Eastern Demons

A literary History

By KyL T. Cobb Jr.
Long lips reaching out from where one hundred males gather send envious talk (mi-kha) like an arrow; where one hundred females gather, it is like spun wool... where one hundred demonesses gather, it flows like water...

In Tibet the dharma is dying out, like beings who are near death. Oceans are drying up, the Life Tree is falling. The big lips of the nine mi-kha brothers are coming...
Anthropology

Complete history of Man (abridged)
Current Scientific Mythology holds:

• Homo sapiens evolved 200,000 years ago in central Africa.
• Man began speaking around 100,000 years ago.
Current Scientific Mythology holds:

- Earliest known writing
- Harappan settlement in Pakistan
- 4,100 BC.

- earliest decipherable surviving writing system
- Mesopotamia
- 3,600 BC
Current Scientific Mythology holds:

- Before Mesopotamia, there is only art
  - The face from Angoulême, France (27,000 years ago)
  - Cave paintings of Nerja in Malaga, Spain (43,500 years ago)
Conquest of Alexander the Great
Definition

Finding a Demon
Demon

Definition using 5 Western characteristics

- Will
- Emotion
- Intellect
- Self-Awareness
- Speech
Demon Definition

• Not previously been a human.
• Not exhibiting normal symptoms of a scientifically definable physical or mental disease.
• Outward manifestation beyond the explainable abilities of an associated host.
• Limited power and therefore at a lower level than a primary deity.
Gilgamesh

The first historic demons
Gilgamesh

3 types of demons from Sumerian texts

• Disembodied human spirits
• Half-monster, half-human entities
• Non-human forces
Gilgamesh

Utukku

• Ghost of Eabani

• Generic term for Sumerian and Babylonian demon that haunts barren places.

“A door cannot exclude them,
A bolt cannot turn them back;
They slither through the door like a snake,
They blow in by the hinge like the wind,
They bear off the wife from a man’s embrace,
They snatch the son from a man’s knee.”

-Extract from a Mesopotamian incantation
Gilgamesh

Alu (Gallu)

• Bull of Heaven sent after Gilgamesh to avenge Ishtar
• Alu from Sumerian Gallu which means “tempest”. Spirit hunts the night.
Gilgamesh

Lilu

- Prototype of incubus/succubus
- Believed to steal life-force
- Blames for crib death
- Associated with sleep paralysis
- Not origin of Jewish Lilith
Gilgamesh

Shedim

- Babylonian meaning “to be violent”
- Winged bull temple guardians
Transfer of Religions

The three methods
3 primary methods of religious transfer:

• Neighbor to neighbor
• Trade
• Conquest
Methods of preserving culture/religion:

• Conversion of completing religions gods to lesser gods/demons
• Branding any completing religions gods as Evil.
• Prohibiting breeding outside the tribe as well as self-imposed tribal isolation.
• Unique diets
• Maintaining tribal languages
• Maintaining secret rites for the initiated.
India

A 1000 gods, a 1000 demons
Hindu Prohibitions

- Wine
- Meat
- Fish
- Hand gestures with your left hand
- Sexual union
Mahishasura

- Granted the gift from Brahma that no male could kill him.
- led an army against the gods and defeated them.
- gods' anger created the goddess Durga.
- Durga eventually cut off the head
Rakshasa

- Blood-drinking cannibals
- fly, vanish, change shape and size.
- black with two fangs protruding from their mouths and sharp claws.
- created from the breath of Brahma when he was asleep.
- started eating Brahma himself.
- Brahma shouted "Rakshama" (which was Sanskrit for "Protect Me!"
- To save Brahma, Vishnu expelled all Rakshasas to Earth.
Rakshasa: Ramayana

- Ravana the king of the Rakshasa with 10 heads
- Steals Rama’s wife, Sita
- Rama is forced to fight Ravana to the death to free his wife.
Rakshasa: Mahabharata

• The Rakshasa live in the jungle and dining on travelers
• Female demoness scout falls in love with Bhima.
• Warns him of the Rakshasa attack
• The demons attack and are ultimately defeated.
Pishachas
पिशाच

- flesh eating with dark skin and glowing red eyes.
- shift form at will, turn invisible and even possess victims.
- Believed to feed off of life energy
- causing illness and even insanity.
- can be cast out using certain mantras and religious tools.
- Same as Tibetan Pisat (ปิศาจ).
Tibet
An exorcism tradition
Tibetan terms:

- Bdud- Demon
- Gto- Expel
- Bardo-State between ghost world, reincarnation and Nirvana.
Tibet spirits

- Ser na- “yellow nose”- hungry ghost that possess living to feed.
- The Klu-serpent deities- whisper false accusation into minds to destroy the harmony of the world.
- The btsan- warrior spirits that seek to revenge their heroic deaths.
- The bdud- demons that cause personal and historic decay.
Tibetan Grul-dzul

- Gyasumdo Tibetans
- Demon arrives in their villages on the back of a traveler
- Hunts within the village for the weakest member and attacks.
- Ward uses a sign of a leaf rake sticking out of basket with girl’s pants on their doors prohibiting travelers from entering
Tibet- 4 ways to stop a spirit

• Use of a phurba
• Spirit traps to protect the home
• Gouduojie festival rituals
• Direct exorcism
Tibet- spirit trap

- A kind of yarn spindle mounted to the outside of a house or to a tree
- colored interwoven yarns designed to catch the attention of spirits nearby.
Tibet - spirit trap

- spirit becomes fascinated with the colors and is trapped within
- spindle is then burned to destroy the spirits inside.
Tibet- Detection a possession

rnam-rtog ceremony

• The enticement… “Come swim in the lake…”

• the destructive part… “May you be carried away in the landslide…”

• Obey and prosper. Defy and be destroyed.
Tibet- Detection a possession

- construction of an effigy on the victim
- Blood or red wine is poured over the effigy as a red offering.
- chant… “Take the meat and go…”
Tibet

Sri Demons

• Sri demons are the escaped inhabitants of the Gurung underworld of Khro-nasa.

• small dough animal effigies are placed in a tray with a thin layer of white ash then covered by black ash.

• A dog’s skull is used to hold the trapped demons.
Tibet
“death demons”

- za-dre kha sgyur ceremony
- “If you disobey Phyag-na rDo-rje, he will split your head! He will chop up your body and send down a rain of weapons and turn you to dust! Instead it is better that you leave!”
- A special phurba forces the demon out of the spirit world to a “higher rebirth” or the demon is destroyed.
Tibet

Nag-po mgo gsum

- 3-headed black demon
- performed annually demon will periodically return.
- For this ritual an effigy of the demon’s host is made to trap the demon
Tibet
Nag-po mgo gsum

• The effigy is threatened.
• Chants are used to draw any other demons in the structure to represent the house it attacked
• The demon is trapped inside the construct
• Trap is then placed at a crossroad to ward off any traveling demons
Tibet

Ggod, severance rite

- Encourages the demon to enter and feast on the body of performer.
- Goddess Ma-gcig slab-sgron (ma-cig lab-dron) invoked to cut up the body and distribute it among swarms of demons.
- When satiated, they leave and take the anger, passion, ignorance and ego.
Burma & Thailand

Nature spirit
Burma & Thailand
Nat and Phi

• instead of possessing people
generally prefers to live in trees,
along the rivers or serving as
cemetery guardians

• represented as positive nature
spirits unless provoked.
Japan

Kokoro No Oni
Japan- The nature of evil

- Onmyodo- the way of yin and yang
- Oni are the opposite of good and represent all of the evil spirits dedicated to harming humans.
Japan
5 characteristics of Oni

• Cannibalism
• Transformation
• The Other- Oppressed, outsiders, alienated, isolated
• Lightning
• Prosperity
Japan

Shuten Doji, the drunken Demon

• Would kidnap a beautiful maiden and then eat her.
• Fought warrior class and became a kind of demonic Robin Hood
• Also represents the resistance of the old religions to the encroachment of the government
• “there is nothing false in the words of Demons.”
Japan
Shuten Doji, the drunken Demon

- Defeated by warrior hero Minamoto No Raiko (Yorimitsu) and his four lieutenants.
- Rise of warrior class was at the expense of farmers, the outcast demon’s struggle became that of the villagers outside the capital.
Japan
Yamauba

• Ugly woman forced to live in exile in the mountains
• Capturing and murdering people
• A warning of the dangers found in being less than vigilant when leaving the villages.
• Shape change into a beautiful woman to seduce her would be victim.
Japan
Namahage

- From coastal village
- Red, blue or black faced demons dressed in straw garments
- Re-enacted in Setsubun ceremony with men in costume that storm down from hilltop shrines and raise havoc in the villages searching for lazy or disobedient children.
Japan
Namahage

• "Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi!"
  "鬼は外！福は内!"
  Oni, Go out! Blessings come in”

• Soy beans are tossed at thee Oni and food is offered. A large meal is consumed to appease the Namahage.

• Straw that is dropped from the costumes is used for luck
Japan
Namahage - Origins

• The girl, the village and 100-step shrine
• Foreigners that invaded the villages and are now personified as demons.
America

Demons without Buddhism
Maya

Nature demons
Maya
Camazotz, Bat archetype

- “Death Bat“
- god of fire, Zotzilaha Chamalcan
- Camazotz decapitates the hero Hun Hunahpu with his claws but was ultimately defeated and cast out from the world.
Maya Camazotz, Bat archetype

- Bakairi-Evaki, a night goddess
- Muskogee Creek, Cherokee and Apache have bat as part of religion
- Zotzil and the Zincanatan people of Mexico still worship
- More Cryptozoology than Demonology
Maya
Xibalba, “the place of fear”

• 10 demons serve in paired groups:
  • Xiquiripat (Flying Scab) and Cuchumaquic (Gathered Blood) cause sickness by poisoning peoples’ blood.
  • Ahalpuh (Pus Demon) and Ahalgana (Jaundice Demon) cause swelling in dead bodies as well as from infection.
  • Chamiabac (Bone Staff) and Chamiaholom (Skull Staff) represent the natural decomposition of bodies into skeletons.
  • Ahalmez (Sweepings Demon) and Ahaltocob (Stabbing Demon) are demons that lie in wait in the unswept areas of people houses and stabbed them to death.
  • Xic (Wing) and Patan (Packstrap) cause people to die coughing up blood especially when while out walking on a road.
Maya

- Muan- messenger screech owl demon- provides-ill omens to any whom encounter it.
- Caprakan- spirit of earthquakes, Child of Gucup Cakix and brother of Zipacna. He was defeated by Hunahpu and Ixbalanque.
- Cotzbalam- "Crunching Jaguar". Killed first people in destruction of the Second Creation
- Xecotcovach- "Face-Gouger"- bird servitor that blinded the first people in destruction of the Second Creation
Zuni

Átahsaia
Zuni Átahsaia

- Giant cannibals with torso as big as an elk, hands so thick that his knuckles appear horned and a wild mane of grey bison hair.
- Unblinking eyes and yellow tusks.
Zuni
Átahsaia

• Capture and eat various women that have strayed from their villages.

• Twin Zuni gods, Åhayúta and Mátsailéma,

• "wa'templa" ceremonial dance, Átahsaia is used as a figure to frighten children into obedience.
Shoshone Dzoavits

- earthquake demon
- feeds on children as well as the eggs from the sacred dove.
- tricked into chasing the dove into a cave where he becomes trapped. The shaking earth is the demon trying to force his way from the cave.
Mapuche Wekufe

- Shape changers or spirit form.
- In order for the Wekufe to possess a host a sorcerer most often hides the demon within object that must touch the victim or the wekufu may also enter a victim when it is in its ghost form.
- Victim of the Wekufes must have violated a taboo
Amazonia
Chullachaqui

• Shape changers or guardian spirits
• protect the forest and punish those that violate taboos.
• Appears as prey to hunters and lures deep in the forests into
• Associated with particularly violent attacks of the chupacabra.