

Shaman Tsuchi-Hiko's Life Story: Nightmare of Civilization in Prehistoric Japan

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<Shaman Tsuchi-Hiko's Life Story>

☐☐Nightmare of Civilization in Prehistoric Japan☐☐

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I: King's Tomb

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They say in the remotest antiquity of Japanese Archipelago the first kings appeared as the sons of the supreme Sun Goddess. Those kings were said to have descended from Heaven, half god, half human, and made huge campaign to conquer all the provinces, annihilating all the 'rebellious savages' to establish one mighty Empire, so goes the legend. They were called Emperors after subjugation of those 'savages and barbarians'. We have many similar myths of ancient conquest all over the world, so that in many cases only the specific location can indicate the regional identity of the imperial lineage. As to ancient Japan the stage of this mythic descent was set on the highest peak of Takachiho in Southern Kyushu. The story was documented in the oldest book of Japan, Kojiki, or the Records of *Ancient Matters*, compiled in the imperial court in the beginning of the 8th century. As the compilation was declared, in its preface, to be based upon oral myths and legends it is certain that this specific story of god-son's descent went back at least several centuries earlier.

In fact archeological as well as historical evidences tell us that Emperors did appear in ancient Japan, not in Takachiho, nor in Kyushu, but in more central part of Japan called Yamato (today's Kinki Region including Nara and Kyoto as its centers). Going back further, like running a video documentary in reverse, we notice Emperors disappearing from the stage, provincial kings emerging, not only in central Japan but in most part of the western Japan including Kyushu and Takachiho. And further? Kings disappear; instead more egalitarian, more heroic shaman-chieftains appear as protectors of communal life. Thus we leave gradually the Japanese history proper and reach the substratum of prehistoric-anthropologic shamanism which had pan-Asiatic as well as regional-Japanese traits (about this discrepancy, confer Eliade's description of Japanese shamanism in his masterpiece). This backward process of de-centralization and emergence of egalitarian community is condensed most vividly in the decrease of the size of tomb of the rulers. The tombs of the first Emperors in Japan were the most grandiose ones in the ancient world as far as the scale were concerned (they are comparable with Egyptian pyramids as to the mass of artificial construction). The preceding kings' tombs were fairly big but not so incredibly gigantic; and finally chieftains' tombs were almost the same with the co-villager's whom he gave advice and led the way through difficult times.

Like the descent myths of the absolute rulers from Heaven, this process of de-centralization backwards is fairly general all over the world. The social evolution took place more or less in the same manner, starting from egalitarian chieftain-shamans through strong kings and finally reaching to the strongest rulers called Emperors. Regional specialty appeared as nuances of this general process of one-way centralization and emergence of mighty systems which were called 'Civilization' proudly and threateningly in most cases.

As we modern people are becoming more and more suspicious about the humaneness of 'Civilization' in general, we are not so much interested in rather gaudy, self-satisfactory rhetoric and ideology of each 'Civilization'; instead our interest has begun to turn to its roots, to the statu nascendi of this whole process of alienation and suppression; for example in ancient Japan.

To what stage of this whole process should we allocate the ubiquitous beginning of 'Civilization'? To shaman-chieftain? To contending kings? Or to the Emperors as ultimate conquerors?

Civilization consists essentially in systems. Shaman-Chieftains had their own systems to be sure; like origin myths, well-organized kinship, common work of villagers and rituals led by them as 'counselors' of the commoners and so on; but all the social norms were very sporadic, egalitarian and not suppressive at all; that is to say, they were not 'civilized' at all but very 'savage' from the viewpoint of the full-fledged Civilization. Then what about kings? Provincial kings had their own systems certainly; like 'noble' lineage, defense and offence organization, hierarchical division of labor and so forth; but all the social regulations were very primitive and mere conglomerate; they were very 'barbarous' from the viewpoint of the full-scale Civilization. In comparison to these predecessors, Emperors realized, materialized full-fledged, full-scale Civilization on earth for the first time in mankind history, for they had accomplished 'System' already; with palaces, prisons and garrisons as hard-ware, with tax-system and general conscription (proclaimed in Japan as early as in the 8th century A.D.) as soft-ware. They had strong means of exploitation and suppression; they could regard the commoners as 'state-slaves'; therefore they were the first representatives of full-fledged 'Civilization' alias general exploitation and, in extreme cases, immolation by System.

What is Japanese specialty then? What is innate in the specific Japanese traits of this general process toward most dire realization of ancient 'Civilization'?

We can investigate this problem scientifically, archeologically.

Or we can simulate the process as a sort of imaginative experiment, mobilizing our own empathy,

that is, sympathy as well as antipathy.

If we choose the latter path we better visit first and foremost the old shrine at the foot of Mount Takachiho. Standing there we depict in our imagination what it looked like this transition of tribal society, through many chiefdom-kingdoms to mighty Empire in ancient Japan.

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There is mountain, forest, river and over the river the sea before our eyes. Therefore there was mountain, forest, river and over the river the sea before their eyes. The Takachiho Tribe might have been divided into interrelated Clans as was the case in many tribal society; they were living side by side, shoulder to shoulder, peacefully cohabiting according to their niche of living; say Wolf Clan for forest, Deer and Crane Clans for the riverside and field, and Snake Clan for the coast. As they were half hunter-gatherers and half primitive farmers (cultivation of walnut trees mostly), the most fertile location was riverside and field, so that Deer and Crane Clans formed the most advanced community of intermarriage-village in oval forms, calling themselves as Deer-Crane Clan (like Bororo Tribe in Amazon documented by Claude Lévi-Strauss in his unforgettable monograph). But the speed and stimulus of social evolution was shifting in the course of time from riverside to sea coast, for primitive trade and exchange of information began sooner or later on the sea coast inhabited by the Snakes; they would become richer and wiser fairly rapidly. They would be the first people to introduce rice cultivation someday, getting the seeds from the wrecked cargo ships from abroad, from Okinawa, from Formosa and finally from the Continent. But the time we are now simulating to get some clear notion of the general process of Japanese prehistory is not that advanced; say we are now between the second and the first millennium BC which is called 'Late Jomon Era' in archeological terms. They are planting still mainly walnut trees on riverside, and experimenting only partly the swidden agriculture with taro and dry-land rice; still we can notice the deviation of tribal culture in these three Clans; Wolves in the forest are brave, proud conservatives, for they preserve the hunter-gatherer's life style fairly purely; Deer-Cranes are sort of liberal centrists, for they are experimenting new life style with walnuts cultivation, while Snakes on the coast are adventurous, cunning civilisationists and evolutionists, for they are the first to taste the lucrative business of exchange and cheat. We can anticipate that the first kings would appear somehow from their offspring; and then the Emperor would descend from heaven to earth in the dreams of their kings, as splendid dream of just only one king and nightmares to the rest...

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But to say you the sheer truth, this simulation is quite unsatisfactory and one-sided, for the stimulus of Civilization came not only as crop seeds and farming tools, but as know-how for these seeds and tools, i.e. as agriculture itself, and ultimately the base of this know-how, the politico-economic system based upon agricultural production. Was that all? Not in the least. For behind this civilizational know-how, they heard the rumors of strong kings and mighty emperors who were said to have monopolized all the advanced tools and nice seeds. These rumors might have caused their nightmares, for they were saying at the same time that the kings and emperors came to the 'savage villages' as mighty, ruthless conquerors, burnt down the houses, killed tribesmen, selecting several as slaves to make them human sacrifice for 'kings' tombs' in the Capital.

Today we know that in this nightmarish rumor there is some scientific-historical core, for the 'Civilization of the Central Plain' had been practicing this drastic ethnic cleansing, sheer holocaust of the 'savages' and human sacrifice for the kings tombs since 17th century BC or thereabouts,

while at that time the ancestors of these Wolves, Deer-Cranes and Snakes were living as 'savage' hunter-gatherers quite egalitarian and peacefully without kings and emperors, without palace, prison and garrison, without tax-system and conscription-enrollment, without anything 'civilizational'. Still rumor of the rumors, despite their slow pace of dissemination, must have reached them in the end with enigmatic bronze tools or in the form of very delicious sweets, as the gifts of trading foreigners for instance. Using this extremely sharp bronze knife, munching these delicious sweets, our Japanese ancestors experienced the 'Dialectics of Civilization' as it was, for they could not forget the nightmarish rumor of holocaust and human sacrifice for kings' tombs. Without having kings among themselves, they experienced in dreamlike simulation stimulated by the exchange of 'information' what it meant to be 'savage' beside mighty 'Civilization of the Central Plain'.

This time our simulation must be fairly accurate; this discrepancy between center and periphery of epidemic pressure of Civilization is the last, indispensable piece of sound simulation in the pan-Asiatic context of prehistory. The people in the Central Plain experienced their Civilization as 'Our Civilization of the Central Plain', as de facto real time process, annihilating the 'savages' around them as total aliens, as quasi non-human from their standpoint; ideologically, materially. Thus they erased totally their collective memory of hunter-gatherers, while our Japanese counterparts experienced or rather anticipated their hybrid 'Civilization' as 'Their Civilization coming to Us' intermingled with dire presentiment of 'Our possible extinction as the Savages'.

The archeology as well as Japanese history in concise textbook form teaches us that it was not so; the Japanese were not extinguished fortunately as innumerable 'savages' around Central Plain suffered this drastic disappearance from the surface of the earth. Instead they became themselves fairly 'civilized' with many, too many kings and emperors.

Were they then mere imitators and provincial copies of mighty Emperors of the Central Plain?

Not in the least.

For the kings and Emperors in ancient Japan were half-savage kings and half-barbarous Emperors in comparison to the full-fledged, pure kings and Emperors in the Central Plain. Viewed from this general standpoint of civilizational process of necessary dissemination from center to periphery, they were so to speak hybrid rulers. They had had long, long nightmares of annihilation and 'cleansing'; therefore their tombs, despite its gigantic scale, did not practice human sacrifice of the slaves as in the Continent; instead they put offerings of naïve-comical clay figures around the imperial cemetery; these clay puppets were called 'Haniwa' meant to be simulated animal and human sacrifices. Interesting thing is that their empathy seemed to be on the side of these primitive animals and humans, not very much on the side of too mighty Emperors in the tombs, perhaps because they knew they were still half savages, half barbarians and had narrowly escaped to be annihilated by the 'Civilization'.

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Some civilizations had no nightmares; for they were nightmares themselves.

Some civilizations had nightmares; for they survived as savages, as barbarians.

We know that the Japanese Civilization in its initiatory stage was exactly the latter type.

Let's simulate now the first arrival of this nightmare of 'Civilization' on Takachiho, where ancient tribe of Wolf, Deer-Crane and Snake were living peacefully side by side, without palace, prison and

kings. Put our date somewhere around 11th century BC at the time when the 'Revolution of Name Change' was taking place in the Continent, from Yin dynasty to Zhou kings. The gloomy atmosphere in the Central Plain might have reached, on the long relay-chain of the rumors of the traders, to the collective psyche of Takachiho Tribe; they had nightmares of kings, kings' tombs and Emperors without having kings, kings' tombs and Emperors yet. Dream, especially nightmare is always precursor of existence; in this case also.

One day, the chieftain of Deer-Crane Clan had a heavy nightmare; in which the 'Son of the Heaven' descends on the highest peak of Takachiho, holding a bronze spear of the Continent, declaring that he is Emperor dispatched from the 'Central Plain' and they 'savages' are all his slaves.

The good Chief cried out in his sleep and woke up. The next day he went to the tribe's shrine, where the 'Great Shaman' was worshiped in the form of splendid Jomon Pottery of flaring decorations.

He put straw mat before the small shrine and fasted till he could 'communicate with Great Shaman'. In the seventh day of his fast, he fell into deep sleep and met the Shaman in his dream who told the following story.

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I was born and raised as a shepherd boy caring only for the herd of dear sheep every day. My home was in the far North of the Continent with hills, fields and forests. Good place for hawk hunting and cattle-breeding. We were living for generations there very peacefully and in plenty. I was the eldest son of a chief of a small tribe, but there was neither special hierarchy nor privilege for chief and chief's family; I was doing everything with my fellow shepherds, for we were quite equal among us. The chief's responsibility was very big; he organized common works such as building assembly cottages; he accepted foreigners and negotiated carefully with them and so on; the reward was not material but spiritual; good reputation, honor, good feeling to be serviceable to our fellow-villagers. Such spiritual satisfaction sufficed totally to be a good chief among us. It was fairly the same as here in Takachiho. We had chiefs, shamans and commoners; we had no kings, nor palaces nor soldiers. You have chiefs, shamans and commoners; you have no kings, nor palaces nor soldiers.

At that time I had only two prospects for my life; either to be a chief like my good father or to be a good counselor; that is, to be a good shaman. I couldn't decide what would be the right path of my life, for I was only a little boy; still I liked our shaman very much and got the first initiation of the Wind God from him. I was nine years old then.

My life changed drastically, severely, when I was twelve; my village was attacked by the so-called 'civilized' men from the south. It was ransacked and destroyed totally by the strong army of the Great Kings of Yin. They killed everybody in the village except boys and girls. I was captured and brought to the big city surrounded by tall, thick walls. It had rectangular form with one big gate on each side and was called 'Capital of Heaven'. I served as a slave in one rich mandarin's mansion. Very many 'slaves' were working there to maintain huge household; making utensils, doing farming work, writing characters on the small sticks of bamboo, serving meals for the master and his family and so on. I did all the works imaginable...

I befriended one old cook. He cared for me very much, instructing the knack of the works, giving sweets to me stealthily on festivals and so on. One day this slave servant committed a fatal mistake in dining room; he put salt instead of sweet powder they called sugar in the tea of master's favorite boy who vomited and cried. He was sentenced to hundred whiplashes in the courtyard. He was an

old sickly man and he couldn't stand it; everybody saw he was dying. I rushed to the hangman-slave and was struck down to the ground. When I came to myself the old man was already dead, spouting blood from his mouth. I was sentenced to death; but not immediately, for I was selected to become one of the 'Slaves of the Beyond'"

This queer service is somewhat related to your nightmare, o Chief of Deer-Crane. You saw in your dream 'Emperor of the Central Plain' coming from heaven to the peak of Goddess Takachiho, saying you all are 'savages' and his slaves. In like manner the kings in the Central Plain declared that Heaven, Earth and Underground were all theirs, not ours. They knew nothing about Great Mother who leniently accepts all the souls of the ancestors in her bosom; instead they built huge tombs as their underground palace. Every King used to build his own Tomb with huge cost as soon as he was enthroned. In a sense they were dying before they began to live properly... Moreover; they committed ferocious atrocity to fellow mankind; they brought the 'slaves' to this 'palace'; that is, they buried these slaves alive for the service in those underground mansions. The chosen 'Slaves of the Beyond' were suffocated and died there to serve the kings in their selfish afterlife. And I was determined to be one of them.

The point is; we should not be killed; we should not be stubbed, cut or hanged; they let us die as we are, for they needed us, they needed our wholesome body in their 'Beyond' as slaves, that is, in their afterlife in the huge underground palace. You say they should be punished by the spirits and gods for this unimaginable cruelty, selfishness and stupidity? To say you the truth, they needed neither spirits nor gods anymore; for they called themselves gods, or at least 'Sons of the Heaven'. They handled us like mere tools for their petty pleasure; that's all. They had invented most meticulous manual for this savage usage of fellow mankind and called it 'History' and 'Civilization of the Central Plain'. They were rather proud that they needed no spirits and no gods anymore; not like us, not like you.

I was totally stunned and lost my words when I was chosen to be a human sacrifice, knowing I was destined to be buried alive in their petty 'Beyond'. But to say you the truth, it was not their special fault; this savagery and pettiness of the superrich, lazy kings. Because I heard from my fellow slaves that there were several extremely rich countries in the far west, beyond deserts and mountains. There was one big City between two great Rivers almost as big as the Yellow River or the Yangtze River. They said they had slaves in every rich house there; they let the slaves die just the kings in the 'Central Plain' in their tombs; they were making most ferocious wars among themselves which again was the same with the kings in the 'Central Plain'.

These fellow slaves determined for the 'Slaves in the Beyond' like me were very clever guys with big nose and whitish skins; some had blue eyes like spirits in fairy tales. They said they came from far, far west beyond deserts, plains and mountains. They were quite like us in my home country; good-hearted, jolly shepherds and hunters. They said they were captured by thickly bearded people from the nearby rich country and sold as slaves to that big City between two rivers. Then the 'gift-and-exchange' men who rode the special animal with big hump on the back called 'camel' got them, by giving special gifts made of lump of metal to their masters; this gift was very common among them and called 'money'. These men brought them to the 'Central Plain' and challenged the people there by giving these blue-eyed slaves, so the people had to challenge back with this money to avoid their curse. These guys laughed and said; "We traveled all over the world and know the vast surface of the earth but only from the cage, only with chain, only as slaves; we'll know how the underworld looks like and the rest of it, again as slaves of the 'Beyond' !"

They were very nice, witty guys. We became close friends. Then the first idea came to my mind... How about running away from the Tomb with those nice, brave guys from far West? If only it were feasible...

Interesting thing was that I made friends with those blue-eyed shepherds who were regarded as 'total savages' even among us slaves, whereas I was not on so good terms with other slaves who were mainly from farmer's villages, for they mostly despise me as 'mere shepherd boy' knowing nothing about the 'rich' life in farming village. I had noticed already that the less the scale of village, the more humane the villagers; the more advanced a life of the villagers, the less kind, generous, friendly, and honorable they became. I observed this difference in the 'Great Capital of Heaven' when I was a young slave boy. My master had more than five hundred slaves, for he was a 'mandarin', the big man in the court who used to attend many special assemblies of the kings. I saw great many differences among the slaves according to where they were captured by the mighty army of the kings. I studied people's character and mental set there in the Capital, I dare say, rather widely and deeply. I gravitated toward more naïve and generous people like that old cook (he came from neighboring country of my home). Thus, when I was chosen to the slave of the 'Beyond', I befriended that jolly band of the blue eyed shepherds; there were seven of them and all were young, fit and nimble.

We were kept in single cell to prevent our escape; but every afternoon we were allowed to do our 'exercise' together to keep our physical fitness; that was required for the future 'service in the Beyond'. It was really an irony of destiny; we lived there 'like kings'; eating delicious foods, drinking everything from wine (well it's difficult to explain, let's pass it), to fruit juice, and tea and tea every day, to expel every kind of disease from our body, for they were anxious to avoid all the diseases in their clean, healthy Beyond; that is to say, they were extremely keen to maintain our health and physical fitness. We were locked up there for full ten years in this paradisiac laziness. The King for whom we were selected to 'serve' in his afterlife was still quite young, although he had begun already the construction of his huge Tomb just after he had been crowned. As I said, that was not exceptional.

We, human sacrifice for the 'King's Tomb', were twenty in all; we waited and waited; eating, drinking, taking bath more often than not and playing once a day in a courtyard. This courtyard was surrounded by tall walls and parapets where the royal guards were going round day and night. So there was no chance of escaping thence. Prison cells were also heavily guarded. During our exercise in the courtyard we 'Close Eight' (so they called us) were playing mostly with small pebbles we contrived to find in the nook. We shepherds are very good at throwing stones by hands as well as by slings. Funny thing was that they, advanced, civilized morons of the 'Central Plain' didn't know how to throw stones at all and perhaps therefore they had no idea how dexterous we shepherds were at such things. That figures, for we had to deal with wolves to protect our sheep in our home. We 'Close Eight' were amazed that one day prison guards gave us deliberately stout leather belts. We all got one for each. Why? Because 'leather' and 'life' have the same sound in their tongue; it was a vicious pan indeed; they wanted longevity for us! Naturally till we fulfill the final 'service', that wholesome suffocation... But because of this nonsensical pan and their ignorance of our custom, our most familiar weapon was given to us. When we got this leather belt-sling, one blue-eyed friend, who was called 'Ladder' because of his extreme height, asked me in prison courtyard, weighing small pebbles in his palm:

"Little Prince (that was my nickname, for my family was on the line of chieftains for generations), do you think we can kill them?"

Four guards were making their round on the high wall which was thrice as high as the average man.

"We can hit and injure them to be sure but we cannot kill them; the distance is too great, the pebbles too small. Besides what can we do afterwards? We'll be locked up here still; they'll summon other soldiers and kill all of us shooting arrows and spears from the parapet."

The others joined to our secret conversation. Among them there was a handsome youth nicknamed 'Lady Killer', for he had had many girlfriends among wives and courtesans when he served as a court slave. He was a very clever and trustworthy fellow despite this small defect of frivolity. He said nonchalantly to us:

"I think we can get at least five lethal stones each; I have one already."

He showed us the inside of his clothes; there was a small pocket and we saw a round, hard stone in it. It was enough to kill a fierce wolf, to say nothing of a man. He said he got it by dint of digging secretly the earth underneath the brick of his cell by small wooden stick we got abundantly. They used these sticks to 'know the good and bad fortunes'; we said we wanted to know our fortune, so they gave us quite humanely these sticks and box, although there could be no other fortune for us poor slaves than to be suffocated in the underground palace. He said under the brick there was sand just like on the shore and many pebbles were buried there just as this one. As to his secret pocket, he got the needle, yarn and patch of the cloth from his former 'mistress' in the court who visited him from time to time. Her rank was so high that the guards could do nothing but to allow secret interviews; he promised to give us all these materials to make hidden pockets.

In less than a month we were fully armed; we had good sling; we had five stones each; that meant we could cope up with 30 to 40 men-wolves if such necessity would present itself. The prison was guarded by thousands of the 'Royal Army'. To attack them directly was naturally out of the question; still this feeling of being well-armed gave us a tremendous stimulus to find any chance of escape.

And then, all of a sudden out of a dear blue sky, as they say, good news and bad news cropped up at the same time in the form of three new prisoners.

They said they were destined to 'serve' King's eighth mistress who died quite suddenly; she was too young to have her own Tomb; so she was buried in provisory small chamber attached to the King's great Tomb that was already completed several years ago. The six slaves were destined to go there through the great Tomb; but the makeshift chamber collapsed suddenly burying not only the slaves but priests and mandarins also who were partaking in the ceremony. Three were saved and joined us to 'serve' for the second time. This time not for the same Queen; but for her husband, for 'our' King himself. Bad news was that they got the wind of approaching 'service'; namely our King was said to be dying exactly by the shock of this loss of his 'most beloved' mistress; 'most beloved' but the eighth nonetheless.

"Within a month you have good chance to greet His Royal Highness personally and mug his blue bloated face as you like, if only you have enough guts to do so just before your sacred death."

One man in this survived band said with ironical sneer. He was very cynical old slave from some southern coastal aria called Yue. Good news was that the same old man, who was called 'Old Turtle' because of his tattooed turtle on the right upper arm, could narrate us the ritual of the Royal Interment Ceremony very minutely. We 'Close Eight' were absorbed in what he was describing. He seemed to have noticed we had formed separate group among prisoner-slaves and abruptly cut off his narration. Next day he deliberately came to us, deserting his friends, and we began secret discussion in the corner of the courtyard putting two of us as sentinel to prevent interference and eavesdropping.

"I think I noticed what you guys were thinking during my narration yesterday," the old man grinned.

"O really? I wonder what we were dreaming of," that handsome 'Lady Killer' said quite

nonchalantly, chewing the tip of the grass stalk.

"I noticed you were dreaming of the same thing I was dreaming of during that procession through the Capital and to the suburbs."

"I see," 'Lady Killer' chuckled; "You were dreaming naturally of the delicious dish of your home, weren't you? When I heard you were from that nice country Yue, I was quite certain we have the same opinion about the exquisite cuisine of the Yue-Xia turtle soup with chopped sea-weeds. Naturally it must be spiced by three year old rotten egg. Oh, that was the paradise on earth! I'll never forget that moment, crisp fresh meat intermingling with subtle rottenness of the eggs!" he half shut his eyes, dreaming of some rotten crap.

"Oh, you have tasted it! That's our pride; flower of our culture. As you tasted it, you are already my countryman, my relative!" the old man brightened up suddenly, quite throwing off his habitual sarcasm.

"Yes, I tasted it with my mistress who came from Zhou district. From her tale I thought it would be a really nice place for shepherds like us; this west province of Zhou. But she added that the food there is awful, rather monotonous and corny, so she had been longing for the abundant, delicious cuisine in the Capital from her childhood, so she said. Finally she abandoned good Kings with bad foods and converted to bad Kings with excellent foods, making a debut as a Dancer in this Capital."

"That diplomatic band of Dancers and Singers from Zhou, isn't it? I've heard of it. They say that wise man 'the Count of the West' is sending them to the brutal Kings in Capital here, to show his obedience diplomatically but in reality in order to gain time for the preparation of the final War. They are said to be most resolute in their determination to 'change the name of dynasty'. Your mistress was one of them, I suppose?"

"Yes, she belonged to the trained performers."

"Oh, then she must have been a dish!"

"Well, quite pretty, to be sure. Still I have to say for my taste her feet were a bit too big and flat, very apt for stamp the corn to separate the husks, perhaps because I was too much pampered by the frail small feet with nice silk sandals of the court ladies. But I was not that corrupt to disgrace her good, simple character; on the contrary; although we ate together the best dishes from the cuisine of the court on our bed (she was very popular, you know, with pink silk gaze dance, stark naked under that gaudy film, to say you the truth – he chuckled here heartily...); but what we talked together was mostly about milking she-goats and cows, shearing sheep, helping the delivery of cows such things; oh yes, she was a quite nice girl. And I thought then, perhaps I could try the reverse path; abandoning these good foods with bad Kings, converting again to good Kings with bad foods like in my home country, although we had only good-hearted Chiefs, not kings and nobles. I thought I might try the sheep of Zhou how cute they are, if I get the chance I mean. And I think I finally got it now!"

"You got what? Got the chance? Chance of what?" the old man grinned, returning to his habitual sarcasm.

"Chance of escape, of course! Chance to live, chance to survive, chance to return to our beloved home, for I smell the loophole in the suburbs!" Lady Killer exclaimed playfully, "You saw something in the suburbs, didn't you? We smell it; just like that miserable turtle in your famous soup smells the rotten egg sauce! Speak up! We are all ears."

"All right. But you have to promise me first; you bet and stake whatever you have, if I let you show the 'chance', and the big one. Can you do that?"

We all swore that we would do anything if we got such big opportunity.

"Have you heard of Dog Burning Ceremony?" old man asked. We said no we never heard of it, except that 'Ladder', who said yes he saw it once in the suburbs of the Capital.

"Then you must have seen the setting and preparation?"

"Yes, it was on the riverbank, on the huge riverbank of that mighty Yellow River; there were many ships, punts and boats and huge crowd of spectator from everywhere."

"What was your master then, a mandarin of the court?"

"No, some priest, sort of shaman, I don't know exactly; but anyhow he presided over the ceremony with other officials and I had to help them."

"What have you seen on the day of Ceremony?"

"Well, first they made huge dog scarecrow out of straw. Very big one indeed; its height was twice as big as mine. They made two of them; one was painted white with rice powder; one was made black with soot of the ovens. They erected both on the shore of the river; and then put fire and burnt them, while chanting and dancing like madmen; that was it."

"And the rest of the Dogs after burning; I mean ashes of burnt straw; what did they do to that?"

"Well, that was the queerest thing I ever saw. My master shouted 'Now it's all yours, people!' and the throng rushed for the ashes. They groped, grasped and put it in their bowls, baskets and bags like real madmen; they fought each other very fiercely to get as much as they could; this useless ashes. Some were wounded, I saw also dead men who were carried away on the stretchers, relatives crying over them."

"That's it, friends! That's our chance!" the old man declared abruptly, cutting off the tale of the 'Ladder'. We were bewildered. Only Lady Killer grinned and said:

"I think I got it. Well, it's a good chance...really good one. But before going into detail, I have to ask you some questions, just to make it sure. I guess you had to make those Straw Dogs with other 'Servants in the Beyond' on the riverbank."

"Your guess is quite right; yes we made it there."

"How many guards were there during your work?"

"Thirty seven; I counted it, no possibility for six of us, besides we were separated from the crowd."

"And you were put in the wooden cage on the cart one by one, right? And they drew the carts through the boulevards of the Capital, didn't they? They wanted to show off the 'Love of the Mighty King to his beloved Queen' or something, although the Queen was only the seventh courtesan."

"No, she was the eighth," the old man corrected.

"She was the eighth, okay. How many were the guards during the procession, more than one thousand, I suppose?"

"No, not that much; they say only eight hundred sixty two; the court budget is tight in these days or King's love is diminishing rapidly after the 'Beloved' became stiff and stinky," the old man chuckled.

"Who are 'they' that counted the number of eight hundred sixty two of your funeral procession? Close friends, I suppose?"

"Well, not so close; mere chance acquaintance to say you the truth. One spectator shouted to us in our Yue dialect and I shouted back in the same tongue; we struck up sort of conversation in that way. It was almost another language in the North, so that no one in the guards could understand it, for they are northerners, all of them."

"How many are they, your acquaintance, or your acquaintance's acquaintance? How many?"

"Well, I don't know...I saw them just accidentally..." the old man smiled.

"C'mon I'm not that stupid," Lady Killer poked the side of the old man good-humoredly, "You Yue people have the best 'Guangxi' (relations) in the Capital, especially in the underworld; they are trustworthy and help each other. They are renowned for that. I envy them very much. If someone is entangled in troubles with the northerners, they come over to help their countrymen; every child knows that. Be a bit friendlier, will you? If we help you, your Yue people regard us as new Yue people, right?"

"That's right. You are our people, if you help me; I mean really help me."

"Then how many can you expect from your countrymen here to come and help you?"

"It depends. In our goddamn occasion of nice burial we had little time to be led from prison to the riverbank, and then from riverbank through the city to that goddamn Tomb on hills...it lasted just one cup of water-clock, that is, one third of the time from breakfast till lunch. If the procedure will be the same, we can mobilize perhaps fifty miscellaneous countrymen including girls and boys, by dint of shouting from our cage for help. That won't help us much though."

"Well then, if you could give them the sign of your second funeral the previous night, for anyway we'll have to be prepared with sensed bath and all and we'll know it'll be tomorrow. If we can send a sign in this goddamn night to your countrymen that it's tomorrow, how many can you ask to come?"

"But it's impossible to give them a sign; it's quite impossible! We are in prison and well-guarded you know," the old man protested.

"Okay, only just for the sake of argument. How many, in such imaginative case?" Lady Killer asked again.

"Well, in that case three hundred or more will join us and we'll have enough time for preparation of some tricks also. But you have to remember one thing; be it small, be it large, they cannot fight on the street to let us run away. Utmost they can only cause some confusion. You have to understand that they are common people without any training of professional fighting; besides they have their own dear life to protect. I have no right to put them in real danger; I can expect their help, but only clandestinely; you understand? They cannot fight for us and must remain

anonymous.”

“That means we on our side have to fight between riverbank and the carts which will be waiting for us. So you thought that day, am I right?”

“Yes, quite right. Can you do that? They are tough soldiers; very brutal ones with many years of training. The number will be around forty just like in our case.”

“How far is the distance, from riverbank to the carts?”

“Well, a bit more than a stone’s throw.”

“That depends who throws the stone,” Lady Killer laughed and went on.

“Are there lanes in-between? I mean between riverbank and the waiting procession, or there are only the boulevards beginning directly from the riverbank.”

“No, no boulevards. There are many lanes, for this area is a big town of fishers, therefore there is a lot of our countrymen there, for we are the best fishermen in the whole Continent. If only we get into the lanes, chasing soldiers would have quite a difficulty to catch us, at least for two cups or even three cups of water clock we can hide ourselves there safely.”

“That would be enough to wait for the real confusion in the riverbank?”

“Exactly! That’s the idea I got that day. I thought if only we can mug down those bastard soldiers and get into the lanes, waiting for the confusion of the festival...”

“After the confusion, can they borrow us transportation? By cart or by boat?”

“By boat definitely. That’s no problem for us, rivers and seas are our back gardens; ten days to the sea, twenty days to our country Yue, if the wind and weather are favorable. If not, we can settle and live as fisher on every coast. The provinces of this wretched kingdom are full of fugitives and slaves escaped from this goddam Capital. I have seen them; they are nice, kind people; they will help us with pleasure and invite us to live with them. If only we can get to the Delta of the Yellow River; we are safe and saved.”

“How about upstream, I mean in the direction of those good Kings of Zhou?”

“Well, it’s a bit difficult; but are you really going to Zhou? The soldiers here are preparing to ‘punish’ those good Kings of ‘Zhou’; at least so they are saying.”

“Oh, really, the bad guys are bullying the good guys? The old stuff,” Lady Killer laughed indifferently and went on.

“No, I was just thinking the possibility to go to Zhou first, to reshape us as good shepherds there and then hire some caravan through the desert and go nearer to our country. It’s only a wild dream naturally; we might go with you after all. But still just as a plan; is it feasible to go to Zhou?”

“Yes, you can do that. It takes a lot of time to be sure, for you go upstream and the guards of the boundary are cautious and watchful; but it is feasible; and I promise if you help me really, we’ll help you to go safely to Zhou, if that’ll be your final choice.”

“Okay, we’ll be thinking about that. There are only two questions left about this weird festival, for I find it better to know the background of the plan beforehand; all the more so, if the plan is the only plan we can afford, don’t you think so, brothers?” Lady Killer looked around us; till then we had been absorbed totally in their discussion; understanding only the fragments of what they were talking about; but we said yes we had to know all about the background; we said so unanimously.

“Good, then the first question; why did you have to participate in that stupid ceremony? For this guy Ladder took part in it but as a normal slave. Then the second question; what the hell is this all about; this burning the straw scarecrow and fighting each other so fiercely to get a morsel of useless ashes?”

“I think I can answer the two points in one breath, killing two birds with one stone, as they say. The aim of this ceremony is to drive away the evil spirits which requires our participation definitely. First they chant some incantation to invite all vicious spirits with coaxing, promising huge offerings so on and so forth. In reality it’s all fraud and cheat; they want to do nothing of the sort. They just want to induce the spirits of Wind to dwell a while in the body of these two Dogs, for they believe the spirits of Wind and dogs are good friends. That correspond partly to our belief by the way; Wind God was said to have been a good hunter; he was protector and patron of human hunters. He had two huge Dog-spirits as vassal-servants of his hunting. Kings came to our world in the meantime and Wind God was gone or dead, but the vassal spirits of winds remained; dissatisfied with the new rule of the ‘Kings’. Seeing their dangerous grudge against the kings’, underling-priests have arranged this stupid ceremony, so goes the legend, to lure the revolting wind spirits into their old friends, into Divine Dogs. After fraudulent invitation they tied them to the straw scarecrow by spells and incantations.

The vicious deeds of these old spirits, according to the court priests, are related mainly to the damage on the crops in the field. They say the spirits inhale deliberately the ‘wind of diseases’ into the plants so that they decay and perish; which would be the blunt revolt against the ‘Kings’, for the wealth and strength of the ‘Kings’ is based mainly on the good harvests in the field. Common people however seem to have another opinion. They lament the death of the Wind God and two Dogs; for them the spirits are good old wind spirits, who are cheated and perished before their eyes so miserably. Therefore they lament and want to bury the ashes. Well, they might not be that pious in the end, for there is another strong motivation for this burial. They believe if they respect the old spirits and bury them in their crop field; the spirits will in their turn promise to help you with good harvest; or at least stop their vengeful havoc of crop diseases. On that head there are many opinions, not only among learned official priests but also among common people themselves; some go so far as to say that the ashes are deserved lesson and warning for the vicious winds just like the rotten bodies on gallows; if you do us bad things, brace yourself, this will be your future destiny! That is the extreme ‘enlightenment’, naturally. But despite all the difference of the opinions they agree in one important point; be it lamentation, be it warning; to scatter these ashes on the field is thought to be essential for the good harvest. They are yearning for good harvest, for the Kings are taking away lions share from their crop; and this fat royal lion grows up bigger and bigger every year, demanding more and more avariciously.

As to our working there to prepare the straw Dogs is a settled matter. I know why you ask this point; you are afraid we were special and next time we go straight to the Tomb? Am I right? (Lady Killer nodded in the affirmative). Don’t worry; it is a fixed convention; the ‘Servants for the Beyond’ go every time to riverbank to make special Dogs; they are larger than that one you have witnessed (he nodded to Ladder), for we have to add our ‘vicious winds’ just before we die in the tombs; for we have to be ‘purified’ from our own viciousness! The hypocrisy and stupidity of the eunuchs in the court seems to have no limit at all! But thanks to this hypocrisy we’ve got big chance of salvation!”

He ended his explanation, interspersing sarcastic strictures on the 'bad guys in the rotten court' here and there. Now was the turn for Lady Killer to give an account to us what by 'plan' and 'chance' was meant.

Well, having heard all and checked it in our own minds, we found the plan to be an excellent one; the chance seemed fairly big enough, at least worthwhile to attempt and risk our lives.

First we would set to work for these huge straw Dogs, to inhale to the last breath of our grudge in it, our vicious will of vengeance and so on, which were said to transform into the 'slave wind spirits' on the spot, and bound to the straw by incantation. It was so conceived at least according to the official doctrine of the priests and mandarins. They would surround us and chant strong spells to cheat the emerging vicious wind spirits and lure them into the scarecrow Dogs we were making. Our chance is dependent on knocking down the guards and priests with our sling stones. We would do it as surprise attack at a predetermined sign; after that we would run for life, get mixed into the crowd, just before the dispatch squad from the procession guards could attack us. We would hide ourselves in the prepared spot in the fishermen's village a while till the next tumult began on the shore among common spectators to get that ashes; when we would notice it had started, we would run to the shore, get intermingled with the shouting, fighting crowd and get on the small boats secretly which would have been again prepared by the Yue fishermen. They would bring us to the middle of the river where we would change the boats to bigger ships and continue our escape.

After we agreed to this main plan, Lady Killer confided to the old man that he could arrange the interview with his high rank mistress and ask her to send message to the Yue people just in the evening of our preparation for the last 'service'.

"Probably I have to eat turtle soup with her as my last dear remembrance of our relationship on earth, I would say to her how sorry I am," he chuckled; "She'll endure this hard blow with big drops of tears on her beautiful cheeks, regretting such nice slave would not die in her Tomb but in that of the stupid King!"

The day came and all went well just as planned; only one thing cropped up as unexpected deviation. Having erected the huge White Dog and Black Dog on the shore, we began to go back to our carts, as the routine of the ceremony commanded. Walking and measuring the distance to the carts, we were eagerly waiting for the appointed sign from Lady Killer (we agreed he would imitate the bellowing of sheep which he, as good shepherd, could do very dexterously). Hardly had I noticed that he began to inhale a big breath to produce a nice sound when we heard tremendous cries and shouts behind us. Looking round hastily, we noticed something was emerging from the back of each Dog; very small, blue things began to fly pell-mell in the air.

"Wind Spirits! They are come, they'll attack us!" someone quite nearby in the throng shouted with all his might (afterwards I learnt from the old man that he was one of the Yue fishermen).

"They are furious, they want to burn us!" another voice around corner responded.

"Dogs are moving; Divine Dogs are moving, for they are furious, they want to attack us!"

Well, the Dogs were moving really; but not because they wanted to attack us; they were moving just because everybody there wanted to escape from the fury of the Wind God and pushed the legs of the straw Dogs.

"Wind God is come! Mighty God of the hunt is resurrected! He wants vengeance for all the sufferings!" several cries were heard pell-mell.

Till then all the crowd was running toward us, huge frock of people; farmers, fishers, merchants, slaves, officials, priests; even the officers and soldiers were running for their dear life. Just at this moment we heard the nice bellowing of human-sheep. We ran and ran; the Yue people were waiting for us in the corner of one lane; we even didn't have to use our sling stones. Any more than we waited in the hiding place for the confusion but went directly to the boats and set sail to the middle of the river where we got on board a bigger ship safely. From the deck of the ship, we recognized the divine Dogs standing still on the desolate shore; like true faithful vassals of the resurrected Wind God.

II: Heaven, Earth and Underworld

□

"That kills me!" said Lady Killer, chucking the dragonfly toy. It flew with nice tick-ticking noise and landed where helmsman was directing our ship.

We were safely on board the ship. The sailing on the vast Yellow River was nice and steady; wind was gentle, sky was azure blue. Putting the savage 'Capital of Heaven' already far behind us, we saw only hills, woods and small villages scattered here and there on both sides of the river.

"It's child's toy, isn't it?" I asked Old Turtle, who was sitting with his back leaning against the main mast, munching one leg of dried squid.

"Yes, in my country we make it for the new Year's celebration of the Wind God," he said. Lady Killer came up to us and joined our conversation:

"For which windy guy you mean? For the good hunter guy with those nice Divine Dogs or for the bad guy whose ashes only can bring good harvest? Are you contending against each other for crap ashes like those stupid people? Personally I don't like it, but you said you have already plenty of rice field in your country, right?" Lady Killer observed, holding his favorite 'child's toy' in his hand.

"Yes, we cultivate rice to be sure, but still we are half fisherman, half farmer; the good wind is far more important for the fishermen, so definitely we worship the good guy Wind God, for we are still fisherman and hunter in the bottom of our heart."

"You said you have scarce woods in your country though; you cut off the woods and make the crop field as everywhere in the Continent, don't you," Lady Killer asked further.

"Yes, we cut down the trees and burn the woods. It pains me to say that we cut off even the divine trees for faggots. Several generations ago our ancestors began to cultivate crop field and put too high score to new delicious food of grain; they were absorbed in the rice cultivation and began to neglect our tradition. Our generation noticed this deficiency, especially among fisherman villages, but it was too late to push the general flow of the things backwards, abolishing the fertile crop field; so we do our best to rehabilitate the old traditions with simulated hunting in the shrines and this sort of old festival. It's rather shabby to be sure, but hunting scenes in the festivals can appease our old gods and spirits anyway. We can do nothing against this new trend of farming anymore; we can only recollect our old good days, doing this childish mimicry. But something is better than nothing, as they say."

We fell in silent and saw the calm woods on the riverside and sky beyond them for a while together. The voyage was easy and soothing. The routine on the deck was lazy and peaceful. We reposed to our heart's content after so severe years in the Capital, relying totally on the stout

fishing ship with bright, white sail.

That day's tumult on the riverside around 'vengeful Divine Dogs' and 'flying wind spirits' were in the end 'child's play'. Old Turtle's Yue countrymen in that town prepared beforehand these toys and hid in the hole of the stakes on which the Dogs were to be erected. They waited for the timing and pulled the strings of the toys. When the toys started to fly in the air pell-mell, the other Yue men in the throng began to shout, predicting the 'vengeance' of the God and his faithful vassals. It was almost the same event they were celebrating in the festival for the Wind God, letting many small toys fly around the divine Dogs. They make the Dogs from bamboo and straw, and this toy uses the elastic power of the small stick of bamboo to float in the air a while.

"I imagine that long ago the people in the North and even in that goddam Capital used to celebrate the Wind God's festival with the same toys like us in the South; but they forgot it totally; we remember and are playing still; they forgot and curse and cheat and fear; that's the difference," the old man said thoughtfully...

One day we saw a big ship with red flag coming from downstream. It was Zhou's trading ship. Red is the color for the great Zhou, for they declared they possessed the 'Virtue of the Fire' (indicated by red color of their flags and clothes) to change the 'Central Plain' totally, renewing everything, resuscitate the ideal tradition of the saints and sages. At least so they were saying, commented my old man.

Accepting the wish of Lady Killer and his band, Yue people had arranged beforehand to meet them here to help the seven blue-eyed shepherds to go to Zhou. I have decided to go to Yue with the old man, for all my family and most of the clan were either slaughtered or captured as slaves like me by that atrocious massacre by the Great Army. It is certain that the greedy neighbor farmers in the south had occupied since then our herd and field to increase their field. Even if I could go back, it would have ended with making a living as a servant or peon to the strangers, though not as a slave, but still as a poor, orphan boy living from hand to mouth, so I accepted the kind offer of Old Turtle to go to his country Yue together, for he became almost the second father to me in the meantime. He said his dear son must have been waiting for his return for years and we would have plenty of food and jolly life there; caring nothing about mandarins, soldiers, phoney priests and even phonier kings.

"Couldn't you change your mind? You can join us still; the kings are the same everywhere, so says the old sayings. At the moment the people are saying Zhou kings are sages and very lenient, benevolent and all. But to be honest I'm rather suspicious that they look like excellent guys only because the Kings of Yin, those bastards in that goddamn 'Capital of Heaven' are extremely bad. Normal guy can be shining like angel from heaven, if you put him beside them you know. Yin will be deservedly destroyed one of these days by those 'sage' kings from Zhou, it's most probably I admit; but who knows whether Zhou kings remain sages and keep their acclaimed simplicity and fortitude or turn out to be greedy, vicious guys themselves, having taken everything in the Capital. I have strong doubt about that; for I've seen the world; even the underworld, just a bit though," he grinned.

"You are honest, wise and kind, o old man; and you are so obliging to be willing to accept us as your guests," Lady Killer replied.

"But you know also how different we are from you; with blue eyes and whitish skins. I believe you and your relatives will accept us as your co-sufferers and close friends; but what about our children, grandchildren, grand grandchildren with still the tinge of blue eyes and white skins? I saw many cities and countries, deserts and mountains on my part, o old man. I saw many ruins of the villages and cities; even big capitals which had been totally destroyed and were lying now

without inhabitants, only some shepherds were here and there, grazing their sheep lazily among cornerstones of the ruined palace. I saw how changeable and ephemeral the world is; how fragile the once adamant custom becomes. Only the people from same ancestors can keep the same memory for generations; that I learnt during my vast meandering on earth. Even if we perish on our way to dear homeland beyond the deserts; we still hope to go nearer to our memory, to our tribe, to our mountains and valleys, to our spirits in the woods. Therefore, o kind old man, we cannot accept your generous, noble offer; for one of us might be an ancestor of brave, noble clan, if only he can reach our country. We discussed together and decided to try this dream; our dream... Fare thee well, good-hearted, noble old man, kind Old Turtle," he hugged the old man with tears in his eyes. The others also took leave of us.

After that Lady Killer beckoned me to him. We went to the stern together where we could talk among us.

"We part here company; but we don't separate in the eyes of our master Wind God, for we both are still aspirants to his final initiation. Don't you think so, Little Prince?"

"Yes, I think so, Lady Killer." *

In prehistoric Inner Mongolia a shepherd boy was captured by the mighty army of Yin kings to be sold as child-slave to one mandarin in the "Capital of Heaven". Afterwards he was selected to fall victim to the human-sacrifice for king's tomb. In prison he befriended blue-eyed shepherds from far west who had been cheated by the neighboring "civilized" people and reached to the "Central Plain", having traveled on the long relay network of slave trade. They contrived together to arm themselves by slingshots and looked for the chance of escape, which came from an unexpected quarter.

The framework of the tale is set in Far East Asia of 11th century BC when the great change of the dynasty was about to happen from Yin to Zhou in the "Central Plain" (Mainland China). Through the eyes of one fugitive-slave who got his first initiation of the Wind God in his Mongolian homeland to become the first accomplished shaman in prehistoric Japan afterwards, categorical difference between center and periphery of the Civilization in the midst of prehistoric process of brutal conquest and enslaving is thematized and sketched as a simulation-parable. Hero of the story, Tsuchi-Hiko (Earthen Man), experienced this drastic discrepancy between declining Pan-Eurasian shamanism and emerging System of Civilization as most essential contrast between self-sacrificing gods and Unknown God of ruthless Process who requires incessantly human-sacrifices. This glaring contrast of ancient ideology is symbolically dramatized, at the end of the story, by confrontation between Tsuchi-Hiko and Minister of Education Wu Wen, who anticipated totalitarian mania of "Cultural Revolution" in prehistoric context.

The intention of simulation is directed to characterize in rough sketch the orientational worldview in Far East Asia in its prehistoric roots. This roots are determined by the categorical difference of human orientation between animistic shamanism and Juggernaut Civilization. In this sense the problematics involves, of its own accord, the ongoing "authoritarianism" in today's Far East Asia, while the real roots of civilizational totalitarianism can be identified in the end with the deepest tradition of dictatorial system in the "Central Plain" from its very beginning of ancient dynasties. At the same time this die-hard totalitarianism in every aspect of the "civilized" life has been opposed to the

shamanistic-animistic roots of egalitarian communality, which has had a common peripheral history among the 'savages'; and 'barbarians'; around the 'Central Plain', including Japanese prehistory of Jomon community. This central polarity between Civilization and Pan-Shamanism in the prehistoric context determines the structure of the parable.

The story is conceived as trilogy whose first part is propounded here.

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