early confusion in the narrative transmission of this story.

[9] Alluding to Nanga Dehar's revelation about the gods Mahandeu and Balomain, referred to below, usually associated with the Shawala pass from Bomboret to Bashgal. Cf. Wazir Ali Shah (1974: 78).

[10] The *Daŋgarīk* are said to have been original inhabitants of Rumbur, identified with speakers of the Shina dialect Phalura or Palula (Morgenstierne, 1941), now restricted to hamlets in south-east Chitral. Cf. Biddulph (1880: 64).

Collected in 1974 from Kazi Khosh Nawaz of the Balõře-nawau lineage, an acknowledged expert in traditional knowledge, it conforms in outline to a more concise variant given two years earlier by another ritual expert.[11] In this earlier version, two goats were lost, while Ramasen and Rajawai take a more elaborate route in their pursuit, by way of Ramgal and Waigal valleys in Kafiristan, before coming to the temple of Mahandeu in Wetdesh. Khosh Nawaz also amended his narration in subsequent recitations that I recorded from 1975 to 1977: in one case only one arrow was given by Nanga Dehar, to establish the shrine of Jach in Acholgah; in another version, recorded as a funeral oration, there are two arrows, marked white and black, which respectively establish the altar of Sajigor and the site of the *bašāli* house. Parts of the same story are also commonly grafted on to alternative legends of Rajawai in Bomboret:

> After he committed incest with his daughter, Rajawai was told by Nanga Dehar to impose a sexual interdiction (*diç*) on the people of Bomboret for three years, after which its women give birth to nine-score sons. Fed with walnut oil, the boys grew into stalwart warriors that allowed Rajawai to conquer all of Kafiristan. After defeating the peoples of Bashgal valley, this army seized nine-score daggers which were to be consecrated to the god Sajigor. Again, Nanga Dehar arranged for Rajawai to shoot a white-threaded arrow from Gangalwat pass into Rumbur; but the sanctuary was now marked by a stone taken from another Kafir shrine, at Mahmat Diwana in upper Bashgal [fig. 2; cf. 'Ahmad Diwáná' in Robertson, 1896: 384n., 388, 394] under which the one hundred and eighty daggers are buried. (Synopsis from Parkes, 1975: 15–16; cf. Wazir Ali Shah, 1974: 77, 79].

Despite such variants, often conditioned by the performative context of narrative references in praise-songs and oratory, focusing upon the ancestors of particular patrilines, the basic story of Ramasen's quest and discovery of the temple of Mahandeu in Wetdesh constitutes a referential framework for almost all ritual exegesis in Rumbur and Bomboret. Not only the three Rumbur sanctuaries accounted for in the above version—those of the god Sajigor, of the goddess Jach in Acholgah, and the *bašāli* house dedicated to the birth goddess Dezalik—but virtually all aspects of Kalasha ritual practice are ultimately derived from Nanga Dehar's revelations at the temple of Mahandeu. The building of the first 'clan temple' (*Jĕṣṭak-hān*) for the lineal and familial goddess Jeshtak, for example, is similarly accredited to the hero Ramasen:

> When Ramasen was in Wetdesh, Nanga Dehar told him to make copies of the sacred designs (*õjiṣṭa čoṭ*) on the temple of Mahandeu there, and he gave him a branch of juniper (*sāras-šuŋ*) so that he could arrange a similar temple (*han*) in the land of the Kalasha (*Kalaṣūm*). Nanga Dehar said to Ramasen: 'Before building the temple, you must have three year's wheat grain . . . and you must make a shrine for Jeshtak, who is the sister of Mahandeu. You must take fourteen goats and sacrifice them for Jeshtak, making a great juniper fire within the temple . . . and you must take a bull to the roof and throw it through the smoke-hole, taking its body out through the door . . .' (Parkes, 1975: 48)

The narrative thus proceeds to enumerate in detail all the ceremonial requirements for the establishment of a new Jeshtak temple (*han-sarīk*), presenting a ritual recipe in the form of Nanga Dehar's original pronounce-

[11] Parkes (1975: 12). Cf. 'Rajawai's fighting in Bashgal' in Morgenstierne (1973: 25); Loude (1980: 50–53).

ments. The introduction of the god Mahandeu is also commonly grafted on to the legend of Ramasen (see note 9 above and appended Text A, lines 77–9):

> Balimain was living in Tsiam and Mahandeu was living in Wetdesh. It was revealed to Nanga Dehar that these gods were competing to decide who would come permanently to the Kalasha valleys. They arranged to sleep together on the Shawala pass [from Bashgal to Bomboret]. Appointing the god Ingau as their arbitrator, it was decided that whoever was found facing towards Bomboret in the morning would be allowed to stay there. Mahandeu the 'wise' (*kušāla*) tricked Balimain, turning him around in his sleep so that he faced towards Bashgal in the morning. Thus he alone earned the right to an altar in Bomboret, while Balimain would come just once a year as his guest during the Chaomos festival. (Parkes, 1975: 14; cf. Wazir Ali Shah, 1974: 78).

Often embellished with additional 'trickster' motifs demonstrating the cunning of Mahandeu, this story similarly introduces an elaborate recipe of prescribed ritual performances surrounding the original establishment of an altar for Mahandeu on the instructions of Nanga Dehar (or of another shaman Buda Dehar). But although the story itself has quasi-mythical qualities, reminiscent of similar trickster myths associated with the equivalent god Mon or Mandi among the Afghan Kafirs (Morgenstierne, 1968: 530–2), it is significantly represented as an historical 'revelation' given to Nanga Dehar in trance (*umbulēk*). It accounts for his appointment of specific rituals for Mahandeu to the clan ancestors Galuta and Daranshei in Bomboret, whose descendants are now responsible for maintaining these rites.

Similar legends about the temple of Mahandeu in Wetdesh also occur in the southern Kalasha valley of Birir, despite differences in other aspects of their religion. Here, however, the discovery of the temple and the introduction of the god Mahandeu is accredited to local ancestors, Rana and Gabaroti of the Mãřã-dari lineage, who are also said to have discovered a treasure of gold inside the temple. The motif of the three coloured arrows also recurs in a separate narrative context in Birir, associated with the exodus from Majam in Bashgal of another early ancestor, Shurasi, escaping as a boy with his grandmother from a cataclysm of winds, floods and earthquakes that followed gross ritual impiety by the peoples of Majam (cf. Hussam-ul-Mulk, 1974b: 82-3). Here the local god, Praba, to whom the boy alone had properly sacrificed, awards the three coloured arrows on the Durik-son pass leading from Majam into Birir: where the white-threaded arrow was found, Shurasi was to build an altar for Praba; where the black-threaded arrow landed, he was to build a *bašāli* house; while the red-threaded arrow marked the site for his dancing-house (*nāṭik-hān*), equivalent to the *J̌ēṣṭak-hān* temples of Rumbur and Bomboret.

One also finds similar narrative motifs in Afghan Kafir mythology: for example, the tracking of the footprints or shadows of a divinely abducted animal in Prasun (Edelberg, 1972: 50–51), and the shooting of an arrow to establish the site of a sanctuary in a story of the Waigal culture hero Demuta (Jones, 1972; 1974: 130). The motif of the three coloured arrows has further analogies in oral traditions of the Karakorum (Snoy, 1975: 49) and western Ladakh (Francke, 1902: 35; Vohra, 1982: 74–5), pointing to a wider diffusion of narrative themes across the Hindu Kush and Himalayas to which I shall return at the end of this article. Of particular interest, however, are Kalasha accounts of the 'temple of Mahandeu' associated with these legends, for these shed unexpected light on a central sanctuary of the Afghan Kafirs, also illuminating other common features of Kalasha and Kafir cosmology.

The Temple of Mahandeu and the Underworld Pillar

> The chief temple to Imrá is at Presungal, at Kstigigrom, which is undoubtedly the most sacred village in the whole of Káfiristán. (Robertson, 1896: 389).

Without Robertson's graphic description of the 'temple of Imra' at Kushteki in Prasun valley (1896: 389–92), one might regard Kalasha legends about the temple of Mahandeu in Wetdesh as imaginative fantasy. Yet there can be no doubt that the two temples are identical. Quite detailed descriptions of the temple in Kalasha narratives conform in most respects with Robertson's observations of this sanctuary shortly before its destruction at the end of the nineteenth century (cf. Buddruss, 1983: 82). For example, there is said to be a huge portico or enclosed verandah (*lawār*) outside the main gateway of the temple where the sacrifice of a bull should be performed by visitors (cf. Robertson, 1896: 390). The head of the bull was supposed to be thrown in through the gateway, those proceeding inside the temple stepping over the body of the sacrificed bull in order to gain entry, and a similar sacrificial rite was performed on exit. The temple is also said to have 'seven gateways' (*sat darwazā*), of which only two may be entered (cf. Robertson, loc. cit.). Several informants further mentioned that the local name of the temple, in the language of the *Wetr* or Prasun people, was *Imbrō-tā̃*, 'place of Imra'.

Most intriguing, however, are references to the 'underworld pillar' (*parilōi thū̃r*) inside the temple. This is said to be constructed out of iron (*čīmbar*) and decorated with 'sacred designs' (*õjiṣṭa čoṭ*) from which all Kalasha ritual iconography is derived. Most prevalent are the typical 'temple carvings' (*rikhīni čoṭ*) of interlaced knots, or of entangled horns (*kumbřẽřā̃ ṣiŋ*) and shield (*křẽřā̃*) motifs (see Wutt, 1977). But the 'underworld pillar' was also said to be emblazoned with figures of intertwined snakes (*gok*), frogs (*maḍrāk*), centipedes (*šawilā*), and scorpions (*hūpala*): sacred animals (*õjiṣṭa žandār*) that also recur in other Kalasha traditions about the hidden world.[12]

Such were the designs copied by Ramasen's craftsman Barwazi. I was told that these were still visible in the original Jeshtak temple of Ramasen belonging to the Baramuk-nawau clan at Anish village in Bomboret. Examining this clan temple in 1977,[13] I was only able to make out the double snake motif reproduced in fig. 3. This snake (*gok*) was said to be entwined around the underworld pillar at Wetdesh, from whose mouth great winds blew if insufficient sacrifices of horses and bulls were given at the temple of Mahandeu. Kalasha pilgrims to the temple are therefore said to have been appointed to bring offerings of cattle there each year in the past, and even within living memory according to some informants.[14] Similar legends were also recorded by R.C. Schomberg, visiting the Kalasha in 1935:

> Many stories are told about this Kafir stronghold of Pransu [Prasun]. Near it is a large hole in which a dragon lives and is fed every week with a horse, bullock or other large animal. If the dragon be not fed, he belches

[12] cf. Snoy (1962: 129) on Kafir snake symbolism. Snakes, scorpions and frogs are similarly associated with the 'underworld' in Central Asian mythology (Holmberg, 1927: 320, 345; cf. Ivanov, 1954: 316), also comparable with the *naga* and *klu* serpents of Indian and Tibetan cosmology.

[13] The Jeshtak temple of the Baramuk-nawau clan in Anish was rebuilt in 1978–79, following lineage division; but this carved shrine-pillar was preserved.

[14] Kalasha ancestors in Rumbur are also said to have collected an annual tribute (*thaŋgī*) of 180 woven blankets from Prasun, on behalf of the Mehtar of Chitral, up until the end of the nineteenth century.

masses of smoke out of his lair. There is also a great cave called Mahandelhan, decorated with frescoes of angels all round the wall ... In this cavern a great bamboo of iron grows, and if anyone tries to pull it out or to cut off a piece, he falls ill and often dies ... The pshé [dehar], when he enters, places an offering of juniper boughs and ghi on top of this wonderful bamboo. (Schomberg, 1938: 174–5).

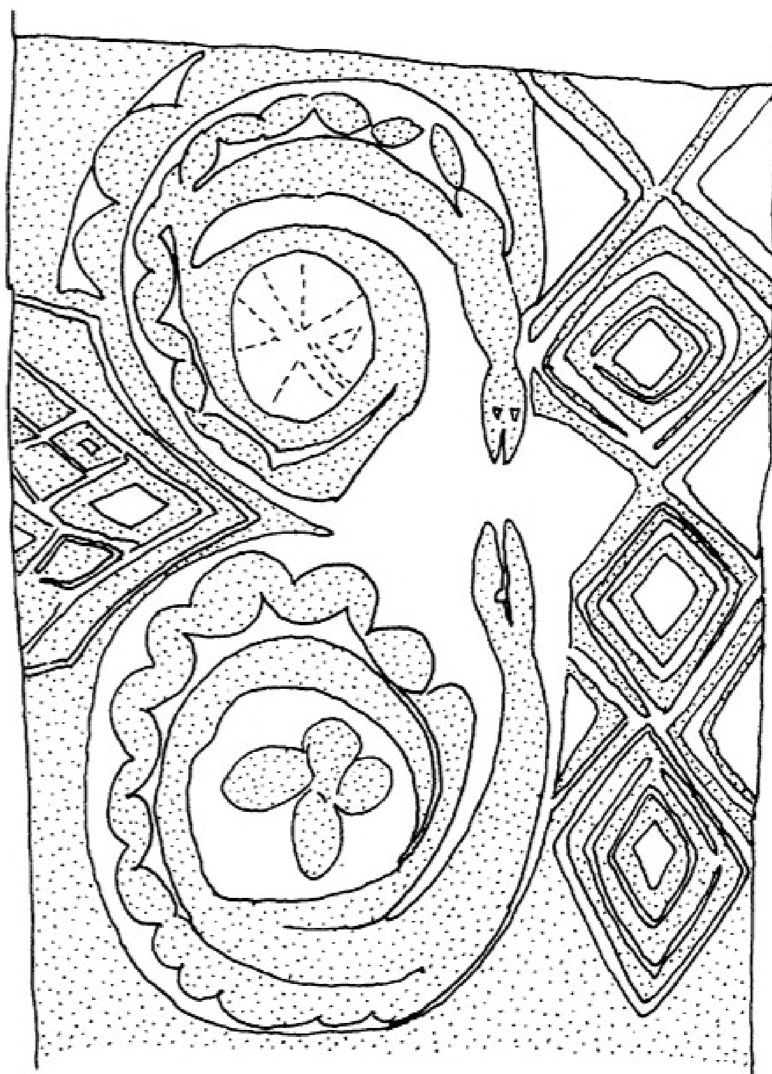

FIG. 3. *Relief carving of snake(s) on a pillar of the Jeshtak-han temple of the Baramuk-nawau clan, Anish village, Bomboret.*

Those familiar with Robertson's account of the temple of Imra will again note some striking parallels: first, with the ' famous hole ' leading down to the ' nether world ' near the temple, where sacrifices of horses were given (Robertson, 1896: 380, 393; cf. Edelberg, 1972: p. 37, n. 15); secondly, with the ' miraculous iron bar ' of Imra, described as ' buried under a heap of juniper-cedar branches ' within the house of its sacred guardian near Imra's temple (Roberston, 1896: 393–4).

The ' underworld pillar ' of Wetdesh has, however, a greater cosmological significance in Kalasha tradition than is evident from Robertson's account of Imra's rod or iron bar. It appears to be none other than the world's axis,

situated at the very centre of the world (*dunyāas khōṇḍa mōčuna*) and descending to the underworld (*parilōi*) of the deceased. There it is said to rest upon the navel (*nyōyak*) of an outstretched giant, the lord of the underworld Mir Mara or Min(j) Mara (var. *Mīñ Marā*, *Mīnj Marā*). This pillar, indeed, supports the world, so that when Min Mara's stomach rumbles, because of insufficient sacrifices at Wetdesh, the earth quakes (*bhūnjau prāu*). It is therefore customary to throw a portion of wheat flour into the household hearth ' in the name of Min Mara ' (*Mīñ Marāas nomēnuna*) during severe earthquakes.[15] Khosh Nawaz, the narrator of the story of Ramasen reproduced earlier, further explained that the entwined snake around this pillar at Wetdesh (*Wetdēš thūřani gok*) was matched by a similar ' ouroboros ' serpent encircling the edge of the world, ' holding its tail in its mouth ' (*damãři pĩřĩ grīau*); and he added that the underworld pillar continues into the invisible realm (*ghaipī*) up to the sky or heavens (*dī*). I should add that he subsequently amended his statement that Wetdesh lay at the centre of the world, arguing that this truly lay in Arabia (*Arabistān*), where there was another ' underworld pillar '.[16]

Many such details about the underworld pillar at Wetdesh were unknown to other Kalasha, so one might suspect here an idiosyncratic accretion of disparate cosmological notions (an ' idio-myth ' as discussed below). Yet its basic features are clearly confirmed in an earlier description by Morgenstierne of the Kalasha deity *Mīr Māra* (equated with Kati *Mřor* and Prasun *Mīr Māro*), the ruler of Hades:[17]

> *M'ir M'ara*—He resides below the earth, which he carries on a pillar resting on his stomach. When he gets hungry, he shakes it, and there is an earthquake (Morgenstierne, 1973: 157).

Mir Mara, more commonly known to my informants as Min(j) Mara, has thus an apparently similar role in Kalasha cosmology to that of ' Maramalik ' in Robertson's account of the tripartite universe of the Afghan Kafirs:

> In the Káfir theology there appears to be both a heaven and a hell. It divides the universe into Urdesh, the world above, the abode of the gods; Michdesh, the earth; and Yurdesh, the nether world. Both the heaven and the hell for mortals is in Yurdesh, which is reached through a great pit, at the mouth of which a custodian named Maramalik, specially created by Imrá for the purpose, is always seated. He permits no one in Yurdesh to return to the upper world. (Robertson, 1896: 380).

The Kalasha have an identical conception of three parallel worlds: that of heaven (*di*, *asmān*), of earth (*čhom-thāra dunyā*, ' the world above ground '), and the ' underworld ' of *parilōi* (< Sanskrit *paralōka*). The underlying image of an axial pillar transfixing these discoid worlds, and resting upon the ' navel ' of Mir or Min Mara, may be modelled upon a familiar mechanical analogy for cosmic

[15] Khosh Nawaz subsequently mentioned that Min Mara had two servants, one feeding him bread mixed with ghee (*sambarī*) and one giving him water; when this customary food was reduced, the earth shook. Cf. Wazir Ali Sah (1974: 73) on similar rites at earthquakes ' when the flies scratch the back of the ear of a bull on whose two horns the world is placed ', reflecting the widespread Iranian notion of a world-supporting bull (cf. Holmberg, 1927: 311–12).

[16] Khosh Nawaz further elaborated accounts of another ' underworld pillar ' at the original homeland of Tsiam, associated with a peculiar shaman-prophet (*rahinamā*) Rahik Jerahim Dehar (cf. Darling, 1979: 158–9). But such ' idio-myths ' (see below), unknown to other informants, may have been created to serve ethnographic requests for just such a primordial mythology.

[17] Morgenstierne (1973: 155) also refers to another ' king of Paradise situated in the nether world ' called Huran (*Hurān*). But this name was unknown to my informants and was perhaps confused with the heavenly ' houris ' (*hurān*) of Islamic tradition.

rotation in this region: that of the horizontal water-mill (*žontr*), with its circular grinding stones fixed to an iron and wooden shaft, whose stone pivot rests upon a large beam of wood beneath the mill's watercourse, and whose socket is also referred to as a 'navel' (*nyōyak*; see illustrations in Edelberg and Jones, 1979: 190; Edelberg, 1984: 198).

Whether the Afghan Kafirs had similar conceptions of an *axis mundi* or *omphalos* located at the temple of Imra remains uncertain. But Robertson's reference to the 'great pit' leading to Yurdesh, through which the souls of the deceased are conducted to heaven and hell, guarded over by Maramalik, seems similar if not identical to the 'sacred hole' at the temple of Imra, which was also supposed to lead to the nether world (Robertson, 1896: 393). We are, indeed, informed in a Kati creation myth that 'God created a large iron pillar and fixed up the earth on it' (Hussam-ul-Mulk, 1974a: 26). An invisible *axis mundi* may also be alluded to in Robertson's (1896: 657) mention of 'seven heavens riveted together by the North Star' (cf. Buddruss, 1960: 206). The iron pole of Imra is certainly reminiscent of the 'cult pillars' of ancient India elucidated by John Irwin (1983), which evidently reflect a similar cosmological perspective to the 'underworld pillar' of the Kalasha, also significantly associated with solstitial solar observatories (cf. Irwin, 1982; Edelberg, Schäfer and Lentz 1959). Indeed, notions of 'world-pillars' made of iron have a wide distribution throughout Central and South Asia (Holmberg, 1927: 333–40; Eliade, 1972: 259–66), so it is not surprising to find this recurring among the Kafirs of the Hindu Kush. Khosh Nawaz's allusions to an alternative world centre in Arabia also point to a grafting of similar Islamic traditions about the Ka'ba at Mecca as an axial focus or 'navel' of the cosmos (Wensinck, 1916, 1928; Chelhod, 1973: 250–52). Prasun myths about an original homeland of 'Maka' (Snoy, 1962: 127; Jettmar, 1986: 49) may also indicate an assimilation of Islamic cosmology concerning the Ka'ba at Mecca, with which the temple of Imra at Prasun may well have been associated as an equivalent (pan-Kafir) centre of pilgrimage.[18]

Another conundrum of Kafir cosmology concerns the identity of Mir Mara or Min Mara as 'lord of the underworld' in Kalasha traditions. I should, however, emphasize that many Kalasha have only the vaguest notions about this underworld, *parilōi*, where the souls of the deceased (*nāṣṭa, ārwa*) are supposed to reside. Apart from references in funerary ritual, most such notions are derived from idiosyncratic dreams (*isprāp*) in which peculiar information about the world of the dead is imparted by recently deceased relatives. Only a few traditional experts, such as Khosh Nawaz in Rumbur, are capable of fleshing out such fragmentary details into quasi-cosmologies, again often incorporating aspects of local Islamic tradition (indicated by Persian-Arabic loan terms) in such details as the named 'seven spheres' of heaven and underworld (cf. Jettmar, 1975: 338). Knowledge about Min Mara is similarly vague, and mainly linked to the ritual formula offered in his name at earthquakes. Yet the name itself is clearly indicative of another enigmatic 'underworld giant' in the mythology of Prasun valley: Munjem Malik (Buddruss, Text 32, cited in Snoy, 1962: 91–3; Jettmar, 1986: 54–7).

Buddruss recorded an elaborate myth of Munjem Malik that incorporates several characteristic folktale motifs, some indeed recurring in other prose stories from Prasun (e.g. Morgenstierne, 1949: 314ff.). The myth culminates,

[18] Edelberg (1972: 43) records a Prasun hymn of migration from 'Mekka and Medina'. See also Robertson (1896: 158) and Grjunberg (1980: 36) on Kati claims of descent from the Koreish tribe of Arabia. The influence of Central Asian mosque architecture on the design of the temple of Imra at Kushteki might also be considered in the context of early Islamic assimilations (cf. Jones, 1984).

however, with the burial of the giant underneath the valley of Prasun, his head located at the tributary confluence forming the 'head' of Prasun valley and his feet located at its base, where the Prasun river conjoins the Kantiwo and Pech valleys: i.e. forming a foundation for the entire inhabited part of the valley, itself equated with the 'world' in Prasun mythology. There were, significantly, major sanctuaries to the god Imra/Mara located at both these places (Edelberg, 1972: 40, *Urtā*, 35, *Ajetokwö*; cf. Robertson, 1896: 65, 399), and the myth further records that a special house was built above the 'navel' of Munjem Malik, at the very centre of the valley, which Buddruss actually identifies with the temple of Imra at Kushteki (Snoy, 1962: 92; Jettmar, 1986: 57).

The name Munjem Malik is translated by Buddruss as 'Lord of the Middle (Region)' (Jettmar, 1986: 57), combining Arabic-Persian Malik (lord, chief) with the Prasun term *munj-* 'middle', derivable from Old Indian *mádhya* (Turner, 1966: 563, headword 9804; cf. 9810 *madhyamá* 'middlemost'). The same term occurs in Kati *mij*, evident in Robertson's recording of Michdesh (**mij-deš*) as the 'middle region' of earth between Urdesh and Yurdesh in Kati cosmology, which naturally recalls our Kalasha giant Min(j) Mara. But there was no indigenous recognition of any connexion of the name Min(j) (*Miñ* or *Minj*) with Kalasha terms for 'middle' (*moč-*), so one suspects that the name of this deity is borrowed, conceivably from the Katir Kafirs of upper Bashgal, where indeed a god 'Miṇā Malik' was recorded by Palwal (1967: 61) as a variant of 'Mira Malik', ruler of the underworld (*miṇā-duk*; cf. Palwal, 1969: 32). There seems, in any event, to be a clear identity between this 'lord of the middle region', a world-supporting giant who also causes earthquakes in Prasun (Snoy, 1962: 93), and Robertson's Maramalik, 'ruler of the nether region', subsequently recorded by Morgenstierne as *Mĩřõ Mālik* (1951: 163) in Kati and also as *Mīr Māro* (1973: 157) in Prasun. One and the same deity seems thus to be connoted by variously juxtaposing epithets of rulership (Arabic-Persian Malik and Amir) with the words Māra (sometimes identified with 'death', but perhaps also a title of divine sovereignty) and Min(j) or Munj-, his 'middle' domain (Parkes, 1986: 153).

As to the implications of this identity for the vexed etymology and historical origins of the sovereign deity Imra himself, also called Māra in Prasun, and apparently derived from the ancient Indian god of the underworld *Yama-rāja* (Fussman, 1977: 30, 48–60; Jettmar, 1986: 132–3), I must leave these for subsequent scholarship.[19] But Kalasha traditions certainly support Buddruss's suggestion that the temple of Imra at Kushteki was also closely connected with the giant of the underworld: standing over his navel, on the world axis, and thus standing at the very centre of Kafir as well as Kalasha cosmology.

Myth, legend and cosmology in the Hindu Kush

> It would seem that in Káfiristán the forms of religion remain, while the philosophy which those forms were originally intended to symbolise is

[19] e.g. the name Māra seems to have been considered a title of 'supreme/divine lordship' among the Kafirs of Bashgal and Prasun (and note its occurrence in the personal name Kan Mara, 'chief and high priest' of the Katirs of upper Bashgal, in Robertson, 1896: 88, 305), being thus applicable to the supreme deities of both heaven and underworld, and hence distinct from Waigali *marā* 'death'. In Kati hymns (Morgenstierne, 1951: 178–9) Imra (*Imřo*, *Yom*) is addressed with the alternative titles *Mřor* (translated 'God') and also *Malīk* ('Lord'). Apart from derivations from *Yama-rāja*, *Yamá-* and *Māra-* (Turner, 1966: headwords 10425, 10422, 10063), the names Imra, Yom, Mara and Mřor may thus conflate alternative roots (? *amára*, *mahārājá*, *mṛtá*, Turner, 1966: headwords 556, 9951, 10278), reflecting complex historical influences from India (cf. Fussman, 1977: 48–9). Further parallels between Kafir Imra, Indian Yama and Iranian Yima are discussed by Nick Allen (n.d.; 1990).

altogether forgotten. This is not, perhaps, surprising in a country in which there are no records of any kind, and everything depends on oral tradition. (Robertson, 1896: 379).

Noting these striking parallels in cosmology, I return to my introductory remarks about the apparent poverty of religious 'mythology' among the Kalasha compared with that known of the Afghan Kafirs. As we have seen in the legend of Ramasen and the temple of Mahandeu, complex cosmological ideas may be embedded in such narratives; yet these narratives are themselves framed within 'historical' rather than 'mythological' time, lying within the normal span of genealogical reckoning and often referring to plausible historical events in Chitral or neighbouring regions. Seemingly mythical events, such as the competition between the gods Mahandeu and Balimain alluded to in this legend, tend to be incorporated within lineage histories as specific 'revelations' of shaman-prophets like Nanga Dehar, thus also framed within the sequential chronology of lineal genealogies. We find barely any 'primordial' narratives concerning the world of the gods such as have been documented among the Afghan Kafirs. It would seem that these gods were simply 'adopted' by the Kalasha through the historical revelations of Nanga Dehar, twelve or thirteen generations ago, when virtually all essential ritual practices were established.

There are several possible explanations for such historicist or 'euhemerist' tendencies in Kalasha narratives concerning ritual. We might, for example, take them more or less at face value: supposing that some such religious innovator as Nanga Dehar did effectively 'introduce' the foundations of Kalasha religion from Kafiristan, perhaps as recently as the fifteenth century (cf. Siiger, 1956: 33). But this naturally begs the question of what their prior religion would have been, as well as being difficult to reconcile with the phonetic forms of cognate Kafir and Kalasha deities (cf. Fussman, 1976: 204). So one might alternatively suppose that an 'original' Kalasha mythology, perhaps similar to that of the Afghan Kafirs, had become displaced through dominant Islamic influences over several centuries in Chitral. Such a hypothesis was already suggested by Robertson (1896: 378–9), who noted a confused intermingling of Islamic notions among the Kafirs of Bashgal, 'apt to mix up their own religious traditions with those of their Musálman neighbours' so that they 'seemed to know so little of their own theology'.[20]

Despite his intellectualist expectations for Kafir 'theology', one may concede with Robertson that such myths as Imra's creation of 'Baba Adam and his wife... in Kashmir' (Robertson, 1896: 386) might be difficult to reconcile with the primordial and localized creation myths of Prasun subsequently recorded by Buddruss. A similar assimilation of Islamic traditions has also occurred in Kalasha religion. Here again we find the story of 'Baba Adam and Bibi Hava' with their seven twin-pairs of male and female children, identical in most respects to folk Islamic versions of Genesis (cf. Hussam-ul-Mulk, 1974b: 83; Loude, 1980: 43–5). Quasi-mythical 'charters' for the separate establishment of Kalasha religion and Islam, notably alluding to the temple of Mahandeu again, may also be appended to such stories:

Baba Adam requested of God what worship should be performed by his children. He was told that the Muslims should build a house as a mosque (*mažīd*); the Kalasha place of worship was to be called Sajigor. God then

[20] cf. Dumézil (1966: 70–71), who actually cites this passage from Robertson's *Káfirs of the Hindu-Kush* in support of his argument for a similarly 'displaced' or historicized mythology in archaic Roman religion.

ordered an angel (*parīštya*) to show the Kalasha their place of worship: it was the land of Tsiam. He told Baba Adam to go to Wetdesh and see the great pit there with an iron pillar standing in it. 'This is the place of Mahandeu,' he said. Later Mahandeu came from Wetdesh to Tsiam, and Sajigor also arrived there, riding on horseback with a whip in his hand. Sajigor said to Mahandeu, 'I wish to go to Mahmat Diwana!' [see fig. 2; cf. 'Badáwan/Ahmad Diwáná' in Robertson, 1896: 388]. So they decided to meet at the mountain pass of Majam [in lower Bashgal], where it was agreed that Mahmat Diwana would be given to Sajigor. An angel announced: 'This place has been given to you; but one day it will become unfavourable to you.' So Sajigor stayed there, while Mahandeu returned to his place in Wetdesh. The three eldest sons of Baba Adam built a temple for Mahandeu at Wetdesh, calling it *Māhandel-hān*. They sacrificed nine white bulls and nine white goats, making a great lamp out of ghee that burned for seven days . . . .

I must point out, however, that such stories are idiosyncratic: the creations of gifted story-tellers like Khosh Nawaz, whose narration is given in synopsis here, which typically incorporate extraordinary ritual details as well as exotic (usually Persianized) names for ancestors, which rarely remain consistent from one telling to another. Indeed, these syncretic 'origin myths', which are never referred to in normal performative contexts of oral tradition, seem specifically designed for non-indigenous audiences (inquisitive Muslims and foreigners), their core elements extrapolated from conventional lineage histories. Yet such 'idio-myths', as we might call them, still to be accepted as 'socio-myths' or part of collective tradition by other Kalasha, do indicate an attempted accommodation of Kalasha religious traditions within the universalist framework of Islamic cosmology. Such accommodations are also evident in Kalasha ritual, notably in its denial or disguise of anthropomorphic representations and its nominal emphasis upon a supreme Creator (*Dezāu, Khodāi*). Overtly 'mythological' narratives, like those of the Afghan Kafirs, might therefore equally have become displaced through their evident dissonance with Islamic ideology (cf. Jettmar, 1975: 337–9).

There is some evidence of such displacement: traces of alternative creation myths concerning earlier races of giants (*bašāst*) and dwarves (*tōpi*), for example, which are reduced to the status of entertaining 'fables' (*aç̄ōřīk*). Among such fables, we even find traces of the famous Afghan Kafir myth of the 'stealing of the luminaries' (Robertson, 1896: 385–7; Buddruss, 1974; Jettmar, 1986: 60–63):

Sun (*sūri*) and moon (*mastrūk*) are sister and brother. They were once enclosed inside a cave, causing darkness in the world. But God ordered them to be released and thrown into the sky, placed under the protection of angels (or *sūči* spirits). The moon would give light to man and the sun would give heat. The sun thus combs out her tresses in summer and she binds them as braids (*čūři*) for winter . . . .

Several other Kafir myths, such as a trickster tale of the gods Moni and Gish recorded by Morgenstierne (1968: 530–32), also occur as the narrative plots of Kalasha fables: stories thought appropriate for women to tell children, but never treated as sacred tales about gods, and having no referential role in Kalasha ritual. Yet such stories may have comprised a comparable Kalasha 'mythology' in earlier generations.

But without denying the obvious historical influence of Islamic ideology on

Kalasha and Afghan Kafir religion, Robertson's notion of mythological 'displacement' scarcely helps us to understand substantive differences in the overall form and content of their respective religious knowledge. Nor does it explain how such differences, including the variable influences of Islam, have actually come to be engendered in ritual practice and its narrative legitimation in myth or legend. Our scholastic tendency to see Islamic ideas as 'contaminants' of Kafir cosmology should also be seen as the peculiar product of an observer's stance rather than an actor's perspective (cf. Tambiah, 1970: 367–77); for when were the Kafirs ever 'uncontaminated' by their historically complex cultural environment on the frontiers of Indian and Iranian civilizations?

It may be more fruitful, therefore, to adopt Frederik Barth's (1987) 'cultural genetic' approach towards regional variations within a cognate cultural universe: focusing upon particular social situations in the transmission, reception, and elaboration of knowledge that may account for incremental changes in its form and content over time (including syncretism), which would thus cumulatively result in the narrative and symbolic emphases distinctive of particular cultures in our region. In conclusion, I can only sketch out a preliminary overview for such a comparative and historically informed approach to the indigenous religions of the Hindu Kush.

As indicated in the introduction to this essay, Kalasha emphasis upon a quasi-historical (rather than overtly mythical) form of religious legitimation needs to be placed within the main performative context of their oral traditions, primarily embodied in the form of praise songs and oratory for lineal ancestors (see appended Texts A and B). Praise songs, for metrical reasons, seem to provide the most enduring framework of traditional knowledge, more freely drawn upon in the construction of oratorical speech and prose stories. Yet all such public recitations are structured by *genealogical* criteria, essentially running through the ancestors of particular patrilines, which thus determine the overall scope and organizational shape of collective memory. It seems no accident, therefore, that the 'foundational era' of Kalasha religious traditions—the epoch of Rajawai and Ramasen and Nanga Dehar—occurs at the upper limit of genealogical knowledge, concerning apical clan ancestors, that is required for the recitation of praise songs and oratory in honour of lineage elders.

This, however, provides only a partial explanation, concerning the narrative organization of Kalasha religious knowledge rather more than its substantive content. Here we would need to consider its distinctive emphasis upon shamanic revelation and 'secret knowledge' (*ras mun*) rather than priestly tradition, itself probably conditioned by a history of repeated Islamic domination. For not only *dehār* shamans but perhaps the majority of Kalasha draw upon personal experience of the supernatural, in the form of dreams or visions, for the construction of 'private cosmologies' (Parkes, n.d.). Collective ritual, and narrative traditions about ritual, thus provide but a referential 'core' of shared symbolism at the heart of a fluid, innovative and syncretic constellation of religious knowledge. Adequate treatment of such personal cosmologies would take us beyond the proper scope of this essay, which concerns particular narrative traditions. Yet these traditions may themselves be seen as the sedimented products of such private cosmologies, given collective tangibility through their accommodation within public ritual performances, whose exegesis is then framed within lineage histories.[21]

[21] One can observe this selective appropriation of personal cosmologies still occurring. A nicely documented example is Snoy's (1965) account of the 'Book of the Kalash': a set of wooden pages

An understanding of the nature and transmission of religious knowledge among the Afghan Kafirs is less easily retrievable. Yet Robertson's account of institutional priesthood in Bashgal Valley (Frembgen, 1983; Jettmar, 1986: 86–9) does indicate conditions more favourable for the acquisition and transmission of ' priestly knowledge ' in the form of a sacred mythology, much of it apparently derived from the localized mythology of Prasun, the ' religious centre ' of Kafiristan.[22] Shamanic and personal revelation seemed conversely less emphasized as sources of sacred knowledge among the Afghan Kafirs (Friedl, 1966: 8–15; Frembgen, 1983), and there is also less evidence of extensive lineal-historical narratives dealing with ritual traditions as encountered among the Kalasha (see Herrlich, 1937: 238–43). Such different emphases on ' priestly ' rather than personally ' inspired ' religious knowledge may perhaps be related to the more stratified social order of the Afghan Kafirs, particularly of the Kati-speakers of Bashgal (Fussman, 1977: 61–5), in contrast to the markedly egalitarian communities of the Kalasha.

It must be admitted, however, that our total knowledge of oral tradition among the Afghan Kafirs, as well as in contemporary Nuristan, is still poorly represented, having been almost exclusively focused upon Kafir mythology, whose intellectual role in religious legitimation, rather than narrative entertainment, may have been over-emphasized. Further research on other genres of Nuristani oral literature, including legends and fables (e.g. Melabar, 1977–78; Grjunberg, 1980: 129–45), would probably reveal closer parallels to the narrative traditions of the Kalasha examined here. Indeed, something akin to the Kalasha tradition of Ramasen and the temple of Mahandeu seems to be alluded to in Waigali legends about the ' introduction of religion ' from Prasun by an early clan ancestor (Jones, 1986: 113). We have also noted that several narrative motifs in our Kalasha legends recur in Kafir myths, which also have notable parallels in the folk literature of other Dardic-speaking peoples in northern Pakistan, and even further afield in western Ladakh (Brauen, 1980: 76–78, 115; Kaplanian, 1983; Vohra, 1989). The Prasun myth of Munjem Malik recorded by Buddruss, for example, has striking echoes in tales of the giant cannibal king of Gilgit, Shiri Badat, similarly buried within a deep pit in the ground, and whose dynastic successor, Su Malik, was also concealed like Munjem Malik's son, in a box cast upon the waters.[23]

The Kalasha legends treated in this article, showing intriguing connexions with the religion of the Afghan Kafirs, seem therefore parts of a greater universe of common narrative and cosmological motifs that are distributed throughout the entire hinterland of north-west India (Jettmar, 1975: 461–79; cf. Parkes, 1987a: 582). Within the scope of this essay, concerning the interrelated myths and rites of neighbouring peoples in the Hindu Kush, I have suggested that broader comparative perspectives on oral tradition, with particular reference to its varying social contexts of verbal performance and transmission, may yet shed further light on the cultural history of this ancient Indo-Iranian frontier region.

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inscribed with sacred designs drawn in goat's blood that is related to have been received from the hidden world by a famous shaman of Birir, Tanuk Dehar, in the 1930s. This is now an object of cult worship in Birir, around which an elaborate tradition concerning Tanuk Dehar has emerged, in many respects similar to the story of Nanga Dehar and Ramasen treated in this article, including allusions to an original ' book ' of Kalasha religion at the temple of Mahandeu in Wetdesh.

[22] Note that Robertson's information of Kafir religion was ' mainly derived from the little stories of the gods which were related to me and to other listeners . . . by Utah, the high-priest ' (1896: 377–8). There are no equivalent ' priests ' among the Kalasha, whose ritual is informally orchestrated by lineage elders (*kam gaḍērak*) and mainly performed by prepubertal boy officiants (*ōjista sūda*).

[23] On variants of the Shiri Badat legend in Gilgit and Hunza, see Leitner (1894: 9–14); Ghulam Muhammad (1907: 114–19); Lorimer (1935, II: 208–13); Lorimer and Muhammad Nazim Khan, in

APPENDIX

Kalasha texts

To substantiate my arguments concerning the narrative-performative shaping of Kalasha knowledge embodied in oratory and praise songs, I present below the Kalasha prose text of Ramasen (see translation and commentary above), together with a short praise song referring to this narrative.

Text A was tape-recorded and transcribed from Kazi Khosh Nawaz in August 1974, the transcription corrected in subsequent field-work. Although narrated specially for recording, the style of recitation is characteristic of oratorical speech (*iṣṭikēk*), with clearly marked phrases (*khōṇḍi mun*) which would be interspersed with shouts of encouragement (e.g. *ṣabā̃ṣ*! ' bravo! ', *šehẽ*! ' that's it! ') during public recitation.

Text B is a song (*gřhũ*) composed by Kazi Khosh Nawaz for a funeral in honour of the Baramuk-nawau clan of Anish village, Bomboret, recorded in April 1989. It is composed in the prolonged and mainly two-tonal *dražaĩlak* song style (Parkes and Stock, n.d.), characterized by regular lines of a 17-syllabic metre with a breath pause (/) in singing after the seventh syllable. Each line would also be followed by shouts of encouragement (*ṣabā̃ṣ*! etc.) by listeners in a public performance, accompanied by drumming and communal dancing.

For reasons of space, I only give brief grammatical guidelines with essential reference to Georg Morgenstierne's *The Kalasha language* (1973), whose transcription I have adopted, indicating words or forms unrecorded in his Vocabulary in my textual notes (cf. Bashir, 1988). Note apostrophes (*'o*) for stress, coinciding with vowel length, elsewhere indicated with a macron (*ō*) over the stressed and lengthened vowel. Note also the retroflex consonants *ç*, *ṣ*, *ṭ*, *ḍ*, and palatal *ř*, the latter barely audible but accompanied by nasalization of adjacent vowels. The translations are literal, with clarification in parentheses, although I follow English (SVO) rather than Kalasha (SOV) word order in the prose text.

For performative and mnemonic purposes, oratorical phrases frequently begin with a reduplicated Absolutive of the main verb concluding the previous phrase, usually rendered as a present participle in my English translation. Note also the use of enclitic *-e* as a clausal conjunctive participle added to verbs, commonly forming a sandhi *-ale* in 3 sg. Preterite forms: e.g., line 5 *am'aale* ' he said (*am'a*(*tr*)*au*), and . . . ', line 8 *ǰag'aale* ' he looked (*ǰag'au*), and . . . '. The main past tenses used in the prose text are Morgenstierne's ' Preterite I ', usually with augment *a-* (1973: 227–30; cf. Turner, 1927: 538–41), and ' Perfect ', with Present of Auxiliary *'a*(*s*)*-ik* ' to be ' (3 sg. *'a*(*sa*)*u*) or Preterite of *h'-ik* ' to become ' (3 sg. *h'a*(*wa*)*u*) added to the Absolutive of the verb, formed with suffix *-i* or *-ai* (1973: 232). There is rarer use of Morgenstierne's ' Preterite II ' (1973: 230–32) for hearsay narrative (line 32 *'ala*, 43 *g'ala*), which alternatively predominates in the song (Text B: *k'ada*, *ṣ'aṭila*). The suffix *-o*, indicated with a hyphen, is an indeterminate conjunctive or emphatic embellishment in speech. Quoted speech or verbalized thought is frequently marked by the word *gřõi* (e.g. lines 5, 9, 10), the Absolutive of a verb for speaking, *gř'õ*(*ř*)*-ik* (see note to line 5). Common Case inflections are: Oblique *-a*, Genitive *-as*, Locatives *-una*, *-ai*, Ablative *-ani*; and postpositions: *gri* ' together with, taking ', *h'atia* or *pat'i*

Müller-Stellrecht (1979: 291–3). For commentaries, see Müller-Stellrecht (1973: 4–10, 236–8, 242); Jettmar (1975: 240–43); Dani (1989: 163–4). Identical legends of Shiri Badat/Bagartham recur in Ladakh (Brauen, 1980: 96–7).

'for the sake of', *kai* 'to', *nə̃ř(una)* 'underneath', *pi* 'from', *sum* 'with', *th'ara* 'above, upon' (Morgenstierne, 1973: 210–12).

A: *Ramasen and the Temple of Mahandeu*

1. *Ramas'en Aḉhoag'a kř'ẽuna 'ais, b'ayas 'asta gri.*
   Ramasen was in the cave at Acholgah, his brother [Sharazen] also with him.
2. *Tar'a-o tr'omiš-o b'atia pi'ai-o, se t'asa kai am'au ki:*
   There in the evening, giving milk to the kids, he said to him [Sharazen]:
3. *'Tu pras'ui! 'A-o p'airan par'im.'*
   'You sleep! I will go opposite [to the other side of the valley].'
4. *'Tu g'oṣṭuna ḍ'uḍi! Čopom'i-o a b'atia pia'ika 'im.'*
   'You sleep in the stable! Tomorrow morning I will come for milking the kids.'
5. *Gřõi am'aale, se ta pras'ui au, s'e-o par'au.*
   He said this, and he [Sharazen] indeed slept, [while] he [Ramasen] went off.
6. *P'airan pai, Pas'uala aḍ'uḍau.*
   Going opposite, he slept at Pasuala [in Acholgah].
7. *Ḍ'uḍi, č'opo-m'ino 'uṣṭi, g'oṣṭuna h'atia par'au*
   Sleeping, [and] rising next morning, he went [back] to the stable.
8. *G'oṣṭuna pai, ǰag'aale, Šaraz'en pras'uyau.*
   Going to the stable, he looked, and Sharazen was asleep.
9. *Tar'a-o luč upu'ai, 'b'atia pi'em' gřõi.*
   Lighting up a pine-torch there, he thought: 'I will give milk to the kids.'
10. *Luč upu'ai, bat th'ara h'ai, th'ai-o, 'b'atia nini'em' gř'õi.*
    Lighting the torch, putting it on a stone, [and] keeping it, he thought: 'I will take out the kids.'
11. *K'ulai dr'aži pr'ale, se l'uč-o phal'ais*
    He stretched into the pen, and that torch went out.
12. *Phal'ais, se t'ante br'ũmbuř kũř'ai, ph'uṣu upua'ikas pat'i, tay'ar h'awau.*
    It went out, [so] collecting the single embers, he blew in order to light [them], [and again] it became ready.
13. *Tay'ar h'awale, ek pai (s'uči) khunḍi'an, 'G'orika' gřõi.*
    It became ready, and they [the *sũči* spirits] called out one nanny-goat, called 'Gorika'.
14. *Khunḍi'ai, b'atia čhal'ai, n'ə̃řuna ah'istan.*
    Calling, [and] pulling out a kid, they threw it underneath [the nanny].
15. *Ah'istan, luč upuw'au.*
    They threw it [under], [when] he lit up the torch.
16. *J̌ag'aale: b'ayas tar'a ne 'ita 'au, pras'uyau, b'atia p'iu dai!*
    He saw: his brother had not come there, he was asleep, [yet] the kid suckles!
17. *Se tar'a hair'an thi, ad'ek duni'au, b'atia nini'ai, pi'au.*
    He became surprised there, [and] he thought awhile, taking out the [other] kids, he gave them to suckle.
18. *T'oa b'atia ṣiŋ-kumbř'ẽřak h'awau!*
    Then [that] kid became cross-horned!
19. *Kumbř'ẽřak h'awale, pai muč-o to ne niw'arau.*
    It became cross-horned, and [so] he did not separate it from among the goats.
20. *N'e-o to pai ad'uau, ne niw'ari 'ais, s'onai an'iau.*
    Neither did he milk that female-goat, nor did he separate [them], [but] he took [them] to the mountain-pastures.

21. *Son 'aini, Šaraz'en g'oṣṭuna nis'au.*
 They were in the pastures, [where] Sharazen stayed at the stable.
22. *B'ayas-o d'ura 'ais, Ramas'en-o d'ura 'ais.*
 His brother was at home, Ramasen was at home [in Anish village].
23. *Ṣo 'asta buṣ-b'ira 'aini.*
 There were also six stud he-goats [for the herd].
24. *Ṣo buṣ-bir'on sum 'ek-kai to 'asta hal'un.*
 With those six stud he-goats they also brought together that [cross-horned] goat.
25. *Hal'i, s'at-kai, An'ižuna h'ali tar'a jag'an hal'an.*
 Bringing it, making seven goats, they were brought to Anish [village] for looking after.
26. *Tar'a 'asini, 'asini*
 There they were, they were [for some time].
27. *Eg 'adua b'ira-wau gř'ŭřak 'ita, t'asa kai am'atran ki:*
 One day the herding boys came, [and] they said to him:
28. *'Te buṣ-b'ira par'un pal'ai, grom th'ara ṣ'aṭi!'*
 'Those stud he-goats went running away, climbing above the village!'
29. *'Par'un pal'ai!' agř'õane, Ramas'en t'asi p'iṣṭao par'au.*
 'They went running away!' they said, and [then] Ramasen went after them.
30. *P'iṣṭao pai, t'asi p'o.una ni'ali pi, Don-s'onuna par'au.*
 Going after them, following after their footprints, he came to Don-son.
31. *Don-s'onuna par'ale, g'oṣṭani pal'ai 'aini.*
 He went to Don-son [pasture], [but] they had run off from the stable.
32. *B'ayas wal'äina ne 'ala*
 His brother [Sharazen] did not come [back] from the herding-place.
33. *Ramas'en J̌'anak t'asa r'oitu pr'au.*
 Ramasen met Janak [their herding partner].
34. *R'oitu dai, J̌'anak ta(sa) kai am'au ki: 'Mai pai p'ai: wal'äina ki 'ita 'on, ki-o ne 'on h'au.*
 Meeting him, Janak said to him: 'My goats went off: while some have come [back] from the herding-place, some did not come.
35. *'B'ayao ne 'au, b'ayao wal'äina ne 'ita 'asau; 'aw-o 'ita 'asum.'*
 'Your brother did not come, your brother has not come from the herding-place; I [alone] have come.'
36. *Ramas'en am'au ki: 'Buṣ-b'irak al'ä gr'omani pai 'asta ḍumb h'awan.'*
 Ramasen said: 'The stud he-goats from that village there also became lost.'
37. *'A t'a(s)i pič'iṣṭ ṣ'ati 'ita 'asam.'*
 'Chasing directly after them I have come here.'
38. *'Tu p'ari! 'A-o g'oṣṭuna par'im.'*
 'You go [down]! I will go to the stable.'
39. *'Tu p'ari, pai s'idha Rajaw'aya darb'aruna khab'ar de!'*
 'You go, [and] going straight to the court of Rajawai give the news!'
40. *J̌'anak 'ita 'au, Ramas'en-o par'au.*
 Janak came [to Rajawai], [while] Ramasen went [to the stable].
41. *J̌'anak pai, khab'ar pr'au.*
 Janak went, [and] he gave the news.
42. *Khab'ar pr'ale, te tal'ä-o tan b'au gri, se 'asta par'au.*
 He gave the news, and [Rajawai] taking his own army from there, he also went.
43. *Se 'asta pai, Ramas'en tar'a g'ala: pai 'ita 'asan, b'ayas m'i ne.*

He also went, Ramasen [also] went there: the goats have come [back], but his brother indeed [had] not.

44. *Tal'ä-o pai, B'a.uk sar khanḍ'eruna pai.*
Going from there, he went to the gully at Bahuk lake.

45. *Gřãŋgřaw'at s'onuna par'ale, b'au gri Rajaw'ai 'asta 'au.*
He went to Gangalwat pass, and with his army Rajawai also came [there].

46. *Barwaz'i 'asta t'asa sum 'ais.*
Barwazi [a craftsman-servant] was also with him.

47. *Tal'ä-o pai, s'idha tar'a dir'a pron.*
Going there, straightaway they made a camp there.

48. *Ramas'en am'au ki: 'A mai bir'aas čhak R'uamun s'onuna kai ap'ašis.'*
Ramasen said [to Rajawai]: 'I saw the shadow of my he-goat at Ruamun pass [in Bashgal].'

49. *'Tu tai b'au piṣṭy'ak h'uti, a gh'eži par'im.'*
'You send your army back, I will go alone.'

50. *Gřõi am'aale, se kawal'iak rah'i h'awale, Rajaw'ai 'asta ta j'ustuna par'au.*
He said this, and he set off alone, [and] Rajawai also accompanied him.

51. *Barwaz'i 'asta rah'i hau.*
Barwazi also set off.

52. *M'učan-o roks'ad pr'au, t'e-o piṣṭy'ak par'on.*
To the [other] people he gave leave, [and] they went back.

53. *Te ek-thi pai, R'uamun s'on bih'oṭi, Wetd'eš M'ahandel-h'an(ḍ)una učhund'on.*
Those three-together going, [and] crossing over Ruamun pass, they came down to the temple of Mahandeu at Wetdesh.

54. *Wetd'eš M'ahandel-h'an(ḍ)una učhund'one, ṣo b'ira 'undru-gh'eri nis'i 'asan!*
They came down to the temple of Mahandeu at Wetdesh, and [there] sat the six he-goats looking down [at them]!

55. *Dram'ia nis'ian, tar'a se ek b'ira ne, se 'õjiṣṭa b'ira ne.*
They sat on the roof, [but] there [was] not that other he-goat, not that sacred he-goat.

56. *M'ahandel-h'an dram'iani ta b'ira n'e-o učhund'ai.*
Not taking down those he-goats from the Mahandeu temple roof.

57. *Doṇ darwaz'auna h'ali, h'ũřĩ-o, udr'iman at'on.*
[But] dragging a bull to the gateway, [and] slaughtering it, they entered inside.

58. *Udr'iman at'on: b'ayas çhat-š'uŋ n'əřuna č'iṣṭi 'asau.*
They entered inside: [Ramasen's] brother stood beneath the holm-oak branches.

59. *Çhat-šuŋ n'əřuna č'iṣṭi 'asau: Šaraz'en!*
He stood beneath the holm-oak branches: Sharazen!

60. *P'iṣṭau d'ewalo-debal'oala, N'aŋga Deh'ar, tar'a 'ita.*
Afterwards the soothsayer of the gods, Nanga Dehar, came there.

61. *Deh'ar umbul'i 'au, umbul'i 'ale . . . .*
The *dehār*-shaman came into trance, [and] coming into trance . . . .

62. *'Mai b'ira khẽ 'au?' Ramas'en gřõi 'asau.*
'How is my he-goat?' said Ramasen.

63. *'Tai b'ira š'eli šatr'a 'an! Ne 'eg asta 'ais, ne war'eg-o.'*
'Your he-goats are those there! Not one more was [yours], nor any other' [replied Nanga Dehar].

64. *Ne! munk'ir h'au!*
No! It was refused!

65. *Munk'ir h'awale, 'Saraz'en!' gřõi khunḍi'au.*
It was refused, and he [Nanga Dehar then] called out 'Sarazen!'

66. *'Sarazen!' gřõi khuṇḍi'aale, digř'ãani m'ẽřyakani b'ira drhan'i maid'anuna 'atau.*
He called out 'Sarazen!', and emerging from a niche in the wall the he-goat fell down into the [temple] precinct.
67. *Ap'alale, tal'ä to te asta učhund'ai, ṣo b'ira asta učhund'ai.*
It leaped down, and then from there those [other goats] also came down, the six-he-goats also came down [from the temple roof].
68. *Su'al kai, khoda'i k'ai-o, piṣṭy'ak ni'au.*
Making a prayer, making a sacrifice, [Nanga Dehar] came out again.
69. *Piṣṭy'ak drhaṇ'i, kh'ãuři geh'enao pai, ek tanh'a darwaz'a aš'is.*
Emerging again, [and] going by the left side, there was a separate gateway.
70. *Udr'iman at'i, paril'oi thũř aš'is.*
Entering inside, there was the Underworld Pillar.
71. *Paril'oi th'ũřani čoṭ ǰagaw'ais: Barwaz'i ṣaṭaw'ai.*
[Nanga Dehar] made [him] look at the designs on the Underworld Pillar: he set Barwazi [to study the designs].
72. *J̌agaw'ai, talä nakš'a jag'ai-o, piṣṭy'ak drhaṇ'i darwaz'auna 'one, Ramas'en že Raǰaw'ai tar'a nis'i an.*
Making [him] look, looking at the picture there, they came back through the gateway, and Ramasen and Rajawai sat there.
73. *Naŋga Deh'ar du išnah'ari m'uça kai ni'au: ek ta nir'aŋ, 'eg-o çhat-šuŋ.*
Nanga Dehar came out with two things in his fists: one indeed [was] a dagger, the other a branch of holm-oak.
74. *Çhat-šuŋ ta Ramas'ena pr'au, nir'aŋga Raǰaw'aya pr'au.*
The holm-oak branch he gave to Ramasen, the dagger he gave to Rajawai.
75. *Apr'ale, to Raǰaw'ai že Ramas'en 'on.*
He gave [the objects], and then Rajawai and Ramasen came [home].
76. *Gřãŋgřaw'at 'atan.*
They arrived at Gangalwat [Pass].
77. *Te Gřãŋgřaw'ata 'ita, Gřaŋgřaw'at s'onuna 'one, du muč pras'uyan.*
Having come to Gangalwat, they came to Gangalwat pass, [where] two men slept.
78. *Ek muč ta Mumur'et geh'en ṣ'iṣ-kai ḍ'uḍi au; ek muč ta Rukm'u geh'en ṣ'iṣ-kai ḍ'uḍi au.*
One man slept facing towards Bomboret; one man slept facing towards Rumbur.
79. *Tar'a ḍ'uḍian khab'ar h'ikas sum paid'a hau.*
There with the news about those sleeping [gods], it appeared [at this time].
80. *Deh'ar tre ša asta gri, tre ša (thum) h'õči, niṣ'an š'ien;*
The *dehār* also took three arrows, drawing them [in his bow], they are signs:
81. *Ek ta g'ora sutr šiu, 'eg-o kriṣna šiu, 'eg-o laçh'iak šiu.*
One indeed is white-threaded, one is black, one is red.
82. *Te tre ša h'õči, ty'ai-o, Raǰaw'aya kai am'au ki:*
Those three arrows drawing, [and] shooting, [Nanga Dehar] said to Rajawai:
83. *'G'ora sutr-w'ala ša pe sapr'ai hau, š'ama th'ai nir'aŋ!'*
'If you should find that white-threaded arrow, keep that dagger [there]!'
84. *'Ama kr'iṣna sutr-w'ala ša pe sapr'ai hau, ay'a-o baš'ali k'ari!'*
If you should find that black-threaded arrow, here make a *bašāli* house!'
85. *'Š'ama laçh'ia sutr-w'ala ša pe sapr'ai hau, tu ta š'ama çhat-šuŋ th'ai!' gřõi Ramas'ena kai am'atrau.*
'If you should find that red-threaded arrow, you indeed plant that holm-oak branch!' he said to Ramasen.

86. *Am'aale, šat'e kh'oji an.*
He said [that], and they searched for those [arrows].
87. *Sajig'or-th'ona 'ita, to g'ora ša sapr'aan.*
Having come to the place of Sajigor, they found that white arrow.
88. *G'ora ša sapr'ai, 'atra no b'ira že p'unj-o gak-gh'ur m'ari, 'atra Sajig'or th'ai hau.*
Finding the white arrow, [and] sacrificing there nine he-goats and five cattle, there they kept [the altar of] Sajigor.
89. *Kr'iṣna ša p'airan šay'a baš'ali-d'ura š'ala gh'ona bunj šiu, šatr'a sapr'aan.*
The black arrow on the other side [of the valley] here at the *bašāli* place [where] that great holm-oak tree is, there they found [it].
90. *Atr'a-o baš'ali 'aran.*
There they made the *bašāli* house [for women].
91. *Lac̣h'ia ša kh'oji pai, Ac̣hoag'a J̣ac̣-gr'i sapr'ai, šat'o c̣hat-šuŋ tar'a 'athaan.*
Going searching for the red arrow, [and] finding it at Jach's ridge in Acholgah, they placed that holm-oak branch there [for the goddess Jach].
92. *Th'ai-o, par'on.*
Placing [those sanctuaries], they went [back to Bomboret].
93. *Ay'a hiday'at 'aran: 'khoda'i k'ara!' grõi Daŋgarik'an kai....*
Here they made instructions: 'Make sacrifices!' they said to the Dangariks....

B: *Funeral song for the Baramuk-nawau clan*

This short song in the *dražaīlak* style of recitation is characteristic of funeral praise songs, with formulaic opening and closing lines. The first line refers to the deceased 'going away' to the underworld (*parilõi*); he is addressed as a 'father' (*dāda*) of the singer, whose father's mother was a clanswoman's child (*jamīli-gřũřak*) of the Baramuk-nawau. The second and third lines refer to the god Mahandeu's 'theft' of Ramasen's goat from the 'sacred valley' of Acholgah, and his subsequent 'quarrels' with Ramasen, who was thus 'mixed' with the gods in Prasun (see Text A: lines 62–5). The final line (9) quotes the ending of an ancient song of the shaman Nanga Dehar at the funeral of an early Rumbur ancestor, Bajika Chakhun: it refers to the Jeshtak temple 'trembling' with the dancing crowd assembled for the funeral; and the deceased is described as 'gold' that has 'dropped down' (like ripe fruit) in death.

1. *Tu ta par'is dai l'a-e / mai d'ada tu, e Baram'uk naw'au.*
2. *'Õjiṣṭa k'ui w'awali / h'ẽřa k'ada, Wetd'ešä Mahand'eu.*
3. *Bir'aas čh'akuna pi/č'iṣṭ ṣ'aṭila, tai w'awao Ramas'en.*
4. *R'uamun son bih'oṭi / učhund'una, Wetd'eš Mahand'el han.*
5. *Tar'a gaug'au že šari/'at k'ada-e, dewal'ok miš'ari thi.*
6. *W'awalo nom dai khuṇḍi/'ala grõan, 'mai b'ira Saraz'en'.*
7. *Paril'oi th'ũřani nak/š'a čhal'ala, tai w'awao Šarazen.*
8. *Šat'e ay'a 'oni-o / ph'ao-n'ãruna k'ada reth'ini han.*
9. *Š'onja-o tai reth'ini / dur jal'akis, s'ũřã ta ṣiṣir'a.*

1. You indeed are going away, my 'father' you, oh descendant of Baramuk.
2. In the sacred valley of your grandfathers he made theft, Mahandeu of Prasun.
3. The he-goat's shadow he chased after, your grandfather Ramasen.
4. Crossing over Ruamun pass he descended, [to] the Prasun temple of Mahandeu.
5. There he made a quarrel and dispute, being mixed with the gods.
6. Your grandfather called out by name, they say: 'My he-goat Sarazen'.
7. The Underworld Pillar designs he took out, your grandfather Sharazen.

8. Bringing them here, he put them underground [beneath] the Jeshtak temple.
9. Now your Jeshtak house trembled, [as] gold indeed you dropped down.

Textual notes

Abbreviations: M: Morgenstierne (1973), with page no.; T: Turner (1966), with headword no.; Khow.: Khowar; Prs.: Persian or Arabo-Persian. I am grateful to Professor Dr. Georg Buddruss (University of Mainz) for comments and corrections.

TEXT A:

2. *pi'ai*: Absol. of *pi'-ek* ' to make drink ', Caus. of *p'i-ik*. M128, T8209. *am'au* < *am'atrau*, 3 sg. Pret. of *m'a(tr)-ik* ' to speak '. M123, T9837.
3. *p'airan*: ' on the opposite side ' (of a valley). Cf. M131 ' *pairen* ', M129 ' *pah'ar* ', i.e., *p'ahara* ' (in the) adjacent valley '. T8114, T8100.
4. *ḍ'uḍi*: imper. sg. of *ḍuḍ-ik* ' to sleep '; cf. line 6 *aḍ'uḍau*, 3 sg. Pret. *pia'ika*: verbal noun with oblique case suffix *-a* from *pi'-ek*, (see note 3 above). Cf. line 12 *upua'ik-as*, line 79 *h'ik-as*, with genitive case. M236 §101.
5. *gřõi*: ' saying ', quotative speech marker. Cf. lines 9, 10, 13. Absol. of *gř'õ(ř)-ik* ' to say ', e.g. line 29 *agř'õan* 3 pl. Pret., line 62 *gřõi 'asau* 3 sg. Perf., Text B line 6 *gř'õan*, 3 pl. Aor. Cf. M105 ' *ghõi* ' mistranslated as ' at one's own free will, for the sake of '. ? T4228, T14450.
9. *upu'ai*: Absol. of *upu'-ek* (Caus.) ' to light, kindle '. M77 *up'o-*, T1814.3.
10. *h'ai*: Absol. of *h'ar-ik* ' to bring, take, place '. M108, T1541.
11. *k'ulai* < *(b'atia)-k/g'u(l-)* ' wicker pen for kids '. ? T3330, T3251.3.
12. *t'ante*: ' single, individual '. Cf. M146 *tan*, T5766.
    kũř'ai: Absol. of *kũř'-ek* ' to collect '. M115–16 ' *kuṛ-* ' (Birir dial.).
13. *g'orika* < *g'ora* ' white ', with fm.-dimin. suffix, typical of goat names.
17. *duni'au*: 3 sg. Pret. of *dun'-ik* ' to think, ponder '. Khow. id. T6410.
18. *ṣiŋ-kumbř'ãřa*: ' entangled, overlapping horns ', a sign of divine favour in livestock (cf. Waigali *anṭala ṣiŋ*). ? Cf. *kumbřã-p'ur* ' smoke-hole with lantern-roof construction '. M113 *kumbř'ä*, *kumbřẽra*.
23. *buṣ-b'ira*: uncastrated male stud-goat. T12083 *vṛṣan-* + T12056.
27. *b'ira-wau*: herdsman of he-goats. Cf. M150 *wal-*, T8125.
    gř'ũřak < *kř'ũřak* ' child '. M116 *k'uřak*. T3245.
28. *ṣ'ati*: Absol. of *ṣ'at-ik*, lit. ' clasped, clinging to ' (cf. line 37). M144, T13085.
32. *wal'äin*: ' place of herding ', *wal-* with locational suffix *-äin*. T8125.
    r'oitu: ' to meet, confront ', with Aux. *d'-ek*, 3 sg. Pret. *pr'au*. ? T10844.
34. *ki...h'au*: conditional clause (*ki*←Prs.), with 3 sg. Pret. of *h'-ik*; cf. line 84 *pe...h'au* ' if . . . '. M234 §95.
37. *pič'ist*: ' immediately behind ' (cf. Text B, line 3, also with *ṣ'aṭ-ik*). Cf. M133 *piṣṭy'ak* ' behind '. ? T7990 X T8371.
39. *s'idha*: ' straight, direct(ly) '. T13401.
    darb'ar: ' royal court ' -Prs.
44. *khanḍ'er*: ' mountain gully, rift '. T3792.
47. *dir'a*: ' encampment ' -Prs.
49. *gh'eži*: ' alone ' < Khow. *γeži* id.
50. *kawal'iak*: ' alone '. M113 ' *kalaw'iyak* ', T3470.
    just: ' accompanying, joining ' < Khow. id.
51. *rah'i*: ' starting out ' -Prs.
52. *roks'ad*: ' leave-taking ' -Prs.
54. *undru-gh'eri*: ' facing (*-gh'eri*) downwards '. Cf. *'undru*, *undruh'āk* ' downwards, below '. T2402.
55. *'õjiṣṭa*: ' sacred, ritually pure ', also adj. *'õjiṣ*. M77 ' *onješta* '. ? T791.
57. *udr'iman*: ' inside '. T357, MIA **antarima-*.
58. *ćhat-š'uŋ*: lit. ' twig-branch ', branch of holm oak (*buñ*, *bunj-š'un*) in ritual contexts. Cf. M95 *ćhat*.
60. *d'ewalo-debal'oala*: ' soothsayer of the gods, *dehār* shaman ', var. *debalaw'au* prob. < Kati *deblole* ' reciting priest ', with *dewalōk* ' gods ' T6539.
64. *nunk'ir*: ' deny, refuse ' -Prs.
65. *khunḍi'au*: 3 sg. Pret. of *khunḍi'-ek* ' to call out '. M118 ' *khunḍ-'eyem* '.
66. *digř'ā*: ' wall '. M97 ' *d'igřä* '. ? < **dig'āřa* T6563.
    m'ẽřyak: ' niche, recess (for god in altar) '. ? < **manḍhaka* T9740.3.
68. *khoda'i*: ' sacrifice ' -Prs.
69. *geh'en-*: ' (lateral) side ', cf. line 78.
70. *tanh'a*: ' separate ' -Prs.
71. *saṭaw'ai*: lit. ' caused to be fixed to '; Absol. of *saṭ-'ek*, Caus. of *ṣ'aṭ-ik* ' to fix, clasp, cling to '. M144, T13085.3.
    jagaw'ais: ' he made to look '. 3 sg. Pret. Caus. of *jag'-ek*. M110.
72. *nakš'a*: ' picture, depiction ' < Prs. ' map '.
73. *išnyah'ari*: ' thing, object '. M81 *ižni(h)'ari* < Khow. *ižn'ari*.
74. *nir'aŋ*: ' Bashgali dagger ' (*Ç'atruma kat'ar*). M127 ' *n'iraŋ* '.
80. *niṣ'an*: ' sign ' < Khow. id. -Prs. *nišan*.

89. *gak-gh'ur* < *gak-k'hur*: lit. ' cow-footed ', i.e. ' cattle '. Cf. Khow. *lot-p'oŋgi* ' big-footed ' id.
94. *hiday'at*: ' orders ' -Prs.

TEXT B:

1. *l'a-e*: emphatic padding syllable.
5. *šari'at*: ' dispute ' < Arabic *šarī'a*.
   miš'ari: ' mixed '. M125 ' *miṣar-* '. T10137.
8. *reth'ini*: var. *rikh'ini*, epithet for *J̌ēṣtak-hān* temple. M136.
9. *ṣiṣir'a*: ' you fell/dropped down '. 2 sg. Pret. of *ṣiṣir'-ik*.

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