

ON PROPHETIC SONGS OF AINU SHAMANESSES

by Itsuhiko Kubodera.

Translated by Donald L. Philippi.

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PROPHETIC SONGS OF AINU SHAMANESSES

Influence of Shamans in Ainu Society.

Even today, when modern ways have been adopted in all aspects of life, a person visiting Ainu villages will often be surprised to find, here and there, a few elderly women who are adept practitioners of shamanism and who are viewed by the other villagers with feelings akin to awe.

In the past, shamans must have exercised immense power over the social life of the Ainu. However, together with the gradual disintegration of the native system of religious beliefs, their power has weakened greatly, and they no longer attract much attention.

In an article contributed to the magazine *Rekishika*, an organ of a group of Hokkaido historians, Dr. Mashiho Chiri wrote as follows:

“Through the process of establishment of the system of contract fisheries under the Japanese during recent centuries, Ainu society underwent far-reaching changes in all of its aspects -- in social organization, in manners and customs, in religion, and in language. This is true also with reference to the shamans. The 18th and 19th centuries may truly be called the period of decline of shamanism among the Ainu. However, in earlier times, there was certainly an age when it was the motive force for society as a whole, with its quite complex system of ceremonies and beliefs. In later times, all of the shamans were women, but in earlier periods there were also male shamans. They used magic practices to cure illness and also told fortunes by means of divination.”¹⁾

In the article, Dr. Chiri adduces many pieces of evidence concerning practices such as *niwok* (augury by means of a fox's skull), *saimon* (trial by ordeal), needle divination, sword divination, bow divination, divination with ashes, divination by waves, divination of fishing omens, and legerdemain. Continuing, he proposes a novel view:

They did more than merely practice magic, divination, and legerdemain. They also acted as the priests in the festivals conducted periodically and

1) “Yūkara no hitobito to sono seikatsu (2)” in *Reki shi ka*, published by Hokkaidō Rekishika kyōgikai, No. 3, May, 1954, p. 33.

became the leaders in warfare. Samaikur and Okikurmi, it seems, were shamans of this sort. If we go back into antiquity, it appears that the chiefs of the Ainu were also such shamans.

Of course, not only among the Ainu, but in all ethnic groups on a primitive level or on the stage of ancient society, those who stood in positions of authority over the masses of the population — be they tribal leaders, chieftains, or rulers — undoubtedly had to attract the popular imagination to their persons by shamanic practices, by divination, by conducting worship of the gods, by taboos, and by the practice of medicine. No doubt they had to be endowed with certain special gifts and abilities as magicians in order to compel obedience to their will. I believe that such qualities were once the most important conditions for exercising political power. In this respect, I do not hesitate to express my agreement with the theory propounded by Dr. Chiri.

That is, I am in complete agreement with Dr. Chiri when he states that, during the period when shamanism was in the ascendancy, all Ainu chieftains were without exception, shamans. However, I am unable to agree at all with the view that Samaikur (Samai-un-kur) and Okikurmi, deities whom the Ainu believe to be the founders of the human race, were shamans who actually lived at one time in ancient society and who acted as links connecting the gods and men. When the god Okikurmi is described in sacred epics (*oina*) as wearing a coat made from linden bast with its hem in flames or as having a sword with its tip in flames, it appears that Dr. Chiri wishes to interpret this as referring immediately to the formal costume of a shaman. I should personally prefer to understand this in a more literal way, as a mythological depiction suitable to Okikurmi in his role as a culture hero, since he is regarded as being a god sent down from the heavens to the world of men as an initiator deity. We also are told that his mother was either the Fire Goddess, Kamui Huchi, or Chikisani-kamui, the goddess of the elm tree, the roots of which were used to kindle fire. This is sufficient explanation of the fire symbolism of his costume.

The extent of the concessions which I am prepared to make in this matter is to allow that the Ainu in their ancient or primitive period may possibly have attributed to Samai-un-kur and Okikurmi the same powers which were possessed by the shamans who actually existed in Ainu society. It is quite possible that such shamanic abilities might have been transferred to the images of these culture heroes, especially in view of the special nature of the religious beliefs of the Ainu, who were strongly convinced of the similarity between human and divine forms of existence.

Men's Role as Ritualists and women's Role as Shamanesses

In the Ainu religion, as far as we can ascertain from field data obtainable today and from the study of old documentary evidence, the functions of offering *inau* (sticks of shaved wood) to the gods and of reciting prayers (*kamui-nomi itak*) to them were exclusively reserved to the men, and women were commonly regarded as being unqualified to participate in such activities. This was so because of the strong conviction that women, because of their physical pollution, must always refrain from any act of direct worship of the gods.

On the other hand, it was chiefly the women who engaged in practices of a shamanic nature. The word for such practices in the Ainu language is *tusu*, defined by Batchelor as "To prophesy. Magic. Shamanism." 1) (Chiri seems to have regarded the words *oina* and *saman-ki* also as having archaically meant "to shamanize.") The word for a female shaman is *tusu-menoko*. 2)

1) John Batchelor, *An Ainu-English-Japanese Dictionary*, 4th ed. (1938), p. 517.

2) This word is not given in Batchelor's dictionary, which lists the word *tusu-kur* (spelt *tusu-guru*), which it defines as: "A medicine man. A wizard. A witch doctor. A shaman." (*loc. cit.*)

In addition, in the poetic language of the epic literature, notably the heroic epics (*yukar*), we meet with the words *nupur* (wizardry), *nupurpe* and *nupur-mat* (the latter two both meaning wizardess).

Nupur is an adjective which is the antonym of the adjective *pan* (weak, flavorless, insipid, fresh). The adjective *nupur* has such meanings as "thick," "strong," "awesome" "terrible," or "holy." When used as a noun *nupur* has the significance of "awesome magic." Thus, the word has a broader range of connotations than the word *tusu*.

Two Aspects of Shamanism—Witchcraft and Divination

There are two distinct areas of shamanism. The first is the realm of witchcraft practiced with the intent to do harm. As for the methods used, it is quite impossible for an outsider to obtain any information at all, since the elderly Ainu informants will become palpably upset even when a question is asked on the subject.

The term used to denote the spell used in witchcraft is *pon-itak* ("little word") and even this word itself has been tabooed so that everyone is afraid even to utter it. This type of magic seems to have been practiced by men as well as women. Even today there are said to be some men who practice it and who are feared by the other villagers for their abuse of their powers. For instance, the elderly Ainu of Saru in Hidaka say that in the village of Nukkibetsu (*Nupki-pet*) there used to live a man called *Kikinni-un-kur*¹) who was an adept at black magic.

Since persons who were skilled at casting spells would use their powers to kill people magically or to usurp their possessions, they were naturally feared by

It is quite clear from the chapter "Shamanism and a Shaman's Seance" in Batchelor's *Ainu life and lore* (1927) that there were both male and female shamans. Batchelor even gives us photographs of them; one is a man, and the other shows a man and wife. (*Ainu life and lore*, p. [263]-285, especially photographs facing p. [262] and p. [274]) [DLP]

1) Literally, "man of Kikinni." *kikinni* is the bird cherry (*prunus padus* L.), a plant believed to have strong power to drive away demons. There is also a place name of Kikinni in the Mukawa valley of Iburi, and perhaps *Kikinni-un-kur* was a native of that place.

the other villagers. At the same time, the Ainu say that such persons will be visited with a series of misfortunes, that their descendants will not prosper and that their line of offspring will die out.

Divination

The second area of shamanism is the realm of divination. Information concerning this is available to us, and it is mentioned frequently in the epics.

There are numerous methods of divinations and various kinds of incantations used. For instance, one might mention *niwok* (augury by means of a fox's skull), divination by examining a sword blade, divination by looking at a needle, and divination by means of a bow. Concrete examples of these methods are adduced by Dr. Chiri, and we shall not go into this complex matter here.

The practitioners of shamanistic methods of divination were chiefly women. Let us suppose that an unexpected calamity occurred for which an explanation could not be found by the villagers themselves — for instance, a famine, a flood, a tidal wave, an epidemic, an eclipse, a death by accident, or some such untoward event. When such a misfortune occurred, large numbers of villagers, headed by the chiefain, would gather together and would summon a shamaness, who would be asked to consult the will of the gods. (Exactly the same practice can be observed in primitive Japanese and Ryukuan Shintoism, and the identical phenomenon is said to exist in Korean and Tungus shamanism.)

First of all, the men worship the gods, making offerings of *inau* and praying. Then they recite prayers to summon down the gods (*kamui-nisuk*). The shamaness becomes prophetically inspired, goes into a trance, and the will of the gods is determined from her oracular utterances while she is in this state. During the first stage of her trance experience, the shamaness mumbles indistinctly in a low voice, but gradually the expression of her eyes changes, and she begins to quiver and shake all over her body. Sometimes she may drop off into a doze or burst into sobs. Then she will begin to utter the prophecy in a manner similar to narrative recitation or to singing. When prophesying, the voice of the shamaness will become quite different from her normal voice. It will be a deep, husky voice, as if an entirely different

person were speaking. Of course, the shamaness will usually state, when questioned later, that she has no recollection at all of what she said during her trance.

Such songs are known as *tusu shinotcha*, the prophetic songs of shamanesses.

The Basic Concepts of Ainu Religion—Animism and Shamanism

The basic concept of the Ainu religion is animism, which recognizes the existence of souls in all things, both animate and inanimate. Shamanism based on animistic concepts is found widely among all the peoples of Western Siberia, Mongolia, and the Tungus, and even as far west as among the Finns and Lapps. In Sakhalin, it is practiced among the Gilyaks and the Oroks, and it is said that traces of it are also found in Japan and in the Ryukyus in primitive Shintoism.

It cannot be determined easily whether this shamanism was a native religious concept originating among the Ainu or whether it was imported by them from the Asiatic continent. At any rate, an examination of the religious ceremonies, the magic practices, and the taboos of the Ainu, as well as a study of the god-songs, the sacred epics, the heroic epics, and the women's epics which have been handed down among them from antiquity will reveal that shamanism has existed from extreme antiquity in Ainu society, and it is quite clear that shamanism takes forms of great complexity and has undergone a far-reaching evolution.

Shamanism of the Hokkaido Ainu

However, the shamanism of the Sakhalin Ainu as witnessed by me was exactly the same as that of the neighboring Gilyaks and Oroks. The word *shaman* itself was used by them, and the Ainu would even sometimes make conscious distinctions between shaman rites of Gilyak type and shaman rites of the Orok type. Shamanism was practiced by both men and women in Sakhalin.

Shamanism of the Sakhalin Ainu

On the other hand, the shamanic rites performed by the Sakhalin Ainu were not performed in Hokkaido, where shamanism had already been assimilated by

the Ainu long before and been transformed into a shamanism of a broader definition. The word *shaman* is not used any more in Hokkaido.¹⁾ Today, the only terms in use are *tusu* (prophecy, shamanism), *tusu-kur* (prophet, shaman), and *tusu-menoko* (shamaness). The practice of *tusu* is now confined to women.

Dr. Kindaichi's Account of a Shamanic Performance

Dr. Kindaichi was able to witness an extremely interesting shamanic performance in 1929 in Sakhalin. Let me quote Dr. Kindaichi's own words of description.

"In the summer of 1929, in all of the Ainu villages along the eastern coast of Sakhalin, a rumor spread far and wide that there was to be a tidal wave. No one knew for sure where the rumor originated, and everyone felt uneasy. At that time I was staying in the village of Shiraraka, where one night a shaman called Harukaainu was requested to prophesy so that all could hear the words of the gods. I was also invited and observed the entire ceremony, seated by the side of the elder Toyatte. At the sounds of the single-sided drum, the *kacho*, being pounded very slowly, all those present became silent, and there was not so much as a single person clearing his throat. By and by, the shaman's breathing became irregular, and his shoulders could be seen to rise and fall rapidly. Then Harukaainu stood up unsteadily by the side of the fireplace, and went walking towards the head of the fireplace, still pounding on the *kacho*. He walked with a strange gait. After he had gone

1) Dr. Chiri argues, however, that the word exists as an archaism. He says that it is present in such compounds as *esaman*, "otter," which must be a contraction of the word *i-saman-ki*, "to shamanize." In this he is no doubt correct. [IK]

It was Batchelor, rather than Chiri, who first stated this view. Batchelor writes the following: "Although the name 'shaman' is not used by itself among the Ainu, yet 'to perform the acts of shamanism' carries it, for that is called *e-shaman-ki*, i. e. 'act the shaman.'" (*Ainu life and lore*, p. [275]) [DLP]

to the head of the fireplace, he would walk back. He continued to walk back and forth in this manner for some time, and then he finally returned and seated himself at his former position. He stopped pounding on the *kacho* and began to utter words. His voice was drawn out long and the words were sung sporadically to a melody. I was quite unable to understand the meaning of what he was saying. Of course, all of the Ainu assembled around me were also sitting there in silence as if deeply absorbed in thought. They were looking intently toward Toyatte. Toyatte, a blind man in his sixties, was the wisest man in this community as well as the only reciter of epics. Everything was explained for them by this old man. Following his instructions exactly, the Ainu immediately set about making the preparations. They cut down a large tree and stood it up on the beach at a place just before Shiraraka. Cutting notches in the tree trunk, they made it into a carved wood fetish. On it they hung food wrapped in straw matting as offerings to the god of the sea. After they had averted the coming of the tidal wave in this manner, their hearts were once at ease.

As I left Shiraraka the following day, I looked back on the large wooden fetish standing on the beach. Recalling what I had seen the night before, I left the place feeling as if I had witnessed before my very eyes a sight coming straight out of the distant past."1)

Shamanic Rite Witnessed By Me

In August, 1935, I also witnessed a shamanic performance on the eastern coast of Sakhalin in the company of Dr. Kindaichi and others. This was in the village of Niitōi, located slightly south of Shishika (Shiska), which was then the border town between Japan and the U. S. S. R. I succeeded in taking a 16 mm motion picture of the performance, and I also took a sound recording of the prophetic song of the shamaness.

1) Kindaichi, Kyōsuke, *Ainu bungaku* (1934), p. 165 - 165.

The name of the shamaness was Kasuga Kotarunke. She explained that there were two types of *tusu*: the Orok type and the Gilyak type. She stated that the seance which she was about to perform that day would be of the Orok type. When the village elders had assembled around the fireplace, one of them began to pound on the drum, the *kachō*, while warming it at the fire. The fire had a skin of an antelope or a musk deer stretched on one side only. The drumstick, the *rex-ni*, was the lower legbone of an antelope to which the fur was still attached. The drummer grasped it at the center and would pound on the skin of the drum alternately with the front and the rear ends of the drumstick. (In some cases, one end of the drumstick is held, and the drum is pounded with the other end.) The drumming was leisurely at first, but the tempo gradually became faster and faster, and the sound of the drumming rang out noisily inside the house, which was completely quiet except for it.

The man who was beating the drum had many shavings (*kike*) of willow wood hanging down in clusters from his head. Walking around the circumference of the fireplace, he continued to beat the drum while jerking his body violently backwards and from side to side. After a while the drum and the drumstick were passed into the hands of the shamaness. On the outside of her clothing, the shamaness Kotarunke wore a leather belt of seal skin from which many metal rings were suspended. There were also numerous swordguards (*seppa*) hanging down ponderously from her leather belt. On her head she wore a blackend ceremonial headband (*paunpe*) made of willow wood shavings. Over the headband she wore a crown-like headdress, also made from shavings of willow wood. These shavings dangled down as far as her waist, and there were willow wood shavings hanging down also from her head as far as her breast. Her sleeves were tied up above her elbows, and shavings of willow wood were also used to bind the sleeves in place. By her seat were placed two *takusa* (a bunch of plants waved at exorcisms — the word *takusa* in a Japanese loan word).

The shamaness rose with the drum in her hand and began to walk round and round the fireplace while beating the drum violently. As she jerked her body

about in violent movements, the metal swordguards and ornaments on her belt would strike each other, making a loud jingling

As the rapid drumming and the loud metallic jingling continued, the shamaness gradually entered a trance. Her breathing had become heavy on account of the drumming and the violent motions. Her shoulders heaving as she breathed, she finally collapsed and sat down by the fireside. At that time, the sound of the drumming ceased suddenly, and from the lips of the shamaness there flowed forth the prophetic song, the *tusu-shinotcha*.

Although sometimes the song was interrupted by her labored breathing, the voice was firm and husky like a man's. The village elder, Mori Moyanke, interpreted the divine will by listening to this prophetic song.

(All of my attention was devoted to taking the 16 mm motion picture, and I was unfortunately unable to listen to the words spoken by the interpreter.)

The shamaness rose once again and, waving the *takusa* in both her hands, went around the fireplace with dancing movements, while brushing lightly over the heads of the persons seated there in order to exorcise them. With this, the rite was finished.

Companion Spirits of Shamanesses

It is believed that shamanesses owe their shamanic powers to their "companion spirits" (*turen-kamui*, *turenpe*).

According to the ideas of the Ainu, every person is endowed, at the moment of birth, with definite tutelary spirits. Whether the person is intelligent or ignorant, his ability or lack of ability, and his good or bad fortune are determined according to the nature of his spirits.

A person having superior companion spirits will excel in every way, while one who has weak companions will lead a miserable existence all his life.

A person is not necessarily limited to only one of these spirits. In fact, it is regarded as desirable to attach to oneself as many as possible superior

companion spirits in order to benefit by their blessings and protection. The companion spirits of shamanesses seem to assume the form of serpents in most cases.

When investigators visit Ainu villages, certain elderly women are sometimes pointed out to them as having superior powers because they are possessed by snakes or dragons. For instance, one woman will be said to be *tokkoni-huchi*, "an old woman possessed by snake," or another will be said to be *e-nupur* ("having superior magic powers") because she is possessed by a dragon (*sak-somo-ayep*).¹⁾ It also happens that many of the women who possess superior powers as shamanesses are excellent reciters of the epic traditions, the god-songs and the heroic epics.

In his book *yūkara no kenkyū*, Dr. Kindaichi mentions a shamaness of Benbe (now Toyoura-machi, Abuta-gun in Iburi, Hokkaido) who was possessed by spider and dragon deities.²⁾ Since this is an excellent example clearly illustrating the relationship between the shamaness and her companion spirits, let me quote the relevant sections. When this shamaness would be dealing with easier cases, the spider gods would possess her and pronounce their oracles. For more difficult cases, the dragon god would take over and speak through the mouth of the shamaness. On one occasion, the wife of the chieftain of Usu³⁾ was stricken with a serious illness, and this shamaness was called in to perform.

1) *sak-somo-ayep*, literally "that which must not be mentioned in summer," a fabulous winged dragon said to emit a foul stench. It is said to increase its power during the rainy summer months, and therefore is a taboo against mentioning its name in the summer.

2) Kindaichi, *Ainu jojishi yūkara no kenkyū*, v.1, p. 406-409. The same section is reprinted in Kindaichi, *Ainu jojishi yūkara gaisetsu*, p.378-381. This shamaness is also mentioned by Dr. Chiri in his article "Jushi to Kawauso," in *Hoppō bunka kenkyū hōkoku*, No. 7 (1952), p. 69-72.

3) According to Kindaichi (see *Ainu jojishi yūkara gaisetsu*, pp 378). In the version quoted by Chiri, she was the wife of the chieftain of Abuta. (Chiri, "Jushi to kawauso," p. 69) It matters little, since Usu and Abuta are adjacent villages.

Going into a trance, she began to sing the prophetic song.¹⁾ At the beginning of the seance, the spider deities — a god and a goddess — spoke through her mouth. The song began with the following words :

<i>Ka-e-rikinkur</i>	We, the God Ascending by Threads
<i>ka-e-rikinmat</i>	and the Goddess Ascending by
<i>ikkewe-ansu</i>	Threads [the names of the spider
<i>ikkewe-anpe kusu</i>	god and goddess], because of a
<i>ainu mat-ainu</i>	definite reason, on account of a
<i>sermakkashi</i>	certain cause, do abide over the
<i>chiehorari</i>	soul of the human woman [the
	shamaness] .

After beginning in this fashion, the song went on to say that the illness of the mistress of the house appeared to be a difficult one. Since another, more terrible deity was present, abiding over the soul of the shamaness, the spider deities announced that they would entrust the matter to this other deity, the dragon god.²⁾ After the shamaness had reached this point in her song, her manner underwent a sudden change. The melody of her song changed completely,³⁾ and the voice of the shamaness assumed a loud, imposing timbre. Then the song continued :

<i>Chikor poro to</i>	I emerge in the middle
<i>to noshikike</i>	of the large lake where
<i>chikoshipusu,</i>	I dwell.
<i>topa un ma</i>	From the head of the lake,

1) In the version given by Chiri, the song begins with the repetition of the burden *Hayussā tā tā, hayussā rankē*. (Chiri, *ibid.*, p. 70)

2) Here I have paraphrased the words of the prophesy, consulting the original text and Japanese translation given by Dr. Kindaichi (Kindaichi, *Ainu jojishi yūkara gaisetsu*, p. 379-380).

3) In Chiri's account, the burden of the song changed at this point to *Sāe Sāo* (Chiri, *ibid.*, p. 70)

<i>tokesh un ma</i>	from the foot of the lake,
<i>otunakaikai</i>	I raise countless wavelets,
<i>oremakaikai</i>	myriads of ripples
<i>chiutasare.</i>	as I swim along.
<i>Me-raiki-ash na,</i>	I am dreadfully cold!
<i>ape are yan ./</i>	Kindle the fire !
<i>ape are yan ./</i>	Kindle the fire !

With these words, the oracle of the dragon god begins. The cause of the disease of the chieftain's wife is revealed, and the prophecy comes to a close. When the shamaness began to sing this part of the song, perspiration flowed down her face, and the glistening drops of sweat pouring down her face impressed those present as closely resembling the churning waters on the surface of a lake ¹⁾.

The text of this prophetic song appears to have been obtained by both Dr. Kindaichi and Dr. Chiri from Kannari Matsu (Ainu name Imekanu), a female Ainu who was a native of Horobetsu (in Iburi, Hokkaido). I believe that the text is a document of unsurpassed value, eloquently illustrating the prophetic songs and telling us a great deal about the Hokkaido shamanesses and their companion spirits.

Matrilineal Transmission of Shamanic Ability

One of the important results of a joint research survey undertaken by the Japanese Ethnological Society (Nihon Minzokugaku Kyōkai) concerning the Ainu of Saru from 1951 through 1953 was the discovery of the fact that, in the social structure of the Ainu of the past, there was a clear-cut distinction between the males, who belonged to a patrilineal kinship system (the *ekashi-ikir* or *ekashikir*), and the females, who belonged to a separate matrilineal kinship system (the *huchi-ikir*, *huchikir*, or *uchikir*). It was

1) Kindaichi, *ibid.*, p. 381.

learned that this fundamental dichotomy lies embedded at the very basis of Ainu society 1).

It was confirmed that in most cases the ability of women to learn the will of the gods and to cure sickness by shamanic ability was handed down through the matrilineal kin group, just in the same way as were other abilities, such as the ability to assist as a midwife (*ikoinkar-mat*) and the ability to recite epic traditions, such as the god-songs or heroic epics. For example, Professor Sugiura made a detailed investigation of the ancestry of the elderly woman Nabesawa Teki (Ainu name Tekita-mat), a resident of Piratur (Hiratori) village. I also accompanied Professor Sugiura and took notes together with him. The ancestry is shown in the form of a graph (Table 10) on page 21 of Dr. Sugiura's paper, and a detailed explanation is given on pages 26 - 28 of the paper.

Nabesawa Teki was born in the village Moto-kanbe in Saru (Hidaka). This village was formerly known as Atsuka (a place name obtained by combining the two names Atsubetsu and Kapari, in Monbetsu-chō, Saru-gun). She was the second daughter of Karipano (father) and Huchir (mother), and her maiden surname was Kazuno.

She was first married to Sanchorek of Shiunkotsu (Shumkot) village. Sanchorek's surname was Nabesawa. Since Isanash, the elder brother of Sanchorek, was childless, she and her husband were formally adopted by Isanash to carry on his line. Later, she appears to have been widowed and to

1) This matter is treated at length in various articles published in *Minzokugaku kenkyū* (Japanese Journal of Ethnology), v.6, No.3-4 (March, 1952), particularly "Saru Ainu no shinzoku soshiki" (Kinship systems of the Saru Ainu) by the late Ken-ichi Sugiura (p. 3-28), "Saru Ainu fujin no upshor ni tsuite" (On the upshor of Ainu women in the Saru Valley) by Kiyoko Segawa (p. 62-70), and "Saru Ainu no sorei saishi" (The worship of the souls of the ancestors among the Saru Ainu) by Itsuhiko Kubodera (p. 46-61).

have remarried more than once, but she bears the surname of Nabesawa at the present time and has particular abilities at midwifery and at shamanism (*tusu*). Although she herself will not admit it, she also appears to be unusually skilled as an epic reciter. As is clear from Table 10 and from the explanation of the genealogy in professor Sugiura's paper, her elder sister Tanechikor (eldest daughter of Karipano and Huchir) and also her younger sister Take (fifth daughter of Karipano and Huchir) were both epic reciters. The mother Huchir was skilled at midwifery and shamanism, and the maternal grandmother, Kakianu, also excelled at midwifery and shamanism. The great-grandmother, also appears to have had outstanding gifts at midwifery.

Are Companion Spirits of Shamanesses Handed Down in the Female Line?

The Ainu think of these abilities as being divine gifts, rather than as being acquired by the individual. They explain that a woman descended from such an ancestry need not set out specially to acquire such abilities, since she will naturally be able to practice shamanism, to function as a midwife, or to recite epic traditions if she will only give it a try. Does this belief in divine gifts mean, in the final analysis, that the companion spirits (*turen-kamui*) imparting such special abilities attach themselves hereditarily to woman belonging to a definite matrilineal group (*huchikir*)? Today we are as yet not necessarily able to prove, in the case of individuals, which factors are transmitted hereditarily even in the realm of physical characteristics, as the composition of any individual's heredity must be extremely complex. This is even more so in the case of the hereditary transmission of mental and spiritual elements, this being a problem involving a great number of unsolved and baffling questions. Although it may be impossible to provide scientific corroboration for any of this, nevertheless we ought to be thankful that we have at least succeeded in ascertaining concretely that these abilities tend to repeat themselves frequently in persons sharing a common ancestry, as has been shown so convincingly in the genealogical table (Table 10) in Prof. Sugiura's paper.

Superior Shamanic Ability Regarded the Foremost Feminine Virtue.

Among the Ainu of the past, the superior qualities most prized by men were, first of all, birth in a prominent family, bravery (*rametok*), and outstanding eloquence (*pawetok*), as well as possibly divination and shamanism as well. On the other hand, the qualities which were most highly regarded among women were beauty and superior ability at shamanism.

Shamanesses and Prophetic Songs Appearing in the Epics

Besides depicting the valiant exploits in warfare of the youthful heroes Poi-yaunpe, Pon Otasut-nu-kur, and Pon-Otasam-un-kur, the chief characters of the heroic epics, the epic literature also devotes much attention to describing the beautiful young woman who become the heroes' wives. These heroines are described in terms such as the following:

nish-or-kushpe

tusu-e-ranke

toi-tum-kushpe

tusu-e-qusu

pakno-nupur-kur

ne rok awa

She was a wizardess

so powerful that she could

bring down by magic things

concealed in the clouds and

unearth by magic things

concealed within the earth.

In many of the epics, there are such heroines who use their superior gifts to overwhelm the magic of the enemy, thus assisting the youthful hero and paving the way to his triumph.

Whenever some untoward event occurs, or when they sense enemy forces to be approaching, the assembled warriors in the heroic epics will often practice divination themselves. They will divine by examining their sword blades. In addition, after they have prayed to the gods, they will invariably call upon their own younger sisters, who are shamanesses. Passing a goblet of wine to his sister, the warrior will cause her to go into a trance and will listen attentively to the prophetic song issuing from her lips. In this way, he will learn the will of the gods, obtain information about the enemy, and also find

out his own fate. Only after having obtained such information prophetically will she and his cohorts go into action. Needless to say, these customs depicted in the epics are reflections of the actual practices followed by the Ainu of those days in their social life.

Descriptions in Sakhalin Epics.

In a *hauki* (a Sakhalin heroic epic) committed to writing Dr. Kindaichi in 1907 and later published by him with a Japanese translation,¹⁾ we find the following description of the appearance of a shamanesses :

<i>Aninkari kusu</i>	Looking carefully, I
<i>kamui pon matekachi</i>	beheld a divinely beautiful
<i>ariki shiri</i>	maiden descending from
<i>annukara manui</i>	the clouds, oh how fearsome !
<i>iyosserekere</i>	Many wizard-like
<i>tu kinra iporo</i>	expressions appeared in
<i>inantuikashi</i>	power over her entire
<i>chiyupoyupo</i>	countenance.
<i>ikotoro kata</i>	On her breast she held-
<i>shakunto pon kacho</i>	a little copper-gold drum,
<i>otekō kanne</i>	and in one hand she
<i>attek orowano</i>	grasped a little copper-gold
<i>shakunto pon rexni</i>	drumstick, oh how fearsome !
<i>iyosserekere</i>	with it he began to beat
<i>kachoyonnoshiki</i>	slowly again and again upon
<i>tu moire tauke</i>	the center of her drum.

Furthermore, in his book *Ainu bungaku*, Dr. Kindaichi provides a Japanese translation of excerpts from another Sakhalin *hauki*, which he obtained from a reciter called Sōkichi of Rorei, a place on the eastern coast of Sakhalin.

1) Quoted from Kindaichi, *Kita-Ezo koyō ihen* (1914), p. 103 -104.

This excerpt describes the infancy and childhood of the Lady of Moisam, who appears as the heroine of this epic together with the hero, Pon-Otashut-unku, the Young Lord of otashut. Since the content of this excerpt is of great importance, let me quote from Dr. Kindaichi's version.

“On the shores of this barren island, deep within a solitary hut thatched with rush, did I lie, buried in a heap of dirt and dust, until I awoke of my own accord. Weeping and screaming with hunger, I continued to cry and my wailing sent me a trance, and I was rapt in my wizard songs. From earliest infancy, this was the way I would spend my solitary days. As time went on, it seemed to me that I had, in fact, eaten food. Season after season, year after year, this went on, and by and by I finally grew up, until now I have grown to resemble any young woman in the world.” 1)

The Lady of Moisam was a born shamaness. As she wept and screamed with hunger as a baby, she would work herself naturally into a trance, and in her shamanic ecstasy she would console herself. She continued to dwell on in this manner, completely forgetting her hunger. After depicting this mysterious way of life of the shamaness heroine, the epic continues with a description of the events which come to pass after she had become a grown maiden.

“Untying the strings binding it up, I opened the little bag. Looking into the little bag through this opening, I found at the bottom of the bag a little shaman's drum, by the side of which was placed a little golden drumstick, to which there was attached a cord wound up in loops. Whose possessions, I wondered, could these have been? At the head of the little drum there lay a golden shaman's cap, oh how fearsome! Overjoyed, I took them up in my hands,

1) Kindaichi, *Ainu bungaku* (1934), p. 58- 59.

oh how fearsome ! The little shaman's drum did I grasp in my hand, and with one hand did I place on my head the shaman's cap. Then a weak trance came welling up in me from my lower abdomen, and by the edge of the mat on the floor of my hut thatched with rush, a weak trance had already begun to issue forth from my lips." 1)

Thus, as soon as the shamaness arrays herself her special shamanic costume, takes the drum and drumstick into her hands, and begins to drum with them, she immediately enters into a weak trance, and a weak prophecy begins to issue from her lips. The epic describes her as she gradually goes on into a deeper trance.

"Redoubling my efforts, I concentrated my mind to the utmost power, so that my companion spirits now came over me completely. With my wizardry, I raised up the lower edge of the rush thatching of my little hut. Then, far away across the sky, before mine eyes there appeared a vision. Before mine eyes spread out the sandy shores of an unknown land, and the aspect of this land, the terrain of this country came into view before mine eyes, oh how fearsome ! In this distant land of the gods, there descended a broad path, and my eyes stopped atop this path. What land was this, what country was this? Its name was the land of Otashut, an ancient land...." 2)

Here the shamaness's companion spirits come over her, and thanks to her wizardry she is able, while remaining there inside her little rush-thatched hut, to behold an ecstatic vision of the world outside. Not only do the shores, islands, and villages come into view, but she is able to see clearly, before her very eyes, the exact appearance and terrain of a distant country unknown to her. This is a powerful and striking depiction of the fantastic world of the shaman, so far removed from anything which we could possibly imagine from our own experience.

1) *ibid.*, p. 62-63.

2) *ibid.*, p. 65.

Excerpt from Etenoa's Version of the Heroic Epic *kutune Shirka*

Let me next quote a typical passage describing a shamanic performance of a shamaness from the heroic epic *kutune shirka* in the version which I obtained from Hiraga Etenoa of Shin-Hiraga village. 1)

a-ye rok kuni
kane-santa-un-kur
kot tureski
a-ar-kotomkap
san ruwe-ne.
iyainumare
menoko sani
an nankora,
nan nipeki

A maiden who must have been the younger sister of the Lord of Kanesanta then came forward. She was of an amazing beauty, so much so that I marveled that such a woman could exist in the world. The radiance of her face

1) I committed Etenoa's version of *kutune shirka* to writing in 1933. Etenoa stated that her version of this epic was the one which she had heard recited in her youth by Chikupshir, who was at the time an elderly reciter of Shin-Hiraga village. She said that she had also heard another version of the same epic recited by Yayashi, an elderly male reciter of Shin-Hiraga village, as well as the version of Rechiuriuk, a male reciter of Yama-Monbetsu. Yayashi informed me that his version also had come down from Chikupshir, and therefore it ought to be identical with the version recited by Etenoa. I also committed to writing the version of Yayashi, and it would be extremely interesting to compare the texts of these two versions in order to discover what individual differences exist between the versions of both reciters. However, there has not yet been enough time for me to make this comparison. Two versions of *kutune shirka* have been published by Dr. Kindaichi under the Japanese title *Itadori-maru no kyoku*. Dr. Kindaichi's texts are provided with Japanese translations and thorough annotations. The reciters of these versions were Wakarpa of Hidaka and Kannari Matsu (Imekanu) of Horobetsu. In the future I should like to compare the texts of these various versions in order to discover the extent of the similarities and discrepancies between all of them.

hetuku chupne
iyenu chupki
chiure kane
nupurpe sone
nuput channoyep
e-shi-rut-tum ta
ruina kane
mutke turempe
nochiu kiyai ne
e-kimui kashi
teunin paye
sara turempe
kapap sai kunne
e-pishkanike
kurun kane
ene a-rekahi
isam menoko
chi-sana-sanke
arki hine
tuki kurpok
e-horari
iku ruwe-ne.
orowa kaike
ape tekkisam
chi-o-sanke-kar
tusu pon repni
sana-sanke,
inumpe kurka

shone forth dazzlingly
like the rising sun.

She appeared to be a
mighty wizardess, and
had her wizardess's headband
(*nuput channoyep*) concealed
within her hair. Her invisible
companions sparkled like the
twinkling of stars over her
head, and her visible
companions darkled all
around her like a flock of
bats.

This maiden, whose beauty
was beyond words for me to
praise, came stepping
forward. Seating herself
beneath the proffered wine-goblet,
she quaffed it.

Then she made her way
towards the side of the
hearth,

brought forth her
little shaman's drumstick,
and began to beat with

e-shitaiki,
tapai shinotcha
e-raun-kuchi
kamui noye
hawash hike
tap orowano
shinotcha etok
a-ekot-ekot,
anakki korka
e-okok hawe
oar isam.
ine-rokpe-kusu
e-kash-kamuye
oshitchiu kusu
hawash nankora
a-eramishikari
tusu utur
ko-sampe murse
ko-sampe toranne
ki rok aine,
tusu orushpe
chish turano
e-isoitak hawe
ene okahi,
“inkar-kusu

it against the hearth-frame.
 The subtle melodies
 of a song issued forth
 from deep down in her
 throat.

After this, wherever
 the song went, it would
 continue to seek me out, 1)
 but there were no signs
 that I was caught by it.

Words would not suffice to
 describe how very powerful
 were her tutelary deities.

From time to time during
 her trance, she would
 faint away, she would swoon.

Then she began to speak
 the prophecy tearfully, and
 the tidings she spoke were
 these:

“How now, oh, my brothers,

1) The first-person speaker in this epic is the youthful hero, Poi-yaunpe. He has voyaged alone across the sea to the island Repui-shir, where his enemies, the villagers of Kanasantá, are celebrating a drinking feast. Arriving when the feast is at its height, he conceals himself and is spying on his enemies during their feast.

a-yup utari
utar orokehe
itak-an chiki
echi-nu katu
ene okahi,
saure kunip
par-etok orke
ko-yai kar katu
oar somo-ne.
neun ne ruwe
-ne nankora,
yaunkur moshir
moshit topkashi
orowano
uran ruika
ek ru-konna
mak-natara.
uran ruika
tan a-kor kotan
kotan tapukashi
chi-e-omare,
ruika kata
kane kesorap
urar-ko-noipa

herken to me ! What
I have to say is this.

The events which are
about to come to pass
promise to be no
trifling matters.

Oh what may this be?
From over the land
of the mainlanders, 1)

a bridge of mist is
seen clearly to be
coming hither.

The bridge of mist
stops now, hovering
above this our
native homeland.

Atop the bridge
there is a golden

kesorap, 2) enveloped in

1) Hokkaido is called *Yaunkur moshir*, "land of the mainlanders," in distinction from the "land of islanders," *repunkur moshir*, *repun moshir*, which is the traditional homeland of their enemies. The name of the hero, *Poi-ya-unpe*, means "Young Mainlander."

2) *kesorap*, a fabulous bird sometimes identified with peacock.

u-ra-ko-chuppa
ki kane kor
senne oheuke
tan a-kor kotan
attom sama
chi-e-omare
arki pekor
yainu-an kor
e-un terukehi
a-erampeutek
tu-mau sermaka
re-mau sermaka
tusu kushpare
a-ki rok ainu
inkar-an ruwe
ene okahi,
atui-so kata
pon repun-kamui
shik-tum-konna
chai-natara.
ashpe sut-kan
pecha pecha
ki kane kor
senne oheuke
tan a-kor kotan
attom sama
chi-e-omare
arki pekor

mist. Flapping his
 wings together, he seems
 to be coming hither,
 heading unswervingly
 towards this our native
 homeland, but now he
 disappears, I know not
 whither.

Piercing with my wizardry
 behind the shadows,
 behind the shades,
 I continue to look,
 and this is what
 I now behold.
 On the face of the ocean
 is a little grampus,
 blinking his eyes
 wide open and
 splashing the water
 against the base of
 his dorsal fin.
 He seems to be
 coming hither, heading
 unswervingly towards
 this our native homeland,
 but now he disappears,

yainu-an kor
e-un-terkehi
a-erampeutek,
tampe kusu
tu-mau sermaka
re-mau sermaka
a-ki rok aine
san-ota kata
kane pon-horkeu
san-ota kata
chi-o-ush-kar
shiktum-konna
kem-rit oshma
ki kane wa
tan a-kot chashu
nukan ru-konna
chai-natara
ki yak a-ramu,
e-un-terkehi
a-erampeutek
tampe kusu
tu-mau sermaka
re-mau sermaka
ko-tusu yupu
a-ki rok aine
neun ne ruwe
ne nankora,
rorun-puyar pok
yaunkur urar
ko-e-rachitke,

I know not whither. =

Thus, I peer behind the
 shadows, behind the
 shades, and now, on
 the sanday beach there
 is a little golden
 wolf standing there,

his eyes bloodshot
 with streaks of blood.
 He seems to be staring,
 with his eyes blinking
 wide open, towards
 this our native castle,
 but now he disappears,
 I know not whither.

Thus, I strengthen
 my trance, peering
 behind the shadows,
 behind the shades,
 Now, what may this be?

Beneath the sacred
 eastern window there
 hovers the mist of

ko-oyamokte
a-ki kusu
ka-urat-chari
a-ki rok awa
puyar pokta
pon kimunpe
chinoikusuh
chiure, kane,
pokna shikitene
kanna notkewe
chi-e-kasure,
kanna shikite
pokna notkewe
chi-e-kasure
nkan ru-ko
chai-natara
ki kane wa
oka yak a-ramu
e-un terkehi
a-erampeutek
ko-oyamokte
a-ki wa kusu
tu-mau sermaka
re-mau sermaka
tusu kushpare
a-ki rok aine
somo neppo
a-ekan pakno
iku-so kurka
chi-patu-atu

a mainlander.
 Thinking this strange,
 I scatter the mist.
 When I do so, beneath
 the window there
 stands a young bear cub,
 twisting himself as if
 to pounce.
 His lower fangs are
 jutting out beyond
 his upper jaw,
 and his upper fangs
 are jutting out beyond
 his lower jaw,
 and he seems to be
 staring with his eyes
 blinking wide open.
 But now he disappears,
 I know not whither.

Thinking this strange,
 I pierce with my wizardry
 behind the shadows,
 behind the shades.
 Oh never would I
 have expected such
 a thing!
 The assembled guests
 at the feast are
 seized with wild agitation,

wen-tumi ran
uko-hopuni
ki rok aine
iku-so ka wano
a-yup utari
shinen poka
onun-posope anak
repunkur anak
shinep poka
shiknup anak
isam-kotomno
a-e-sanniyo
kihi anakne
saure kunip
por-etok orke
ko-yai kar katu
oar-somo ne
ki kotomno
a-e-sanniyo."

secor okaipe
pon-menoko
chish turano
tusu orushpe
e-iso-itak

As the story goes on after this, each one of the prophecies contained in the prophetic song of the young shamaness, the of Lady Kanesanta (Kanesanta=un-mat), comes true. In this manner, a shamaness will be able to go

and fierce fighting
 breaks out on all sides!
 It seems to me
 that not even one
 of my brothers
 here at this very feast
 will even barely escape,
 and that not even one
 of the islanders here
 will survive.

Thus, methinks, this
 portends that the
 events which are about
 to come to pass will be
 no trifling matters."

Thus did the young maiden
 tearfully utter her prophecies. 1)

1) Unpublished manuscript of *kutune shirka*, v. 2, p. 288-295.

into a trance and witness clearly things that are occurring in distant places or predict in detail events which are yet to happen. All of these matters will appear vividly and concretely to her in her ecstatic trance state. This is the reason why these mysterious shamanic powers were feared and believed in so religiously.

This is not a phenomenon confined to the Ainu alone. As is evident in the case of the god Apollo in the temple of Delphi in ancient Greece, many peoples in the primitive stage attributed great authority to the utterances of prophets and oracles, and it is probable that among all of these peoples prophecies took the form of songs and were phrased in verse. It is undoubtedly true that prophets and their utterances once played a role in the social life of these primitive peoples far beyond anything which we are able to imagine today.

Transmission of Prophetic Songs of Shamanesses.

Such *tusu-shinotcha*, prophetic songs of shamanesses, were normally pronounced on a single occasion, after which they would naturally be forgotten in many cases. Nevertheless, some of them were regarded as being so important for the subsequent life of the community that it was held to be essential for the prophecies, which had gained popular sympathy and support, to be remembered and transmitted from mouth to mouth.

In this connection, Dr. Kindaichi, in a chapter devoted to Ainu songs and the songs of the *Manyōshū* in his book *Ainu bungaku*, gives an extremely lucid exposition of the point which I wish to make. In Dr. Kindaichi's words,

“..... in ancient society, since there is little development of the individual personality, even words which are pronounced in a trance state will remain accessible to all, not straying very far from the limits imposed by the beliefs and the normal mental processes predominant within the society in general. Therefore, in general, such revelations may reasonably be regarded as typical of the mentality. It is precisely for this reason also that the populace of such a society will be able to accept these utterances unreservedly. Furthermore, the fact that a trance state was attained would mean that somewhat superior ideas, ideas which could not possibly be arrived at in the normal state of

consciousness, would naturally come flowing forth, and for this reason the populace would tend to be struck with awe at such utterances, convinced that they were the words of the gods. It is undoubtedly for this reason that these utterances were so highly revered and were endowed with a potency which caused them to be transmitted." 1)

Shaman Songs Are the Beginnings of Ainu Literature.

The prophetic songs of shamanesses (*tusu-shinotcha*) are precisely such primitive songs as Dr. Kindaichi describes, constituting the matrix out of which the Ainu epics originated. It is my belief that they gave birth to innumerable groups of epics, gave a mighty impetus to the development of lyric poetry, and also finally resulted in the evolution of prose literature. Although this theory may possibly overemphasize their importance, I am confident that this can be clearly proved at least with respect to the Ainu songs, that is, the genres of narrative and lyrical poetry, particularly the representative type of Ainu literature -- the god-songs (*kamui-yukar*), the sacred epics (*oina*), and the heroic (*yukar*).

This proposition has been argued out fully by Dr. Kindaichi in many of his works, such as *Ainu jojishi Yūkara no kenkyū*, *Ainu bungaku*, and *Ainu no kenkyū*. D. Chiri, a disciple of Dr. Kindaichi, has also expressed his support for this theory in various writings, such as his book *Ainu bungaku* and his article "Ainu no shinyō" (The Ainu god-songs) in the journal *Hoppō bunka kenkyū hōkoku*.²) On the basis of my own results after many years of work in collecting and studying Ainu literature, I also have come to be convinced that this theory is correct.

1) Kindaichi, *Ainubungaku* (1934), p. 169-170.

2) Chiri, Mashiho, "Ainuno shinyō," in *Hoppō bunka kenkyū hōkoku* (Studies from the Research Institute for Northern Culture, Hokkaido University), No. 9 (March, 1954), p. 1-78.