

Chapter Seven

Cosmos

Matsigenka religion may at least partly be understood as the attempt to reduce or completely eliminate the influence of the death spirits (kama'garini): wicked and evil is everything that threatens life in any way, that brings sickness and death; it must be opposed. (Baer 1984: 187)

For the Matsigenka of Shimaa, kameti “good” and tera onkametite “not good” are pervasive components of everyday conversation. In the semantic space generated by our “colors of emotion” experiment (Johnson et al 1986: 677), the Matsigenka clustered “good” with “happy” at one pole and “not good” with “sad” at the opposite pole, as if the pleasure principle were operating at its most elemental: “What makes me happy is good; what makes me sad is not good.” In much of their world this dimension has a pragmatic, “useful vs. useless” implication: black soil is good, yellow soil is no good; sugarcane is good to eat, caña brava is not. As we move closer to the human sphere, however, from inert matter to personhood, the “good vs. not good” dimension takes on an increasingly moral tone, becoming “good vs. evil” as transgressions against persons are seen as bringing on cosmic and spiritual ruin.

We can see both the impersonal and the personal aspects of the good--not good dimension in the story of how two mythical figures, Tasorintsi and Kentivakori, helped create the world.

Tasorintsi said, "I will give you an example of my power." And saying this, and casting upon the waters a kind of dust he carried in his right hand, after blowing on it, he caused the greater part of the watery element to form land: the original or archetypal soils of highest quality that still exist today. In these soils manioc, and many other plants of great usefulness to humans, produce abundantly.

Then, turning to Kentivakori, he said, "Let's see if you can create anything to equal or surpass what I have just done." Then Kentivakori, following almost exactly the same procedure as his divine rival, also caused a great portion of the watery element to become land, or at least something like it. Such is the origin of those clay soils we find today where no cultivated plants will grow; of swamplands; of that ferruginous mud that causes ulcers on the feet of those who walk upon it; of soils that support the growth of the arco iris plant, believed to be an evil spirit; of pits of gravel and sharp stones; and of the gloomy crags and rockpiles where evil spirits dwell. (Alegre 1979: 42)

Some have been tempted to identify Tasorintsi, or "Blowing Spirit" (Shepard 1998: 322), with God, and in some Matsigenka narratives he is referred to as Dioshi (< Span. "Dios," God; F. Pereira 1952; Alegre 1979: 40). By implication, Kentivakori is Satan. But the analogy is weak (Baer 1984: 166-75). While falling on opposite sides of the pleasure principle, Tasorintsi and Kentivakori have more in common with the Trickster than with the great deities of any world religion (cf. Baer 1979: 106). They act willfully and selfishly, exercising the powers they possess without regard for their impact on human welfare. Baer (1979: 107)

regards Tasorintsi as a cover term for a host of deities, including Sun and Moon, the latter a most dangerous being, responsible for the deaths of countless human souls.

Although this story of the origins of good and bad has a mechanistic, “just so” quality, when we get to the origins of people a moralistic thread emerges that will prove to be of fundamental importance. This is especially clear in the origins of poñarona “Quechuas” and virakocha “whites” (Euro-Americans). Here we begin to see the moral side, as careless humans unleash bad people onto this plane of existence:

The First People

The origin of man.--The Matsigenkas are the first people that existed in the world.

Tasorintsi made them, in large numbers and already adult, by blowing upon the balsa tree.

The Chonchoite, tribes of cannibalistic savages, were created by the demon Kentivakori.

They live far away, three months travel. They kill people and eat them roasted. Long ago, a Matsigenka seripigari went there and was unable to free himself from them; they killed, roasted, and ate him.

The Kogapakori, a tribe of savage bowmen, are the work of Kentivakori. He made them by blowing upon the violent ants of the Kanae tree (palosanto), and for this reason they are so fierce that they shoot and kill anyone who comes along.

The Puñarunas, or Indians of the puna, were created by Kentivakori below in Gamaironi [Underground]. In ancient times there were no Puñarunas here on Earth. A child was digging in the earth for amusement, as was the custom, when the Puñarunas poked their heads through the hole he had made. Startled, the child ran to give warning, saying, “What has reared its head?” He ran right back, but he could not block the hole, for they were coming out in a mad rush. Tasorintsi did not wish that there should be Puñarunas.

Virakochas (civilized people or whites) were also created by Kentivakori in Gamaironi.

Originally there were none on Earth. The spirits called Inkakuna were excavating for the brilliant

ore of the metal kori (gold, silver or other precious metal). One day, while they were busy at work, the Virakochas poked their heads through an opening in the excavation. Aghast, the Inkakunas shoveled dirt furiously to stop up the hole and keep them from coming up; but they pushed with such force from below that they were unable to contain them, and they came up in vast numbers. Then Tasorintsi, who did not wish there to be Virakochas, blew from above and out of the air fell a cloud of arrows, that killed almost all Virakochas. The shafts of those arrows were of Tasorintsiipi, a species of caña brava. Tasorintsi told the Inkakunas not to dig there any more, so that no more Virakochas would get out, and they obeyed. Still, many more Virakochas climbed and climbed up out of that same hole.

The Puñarunas and Virakochas that escaped to this world are only a fraction; the greater number remained below in Gamaironi and are Kamagarini or demons. Those who escaped and live here on Earth were also once Kamagarini, but since they began to eat manioc they have become, though still evil, no longer demons. (Garcia 1939: 229-30)

The version of this story I was told in Shimaa is even clearer on the moral issue: a shaman told the people, “don’t fish, the whites will come.” But they disobeyed him and once one white caught hold of the hook, the others began to follow him out of the water in great numbers.

The Natural World

The Matsigenka have extensive and detailed knowledge of their world. In exploring it with them, I found a few simple questions could elicit a wealth of information. Tatoita oka “What is that?” generally elicited the name of an object, as did tiara opaita “What is it called?” From their standpoint, these were entirely natural questions. The drawback to such queries was that they often opened the floodgates: my companion would begin to name everything in sight

far more quickly than I could write. Then, a few days or weeks later, I might ask the name of another object and be told, “Don’t you remember? I told you the name of that before!” Once they recovered from their surprise at my ignorance, many Matsigenkas genuinely enjoyed naming things as a way to teach me about their world.

As powerful as this simple eliciting technique is for acquiring lists of words for things, it teaches little about how the Matsigenka order their universe and give it meaning. As I tried to move from the exuberant naming of diversity to some order of groupings and relations, however, the Matsigenka found my efforts perplexing, often boring. If their enthusiasm for supplying names ultimately exceeded mine, their enthusiasm for discovering pattern and organization--a typology or structure of the world--was much less. It was not that they did not want me to discover it, but rather that it was not something they were used to reflecting upon or talking about.

It is not that patterning is absent. The problem is better described as one of too many patterns, each generated by separate organizing principles. Just as a complex geometric sculpture appears to change form as it is viewed from different angles, the Matsigenka may be said to rotate the world and view it from different perspectives according to the conditions and purposes of the moment. And their culture, to a degree, codifies these different perspectives in lexicon and grammar.

The cultural model of the Matsigenka world described here is a result of two research processes: one, systematic focused interviews intended to uncover the structure of the Matsigenka conception of the world; the other, induction from texts copied into pocket notebooks during on-site conversations. The first has the advantage of emphasizing the pattern

and organization of their cultural construction of reality, whereas the second has the advantage of showing how language is used to make distinctions on-the-spot in the process of communicating important information about the world. The first is simple but tends to be artificially neat and may be over-constructed by the researcher, whereas the second is authentic but tends toward idiosyncrasy and disorder. I have combined these two methods to provide some sort of balance between clarity and complexity.

As a rule, the Matsigenka value honesty and accuracy. The distinction between what is true (arisano) and false (tsoenti) is important to them. Although telling a lie is, in the right setting, considered a good joke, the joker will ultimately admit inti notsoenti “that’s my lie.” Someone who, like Aretoro, lies frequently and not in a joking manner is said to be characteristically false (inti tsoenti). When people recount stories and histories, they distinguish reports based on their own personal experience (kenkiagantsi) from hearsay (kenkitsarintsi). People would vouch for the former, because they themselves witnessed the events being reported, but would not take responsibility for the latter, saying--when pressed for the truth--“I don’t know; it’s what I heard.”

As a corollary, the Matsigenka take for granted that knowledge is incomplete, and that differences in specifics of belief are common. For people who live so close to nature and are keenly observant, individuals revealed a surprising number of gaps knowledge, from not knowing what lemons are to never having seen the house of someone who lives 15 minutes walk away. This kind of ignorance is in addition to more expectable disagreements over when to burn the slash or whether dynamite is depleting the fish.

The Matsigenka world is charged with supernatural significance, but everyday conversation is dominated by pragmatic, one might say materialistic, descriptions. The material world is described primarily in terms of sight and smell, and to a lesser degree, taste. Although hearing is extremely important to them, especially in the forest, they are less likely to describe a sound than to imitate it, often with conventions like tsein! for the sound of an arrow flying or tin! for a footstep. For sight, smell and taste a small number of basic terms serve to label broad qualities of the world. Then an ample supply of modifiers, including words made up by referring to particular species, are available to provide rich and evocative descriptions of things.

A good example of this is the domain of color. In the comparative typology of color terminology systems (Berlin and Kay 1969; see also Berlin and Berlin 1975), the Matsigenka have a Stage V system with six basic color terms (Table 7.1). The Matsigenka use the term sanori, “true” or “real,” to refer to the focal colors in each color range: focal yellow (kiteri sanorira, or okitetasanotake) centers on lemon yellow, focal red (kiraari sanorira) on a fully saturated fire-engine red, and so on.

<u>potsitari</u>	black
<u>kutari</u>	white
<u>kiraari</u>	red
<u>kiteri</u>	yellow
<u>kaniari</u>	green
<u>kamachonkari</u>	blue

Table 7.1. Matsigenka Basic Color Terms (Source Johnson et al 1986).

The basic terms can be modified in a variety of ways to express gradations of color. In addition to sanori, the most common modifier is choeni, a distance term (Table 7.5) meaning close or near. So, “it’s almost blue” (choeni okamachongatake) can refer to a greenish-blue, a

bluish-grey, and so on. Other common ways of modifying basic color are described in Table 7.2. The flexibility of color naming is also expanded by referring to particular species, such as choeni onarankatumatake “almost the color of a pale orange” (<Span., naranja).

<u>Modifier</u>	<u>Example</u>
color term + <u>kipatsi</u> (soil)	<u>kitepatsari</u> = color of yellow soil
color term + <u>-tuma-</u> (little)	<u>okiraatumatake</u> = pale red
<u>maani</u> (little) + color expression	<u>maani okiteritake</u> = a little yellow
<u>panike</u> (almost) + color expression	<u>panike ompotsitake</u> = almost black

Table 7.2. Modifying Color Terms.

Matsigenkas use modifiers and reference to particular species to expand on the limited basic terms for describing other domains as well (Tables 7.3 and 7.4). Hence their capacity to describe a world rich in detail is fully developed. In my experience, the Matsigenka use words for smell and taste primarily in relation to living, not nonliving, things. Their basic words for taste are few (Table 7.3). Among these, the most commonly used was poshin, “delicious.” People often offered me an unknown food with the phrase poshin pogakaro “delicious you-eat-it.” Pochari referred to sweet fruit and sugarcane, while kacho was used primarily to refer to the sour tastes of lemon, the meronki fruit, and well-aged manioc beer. Often, the words are used in verb constructions, as in meronki okachotake (meronki it-sours) or paipo opochavagete etsiki (“etsiki is the sweetest” [literally, “first it-sweets-(intensely) etsiki]). Kepishi, bitter, has the same root (-kepi-) as words referring to poison and hallucinogens (e.g., okepigate, “it causes hallucinations;” see Shepard 1991).

Words for smell are often built from words for taste by adding the infix -enka- “scent,” as in poshinienkatake “delicious-it-smells.” The word for foul smelling derives from the root related to feces and defecation, -shiti-. Specific words label remarkable odors, like the strong peccary smell called ishamake shintori. In general one may indicate the smell of a particular substance by combining its name with -enka- as in potsotienkama “achiote smell.” People frequently crush a leaf or piece of bark in order to use its smell to help identify it.

<u>Taste</u>		<u>Smell</u>	
<u>pochari</u>	sweet		
<u>kacho</u>	sour	<u>kachoenkamatake</u>	sour smell
<u>kepishi</u>	bitter		
<u>poshin</u>	delicious	<u>poshinienkatake</u>	smells delicious
		<u>shitienkamatake</u>	foul smell
		<u>ovegaga</u>	rotten
		<u>kasankaenkamatake</u>	perfumed

Table 7.3. Taste and Smell.

smooth, slippery	<u>kareni</u>
rough	<u>morokimatake</u>
hard	<u>kusori</u>
soft	<u>metsomaimatake</u>
rubbery	<u>aratsitimatake</u>
tickles	<u>kainitake</u>
sticky	<u>otsirekakena</u>
slimy rotten	<u>ovesegaka</u>
cold	<u>katsinkaimatake</u>
hot	<u>katsirinkaimatake</u>

Table 7.4. Words for the Feel of Things.

Placing events in space and time is a central concern. We saw in Chapter 2 how the Matsigenka of Shimaa orient themselves in space by a compass aligned on the river, such that katonko/kamatikya (upstream/downstream) replaces north/south, and oaku/inkenishiku/intaati (at the river/in the forest/across the river) replaces east/west (Figure 2.1). This compass reflects the practical reality that all major trails either run alongside the river or else from the river inland

up the valley slopes. It also captures the major difference between the complex of riverine species and those associated with the rainforest interior.

Most often, however, the Matsigenka indicate time and distance with reference to the speaker: “near” vs. “far,” “now” vs. “later today,” etc. Sometimes, speakers will combine distance and direction, as when describing a place as “nearby” while they cradle their right elbow in the palm of their left hand and use their right arm, held straight from elbow to fingertips, as a pointer to indicate direction. Everyday conversation is replete with pragmatic references to spatiotemporal locations of past or future gardens, ideal house sites, fishing spots, fruits in season, and raw materials for manufacture.

<u>Time</u>		<u>Distance</u>	
<u>maika</u>	now	<u>aka, kara</u>	here
<u>inkara</u>	earlier today	<u>choeni</u>	nearby
<u>chapi</u>	past few days	<u>samani</u>	distant, far
<u>karanke</u>	recent past	<u>parikoti</u>	elsewhere, foreign land
<u>pairani</u>	distant past	<u>onta</u>	there, medium distance
<u>paita</u>	later today	<u>yonta</u>	there, far distance
<u>kamani</u>	next few days		
<u>impogini</u>	indefinite future		

Table 7.5. Referring to Time and Distance.

Most of the counting I observed also applied to living things, especially wild animal foods. When reporting encounters with wildlife, or recounting the story of someone else’s hunt, narrators seemed especially inclined to spell out how many individuals were sighted or bagged, a specificity that was rare otherwise. Usually, general terms like “many” or “few” seemed to be all that were required (Table 7.6). When counting is desired, the Matsigenka count up to three, followed by “many.” Beyond that, people may touch their fingers, folding each one over in turn

until the desired number (less than 10) is reached. But that is unusual; more commonly, large quantities are indicated by verbal constructions like itovaiigavagetakara, “plenty of them” (lit. “he-plenties-[plural]-[intensive]”), accompanied by an appropriately excited tone of voice.

<u>mameri</u>	none
<u>paniro</u>	one
<u>piteni</u>	two
<u>mavani</u>	three
<u>maani</u>	little
<u>paniropage</u>	few
<u>ainyopage</u>	some
<u>tovaini</u>	many, plenty

Table 7.6. Counting.

The Living World

The Matsigenka draw a fundamental distinction between living and nonliving, based on whether something “has breath.” Earth, water, fire and air, in all their diverse forms, are mere matter: tera ontime aniane “not exist its-breath.” Even though they may be occupied by indwelling spirits, the elements themselves are inert and without spiritual qualities. Rock is just rock, and only a shaman can discern which rocks are inhabited by spirit helpers (inetsane). Fire is simply a property of burning wood, and emphasis is placed on understanding the burning qualities of different kinds of wood to meet various cooking needs. Wind is just wind, although some sudden gusts may indicate the passage of an unseen one (terira ineenkani).

Living things have another quality as important as breath: they feel pain (-katsi-). As Roberto put it, including plants in the generalization, “When you cut them, they hurt.” It is at this point that moral issues (good vs. evil) begin to join the pleasure principle (good vs. not good) in Matsigenka psychology and cosmology. Because animals and even plants can feel pain, it is not

good to hurt them unnecessarily. True, my self interest (pleasure) compels me to cut plants and shoot animals in order to eat them, but I empathically recognize that I am hurting creatures that do not want to be hurt and eaten and who could be expected to be angry and vengeful. Even though some cases of sadism toward animals seem to contradict this rule, the Matsigenka clearly believe that breathing, feeling pain, and intimate connection to the spirit world are defining characteristics of living things.

In the living world, the grammatical distinction between inanimate and animate marks the boundary between plants and animals, respectively: ogagani = edible plant vs. yogagani = edible animal; inkenishikutirira = forest plants vs. inkenishikunirira = forest animals. Therefore, although the Matsigenka have no cover terms equivalent to “plant” or “animal,” the distinction is built into their world view at a fundamental linguistic level. The ability to move around, or willful locomotion, “appears to be the basis of the distinction made between animate and inanimate objects...” (Shepard 1995b:13).

Plants--. Nowhere was I more overwhelmed by the richness and detail of Matsigenka lore than in trying to learn about their plant world. The complexity had several aspects:

1. a large number of specific names for plants (a kind of “species level” lexicon);
2. a general absence of higher categories for grouping (no genera, families, etc.);
3. a large number of varietal names within certain specific categories (such as ivenkiki, to be examined below);
4. a certain degree of idiosyncrasy, such that different informants gave me different names for the same plant; and
5. a small amount of unevenly distributed ignorance (tera nogote, “I don’t know”).

As I worked in field and forest with various companions, however, a broad distinction between three categories of plants took shape that I was later able to validate in systematic interviewing. These are the categories of pankirintsi “crop,” tovaseri “weed,” and inchato “tree.” While these terms are rarely given in answer to a question like “What is that?” or “What is it called?,” they are readily applied to correct an erroneous statement. For example, if one should point to a plant and say “Inti pankirintsi?” (“Is it a crop?”), the reply might come, “Tera, inti tovaseri” (“No, it’s a weed”). These are the only high-order plant categories regularly used by the Matsigenka in my experience.

Implicit in the three-part scheme is a dichotomy between wild and domestic, a reflection of a Nature vs. Culture contrast present in many areas of Matsigenka culture. Pankirintsi (< -panki-, to plant) are crops purposely planted in prepared garden sites. Tovaseri, the way the word is most often used, are intruders into this constructed garden space, enemies that threaten the garden and require the single largest input of energy of all garden tasks. Many tovaseri, especially aggressive varieties that line trails and other frequently used spaces, have thorns, thistles, burrs and other unpleasant attributes that annoy and cause pain. Tasorintsi created many pankirintsi while Kentivakori created tovaseri.

The distinction between tovaseri and inchato is complex, but refers primarily to size. Tovaseri are small plants, with flexible stems and growing no larger than small bushes. Inchato, by contrast, are trees and large bushes with solid trunks, generally growing taller than a man. In this regard, the Matsigenka would seem to conform to Brown’s (1977: 317) finding that in folk botanical classifications the first two terms are always a term for tree and one for “small herbaceous plant.” In many cases, however, tovaseri are simply the early growth stages of

inchato, in the sense that the plants that first invade a garden are the seedlings of rapidly growing species that start the process of forest regeneration almost immediately after a garden has been burned and the first cultivars begin to sprout. Those tovaseri become inchato when they have grown into small trees. Some of them will be overshadowed by slower growing but more majestic species that eventually become the primary forest perhaps 25 or more years after the garden has been abandoned. Other tovaseri are small vines or bushes that grow in open spaces but never become trees and tend to thin out when mature forest blocks off their sunlight.

In classification schemes like these, the boundaries between categories do not trouble the Matsigenka much. When asked whether a mid-sized bush is a weed or a tree, my informants would pick one or the other, or might say something like, “Now it’s a weed but it will become a tree.” I also found little confusion over the boundary between crops and either weeds or trees, although the Matsigenka draw the boundary differently than I had expected. For example, in the forest we often came across plants that I assumed were surviving crops from old gardens: avocados, oranges, pineapples, lemons, sweet potatoes, and plantains, among others. Though my instinct would have been to call them all pankirintsi, I was wrong: the Matsigenka invariably called them inchato (or tovaseri, in the case of pineapple and sweet potato). In their view, these were not straggling survivors of some old garden, but wild plants that “just grew:” ogantaka otimake, “it-is-(habitually) it-exists.” The crucial distinction between domesticated and wild plants is “No one planted it” (tera impankitero), not (as I was prone to think) a genetic breeding of domesticated species out of distinct wild ancestors.

Another blending of wild and domesticated plants occurs when a man spares certain species of trees during garden clearing. A good example is the palm kuri (Bactris ciliata),

whose hard outer wood is used in making arrowheads and other artifacts. Since the tree is rather scarce in the forest, it is not felled during clearing and becomes part of the garden. “Wild” avocados or orange trees may also be left standing during garden clearing. Yet, when asked, “Is that a crop?,” a respondent replies, “No, it was already there.” It is not a cultigen unless created through human activity, a crop that some known person actually planted with his or her own hands. When the Matsigenka let go of a garden, they say it is “Peccary’s” (ashi shintori)-- by turning it over to a wild animal, they release it from human responsibility and, one might say, allow it to revert to nature.

The link of a crop to the person who planted it, however, is deeper than the distinction between pankirintsi and tovaseri/inchato. We saw in chapter 6 that a man’s failure to observe certain taboos after planting maize can harm the maize. And in the case of the magical herb, ivenkiki, it is impossible to tell what any given plant is good for simply by looking at it. Its owner must tell us what it is used for, because an ivenkiki plant does not gain its power by virtue of belonging to this or that species or variety, but because of its individual history, known to the person who planted it.

Beyond the pankirintsi/tovaseri/inchato typology there are few cover terms. Ivenkiki may be said to act as a cover term, in the same sense that shinki “maize” is a cover term for many varieties of maize. Higher order categories that we might look for, such as “palms,” “evergreens,” or “grains” do not occur. Consistent with the nearly universal experience of cognitive anthropologists (D’Andrade 1995: 92), I found that interviews aimed at discovering an underlying set of basic principles by which one kind of tree is distinguished from another instead turned up a vast array of specific knowledge. For example, when I tried to learn about the

difference between two very similar types of palm trees (kuri [Bactris ciliata] and manataro [Bactris chaetochlamys?]),

Fieldnote [4-23-73] - ... Roberto, when asked, distinguished kuri from manataro on the basis of their seed color (kuri seed is more yellow). Then, when I pointed out the sample in question had no seeds, he said kuri leaf is lighter green. When I asked about the form of the leaf, he said manataro is stubbier.

And so it went in attempt after attempt: where I wanted to simplify, my informants preferred to reference detail after detail from their profound fund of knowledge.

The Matsigenka system of plant classification roughly corresponds to the pattern reported for systems of folk classification generally (D'Andrade 1995: 92-101). At the highest level is a "unique beginner," the inanimate grammatical category signifying "plants." The next level, however, where we find a tripartite "crop-weed-tree" typology, intervenes where a level of "generics" would be expected. But the generics appear at the next level (walnut, bamboo, cedar, etc.). Some of the generics, especially crops, are subdivided into "specifics" (e.g., "cuban" maize, red-leaf manioc, sedge "for-flu"). I searched for "intermediates," or covert categories in such likely groups as palms and hardwoods, but found none.

Animals--. As with plants, the Matsigenka do not divide the animal world into intermediate categories like fish, birds, insects, etc. The most general division of the animal world--comparable to the pragmatic "crop-weed-tree" distinction among plants, is between piratsi "game," and tera ironkenkani "inedible animals." Although this division does not cover the whole animal world--caterpillars are not piratsi but they are edible--it does apply very widely. When I asked why caterpillars were not game, however, hoping to get at some

classificatory principle, I was told, “Because they cocoon.” In a practical sense, however, piratsi share the attribute that they are obtained through hunting. Rosengren (1987b: 65) and Baer (1984: 130) report that what sets piratsi apart from other animals is that they have been domesticated by saankarite (the unseen ones; see below) and are thus ritually clean.

Fish are not included under piratsi, nor is there a cover term for the category fish. Like game, fish are grouped according to where they live, as in deep pools (amonkiakunirira) or among the rocks (mapukunirira). Pregnant women are strongly prohibited from eating fish with teeth like shivaigi (see tale of Moon below), but otherwise fish do not occasion dietary restrictions, and are not seen as posing spiritual danger through metamorphosis into demons.

As with plants, the general tendency is to name animals distinctively at the species (generic) level, roughly speaking. Each species has its own spirit ruler (itinkame) with a unique history and personal characteristics; e.g., the violent Osheto (spider monkey) versus the lazy Yaniri (howler monkey). Generic categories like these may then be grouped ad hoc according to context. For example, inkenishikunirira, forest animals, in contrast to oakunirira, river animals. These classifications do not come up often in ordinary conversation, but can be readily elicited. A conversation might go like this:

Q. “Is howler monkey a river-dweller?” Yaniri inti oakunirira?

A. “No, he is a forest dweller.” Tera, inti inkenishikunirira, or, itimi inkenishiku. If you say nothing, your informant might offer spontaneously: “He is a tree dweller” Inti inchatoshikunirira. Otherwise, you can get this by asking (for example):

Q. “Is he a thicket-dweller?” Inti pankomaikunirira?

A. “No, he lives in trees.” Tera, inti itimi inchatoshiku.

This system of classification conveys useful information about resource zones. For example, some birds walk on the forest floor (saaviku), meaning they can be caught in certain kinds of traps, whereas others live among the branches (enoku “up” or oshiku “in the leaves”), requiring different traps. As Werner Wilbert has pointed out, such a classificatory system groups animals according to the spaces they occupy, a kind of de facto recognition of plant and animal associations (W. Wilbert 1992: 71; 1995). As Wilbert interprets this aspect of cosmology, it is not the descent of species that matters, but their “balanced complementary diversity” within the natural (and spiritual) world. Such a classification groups biotic communities rather than a Linnean tree of genetic relatives.

In conversation Machiguengas explore details that generate cross-cutting classifications. Different monkeys prefer different fruits, seeds or leaves, traces of their aboreal feeding littering the ground below. Some fish can be caught with fishhooks, others cannot. Some animals are dangerous (koveenkaripage) or eat people (sekatantacharira). Matsigenkas know all sorts of behavioral details about the animals around them, and any of these details is liable to be used in describing any particular one. Shepard (1995b) explores many forms of noun classification that also result in partial or cross-cutting typologies of animal life.

Some patterns of classification, however, do come up frequently in conversation. In Matsigenka, one does not ask directly, “What kind of x is y?” (e.g., “what kind of bird is a dove?”). Two other questions have to serve instead: first, tiara ipaita “What is it called?” and second, “Is x a y?” (e.g., shiromega inti kanari “Is dove a ‘guan’?”). The “What is it called?” frame usually elicits the specific name of an animal. But sometimes I found that it was eliciting cover terms, which are more common for animals than they are for plants. A few of them have

very narrow scope. For example, shintori is a cover term for two species of peccary: shintori (collared peccary, *Tayassu tajacu*), and santaviri (white lipped peccary, *Tayassu pecari*); matsontsori is a cover term for four species of wild cats: matsontsori (jaguar, *Felis onca*), matsontsori potsonari (puma, *Felis concolor*), patiaigi (ocelot, *Felis pardalis*), and kovoteri (*Felis wiedii* ?).

But some other cover terms range over significantly larger territory and represent intermediate categories not found in plant classifications. Typical of these is the cover term kanari, a category of large game birds. Like virtually all Matsigenka cover terms, kanari is the name of a particular species, Pipile pipile, the Blue-throated Piping Guan. At the same time, it is also used to label a number of other large game birds, such as kentsori (White-throated Tinamou, *Tinamus guttatus*), tsamiri (Razor-billed Curassow, *Mitu mitu*), and pareto (Mitre Parakeet, *Aratinga mitrata*; Golden Plumed Parrot, *Leptosittaca branickii*). Each of these birds is quite distinct from the others, but they have in common that they are forest-dwellers, they are relatively large and good-eating, they provide feathers useful for headdresses and arrows, and they are usually hunted with barbed bird arrows. In answer to a question like “What is it called?” a companion might answer, kanari ipaita tsamiri “a guan called curassow.” Many of the larger game birds, however, are not called kanari, as seen in the following exchange:

“Is Cock-of-the-Rock kanari?” Oe inti kanari?

“No, he is Cock-of-the Rock.” Tera, inti oe.

The other cover terms frequently applied to animals are:

Tsimeri, a cover term for many different small birds, such as sheshegiri (White-banded Swallow, *Atticora fasciata*), mampiro (Sapphire Quail-dove, *Geotrygon saphirina*), and marini

(Amazonian Black-tyrant, Phaeoctriceus poecilocercus). They are generally hunted with bulbous arrowheads, slingshots, or with traps. As with kanari, many small birds are not called tsimeri, even though they are hunted with the same techniques.

Maranke, the cover term for “snake.” As far as I know, every kind of snake is considered to be maranke, making this and the jaguar category (matsontsori) the most complete and least ambiguous cover terms I have found. In part, this clarity may be due to the powerful fear associated with snakes and jaguars, all of which are assumed to be agents of spiritual attack, capable of tracking their “game” (humans) even into their houses.

Poroshito and tsuro serve loosely as cover terms for caterpillars and grubs, respectively. Poroshito are the larvae of butterflies and moths, and are believed to feed on leaves; tsuro are the larvae of beetles and are believed to feed on wood (bark and trunks).

In telling me about animals, people often used the phrase ikaniotakari, “it resembles.” For example, mampiro ikaniotakari shiromega, “pigeon resembles dove.” I was excited to discover this concept because I thought it was my key to unlocking the Matsigenka classificatory system. Again, I was mistaken. When people say one thing resembles another, they always have a specific similarity in mind; in this case, pigeon is like dove because they both walk on the ground. The same man who told me this told me that mampiro ikaniotakari pareto, pigeon resembles parrot, because they both eat seeds; but the two are unlike in that parrot does not walk the ground, requiring a different trap than dove. Another compares paca to agouti (samani ikaniotakari sharoni) because both raid gardens for manioc. Still another man told me that the fish omani (Span. zongaro) resembles segori (Span. vague), because they are amonkiakunirira, that is, both live in deep pools in the river. Yet segori is a small trout-like fish

of about 20 cm in length, whereas omani is a huge fish reaching lengths of two meters. Plants or animals will be assigned now to this class, now to that according to which feature is salient. A specific animal or plant is what it is, a unique configuration, and this is what matters most, not its place in a classification.

The only domesticated animals the Matsigenka are familiar with are dogs, cats, chickens, guinea fowl and Muscovy ducks. Except for dogs and cats (inedible), these fall in the non-game but edible category along with fish and insects. Chickens and ducks are never treated as pets, but many people in Shimaa begged us to bring them dogs and cats, even though, when we did, they all died from one cause or another. They did not die of neglect, since pets are treated well, but of environmental hazards. Birds and monkeys are often captured and treated as pets. Pet birds may even be allowed to fly in and out of the house, making an interesting boundary case between wild and domesticated animals. Also on the boundary between wild and domestic are the larvae, kao, which are allowed to grow in discarded beer mash, from which they are harvested as garnish for manioc.

The Matsigenka are, of course, familiar with animal anatomy, since they butcher and prepare all the animal foods they eat. Children can often be seen playing with animals that have been killed, exploring the details of their anatomy. Table 7.11 presents the basic terminology for parts of the body.

head	<u>igito</u>
brain	<u>ikipatsa</u>
hair	<u>igishi</u>
eye	<u>yoki</u>
ear	<u>igempita</u>
nose	<u>igirimashi</u>
lips	<u>itsera</u>

tooth	<u>irae</u>
tongue	<u>inene</u>
chin	<u>igura</u>
throat	<u>itonkorina</u>
neck (nape?)	<u>itsano</u>
shoulder	<u>ishironte</u>
back	<u>isavata</u>
small of back	<u>imititsa</u>
side	<u>imereta</u>
chest	<u>inegi</u>

breast		<u>itsomi</u>
stomach		<u>imotia</u>
heart		<u>iranigaki</u>
liver		<u>ishamente</u>
intestines		<u>iramporetsa</u>
genitals	<u>ishivu</u>	
buttocks		<u>itsomonte</u>
anus		<u>itioki</u>
hip		<u>itsaki</u>
thigh		<u>ivori</u>
lower leg		<u>itasagi</u>
knee		<u>igereto</u>
foot		<u>ivonkiti</u>
upper arm		<u>inara</u>
elbow		<u>igonake</u>
forearm		<u>iempe</u>
wrist/ankle		<u>iginkeki</u>
hand		<u>inara</u>
knuckles		<u>iginkoki</u>
fingers/toes		<u>ichapaki</u>
fingernails		<u>ishata</u>
bone		<u>itonki</u>
skin		<u>imeshina</u>
fur		<u>iviti</u>
blood		<u>iriraa</u>
body, flesh		<u>ivatsa</u>
soul		<u>isure</u>

Table 7.7. Parts of the Body

People and Spirits

The idea that some plants and most animals have spirit rulers or protectors who can cause harm to humans personalizes the living world in the way usually referred to as animism. It projects human qualities into nonhumans. The content of the projection is not only that other organisms feel pain, but also that they, or their spirit representative, can know who harmed them and plot revenge. In taking ritual steps to appease those spirits, the Matsigenka evidence a kind of internalization of responsibility or blame that, in its anticipation of punishment, shares something in common with the complex emotional state we call guilt.

Non-Matsigenka--. The Matsigenka view many other humans as cannibalistic, uncontrollably violent, or demonic. In the story Ineantavageigira "A Distant Journey," a group of Matsigenkas travel to other lands and encounter humans who eat snakes they claim are fish and demons they claim are agoutis, among other terrible things (Davis and Snell 1984: 36-44). To eat snakes or demons would be horrifying beyond words. Since the people of Shimaa are well away from the travelled areas that formerly brought many upper Amazon tribes into contact with Inka traders and have little contact with the steady traffic of Peruvian boatmen and foreign and domestic tourists along the Alto Urubamba and through the Pongo de Mainique, their direct knowledge of other peoples is extremely limited. Their belief in humans with terrible or disgusting attributes is part of a larger process to be explored below by which they deny the possibility of forbidden desires in themselves and project them into other creatures.

As was no doubt true for centuries past, their main contact is with poñaronas, who in 1972 were beginning to colonize the region from the mouth of the Rio Kompiroshiato upstream to within a few kilometers of Shimaa. Towards these new immigrants their attitude was

courteous but distant. They saw them as more or less good people, and would attempt conversations in broken Spanish on the few occasions when poñaronas passed by, but only a few families downstream along the Kompiroshiato included them in their visiting and exchange networks. This is an ancient pattern of minimal blending between Amazon Indians and Andean Indians

Salient too were virakochas, mainly middle-class Peruvians and North Americans. Occasionally, government officials and survey teams would pass through, socializing briefly before passing on. These visits had great significance, because Maestro was encouraging the Matsigenka of Shimaa to think of themselves as Peruvians. He viewed these outsiders as powerful models to emulate. Other Matsigenkas, however, remained ambivalent: attracted by the virakochas' wealth and the opportunities they offered for trade, yet still frightened by the old stories linking them to danger and disease.

Although the North American linguists and anthropologists were of less importance to them as models than the Peruvians they encountered, the linguists Harold and Patricia Davis spent much time in the vicinity of Shimaa before and after it was started in 1968 (Davis 1994). They were greatly admired for their honesty and generosity, as well as their linguistic and cultural mastery. Many men spontaneously and with great pleasure told me of Harold Davis's physical skill and endurance in negotiating even the most treacherous mountain trails, and of his profound knowledge of their language. I had the impression that my physical and linguistic achievements were being weighed in the balance and found wanting. During household inventories in 1972, I learned that many of the trade items people owned had been gifts from the Davises.

In general, despite the representations of non-Matsigenkas in their folktales, the Matsigenka of Shimaa have a cautiously positive view of these outsiders. Although extremely shy on first meeting, most made a distinction between the current situation and the fearful abuses of the past. As the Matsigenka are generally trusting by nature, once they learned that neither the virakochas nor most of the poñaronas wanted to cheat or abuse them, they were curious, warm, and almost naively trusting. Many of them made sincere efforts to adopt the lessons in religion taught by the linguists, and in Peruvian nationalism and civic responsibility taught by Maestro and absorbed by contact with poñaronas and virakochas.

In Shimaa, awareness of other Amazon groups, such as Piros or Shipibos, was slight. In the tributaries of the Upper Urubamba, the only other Amerindian groups besides poñaronas were the Campas, whom the Matsigenka call Ashaninka. At the start of our research in 1972, there was a Matsigenka-Ashaninka assistant schoolteacher in Shimaa. The two languages are not mutually intelligible for the ordinary person (perhaps roughly equivalent to the difference between Spanish and Portuguese), but Antonio spoke both owing to his family background. He came from a village, Picha, where Matsigenkas and Ashaninkas lived together and intermarried to some degree. But in Shimaa and the larger region around it, including the communities of Shimentaato, Pogentimari, and Mantaro Chico, there were no Ashaninkas in 1972. Antonio left Shimaa shortly after our arrival, citing loneliness. Ashaninkas do not appear in any of the life histories or folktales I recorded and are not a salient part of the Matsigenka world view in this region.

Matsigenka--. In the division between Matsigenka and other humans the split between good and evil is fully present. It is not just that Matsigenkas are good and others are bad, but

that the badness of others is linked to demonic behavior like cannibalism and unrestrained violence. In chapters 3 and 4 we saw how raising a Matsigenka to adulthood is a constant balancing act between strong, self-centered agency and the control of impulsive behavior that could damage the family group. As true as it may have been in the past that outsiders really were violent cannibals, they also provide a convenient place in which to “locate” feelings the Matsigenka are intensely uncomfortable with in themselves. This amounts to a kind of defensive splitting of the world into good people like us who are self-controlled, and bad people like them who are out of control. Although there are communities Peruvians call kogapakori, I would be surprised if any Matsigenkas who live in those communities accepted this designation of themselves uncritically, for it means “people with no reason,” wildmen out of control, not at all the way the Matsigenka think of themselves.

The difference between “us” and “them” begins even closer to home than that. Their interactions with households within a few hours’ walk is also slight: they are much more likely to know about them through gossip than actual personal contact. One is hesitant to wander too close to another settlement for fear of being confronted and accused of bad motives--a sense of scarcity and resentment against outside competition is palpable. Even in-laws are suspect, especially in-laws who live in another hamlet.

That feelings of hostility within the household, especially between spouses, are not absent but rather carefully-controlled is revealed in the occurrence of hostility in folktales and fears of magical attack by spouses. The interdependence of the married couple and the close ties of dependence between offspring and their same-sex parents help keep the ambivalence

within the household under wraps, but even within the hamlet the option of hiving off and living isolated is frequently exercised.

The pull of security, sharing, and sociability, countered by the push of social friction, contagion and competition results in the dialectic of aggregation and dispersion characteristic of all family-level societies (Johnson and Earle 2000: xxx). Put as simply as possible, the Matsigenka want to be with others (enjoy the benefits) and at the same time do not want to be with others (avoid the costs). As we saw, folktales generally begin with a problem created by the conflicting desires of two willful individuals, and depict the danger created by the resulting anger. As frightening as anger is, it does not always lead Matsigenkas to sacrifice their desires to placate angry people, especially beyond the walls of the household. An egalitarian political ethic limits the ability of members of one household to control members of other households. This is not so much a political contract to respect each other's independence as a recognition that intervention is fruitless and probably dangerous.

Spirits--. The assumption that every being is a center of purpose and will pervades the Matsigenka conception of a world of spirits. If living humans are continual sources of danger owing to the inevitable clashes of will that social life entails, so too are animals and spirit beings seen as potentially dangerous individuals (person-like beings) dominated by self-interest. At home, in the garden, or in the forest, the Matsigenka continually adjust their behavior as they receive cues about the possible presence and activity of spirit beings.

They assume that each of these beings has a soul or spirit, is osure, which has an existence apart from the material, this-worldly substance of his or her body. As is common in animistic, shamanic religious systems, the Matsigenka believe in the full coexistence of two

worlds, a material world and an “other,” invisible world (Lévy-Bruhl 1923; cf. Kensinger 1995: 207, Roe 1982: 17). The spirit, which exists essentially in the other world, is not formless: it can appear just like the body it normally inhabits, or it can take on a new form--that of an animal or some other human. In the case of many spirits, it can be invisible, and can pass through walls “like the wind.” All souls or spirits have goals and purposes that have consequences for the humans that come into contact with them.

Most of these consequences are bad. The Matsigenka world is full of harmful spirits close at hand, whereas beneficial spirits are distant and hard to reach. Many illnesses and deaths will ultimately be traced to spirit action. Matsigenka loved ones, when they die, are thought to lose human generosity and respect and to become remorseless in sating their appetites, which nearly always involve either food or sex. For this reason, they have traditionally placed the corpse of the deceased in the river, to carry the soul so far away it would be unable to find its way back home and importune its grieving family. As a further precaution, it is common to burn the house of the deceased, so that the soul will become disoriented and finally abandon its effort to capture the soul of a living kinsman for companionship in the next world.

Good and Evil. In order to avoid the ethnocentric implications of the concepts of good and evil, Rosengren (1987b: 33) has suggested that the basic distinction for the Matsigenka is between perfect (Tasorintsi) and imperfect (Kentivakori). There are two difficulties with this approach, however. First, although Tasorintsi is extremely powerful and brought great good to humankind, he could also be irritable and cause bad things to happen, as when he withdrew the gift of immortality humankind once enjoyed (cf. Renard-Casevitz 1984:

5). Second, there is too much evidence linking suffering to transgression and punishment in Matsigenka belief to justify leaving good and evil out of our description altogether. Matsigenka stories portray many sin-like behaviors (rage, greed, lust, envy), the bad consequences of which cause human suffering. If the suffering is not unambiguously punishment for sin, it is at least the price of indulgence. In this sense, most Matsigenka folktales are morality tales.

Early in fieldwork this moralistic side to Matsigenka character and culture largely escaped me. I wondered if I had come to a place where people had no concern with sin or with spirituality:

Fieldnote 9-26-72 - People are quiet and largely unobtrusive, going about their business without displays. They paint their faces, but do so with a lack of ritual or careful design. Life does not seem to be imbued with the sacred, rather, the sacred and profane are not apparent to us yet.

Without the elaboration of art and ritual, we feel they are less primitive (in the anthropological sense) than they really are.

When I tried to explore the magical and mystical underpinnings of everyday reality, I found my informants preferring to give me ordinary explanations. Some of this was a reluctance to be open about spiritual beliefs, having been criticized for them by other virakochas, and being characteristically secretive about them. But part of it also reflects a real substrate of practical materialism (in the philosophical meaning of the term) in Matsigenka outlook, where many things just happen--a branch falls and breaks a man's arm, a raft overturns in the river and a woman drowns, a child is bitten by a maiini ant--without any suspicion of spiritual causation.

Farabee (1909: 128-9) long ago remarked on the absence of ritual and ceremonial among the Matsigenka. Because of their lack of ceremony with the dead--simply throwing the corpse in the river--he came to the conclusion that they have no fear of the dead, indeed, "no

belief in ghosts or in the return of the soul,” a startlingly erroneous conclusion. That he completely missed the richness of Matsigenka spiritual beliefs discounts his value as an ethnographic resource, but I have to sympathize. In this aspect of their lives, as in many others, they do not wear their hearts (or their souls) on their sleeves.

In time I learned to appreciate how filled their world is with spiritual forces and beings. Despite the absence of public spectacle characteristic of many family level societies, the spiritual is potentially lurking almost anywhere, and can be activated suddenly and without warning. Most prominent and dramatic are spirit-beings that are, in effect, humans with exaggerated attributes and life-and-death powers. But there are also less personified powers or processes that might be called “magical forces,” roughly transitional between the materialistic world of mere matter and the personalized world of spirit beings.

Magical Force: Accidents and Taboos. The first encounter I had with any Matsigenka spirit belief was when I tried to measure Javier’s garden and he refused, standing arms akimbo at his garden entrance, bow and arrows in hand. Simply by setting foot in his garden while the maize was in its vulnerable stage, I would have, without wanting or intending to, endangered his whole maize crop. Anyone who ate certain kinds of meat (especially howler monkey, shito monkey, deer, anteater, and charava fish) after helping him plant his maize would also bring about magical harm, but only to the maize plants the meat-eater himself had planted.

This is typical of a host of mechanical magical effects that just automatically happen when someone breaks a taboo deliberately or even innocently by accident. Although no willful spirit is blamed for the harm, there has been a kind of disobedience or carelessness at fault, implying that punishment has taken place. Hunting is a major focus of magical concern, and loss

of hunting skill (failure to bag game over a series of hunts) is sure evidence that some taboo has been broken. Magical practices such as avoiding contact with women and applying magical substances can correct the problem:

Do Machiguenga men develop the aim and skill required to hunt monkeys through years of daily training with bows and arrows since boyhood? Or do some men inherit natural talents from a father with exceptional vision or athletic abilities? If you ask a Machiguenga, the answer is no. There is no such thing as good practice, or good luck, or good genes. There are only good hunting medicines. (Shepard 1997: 6)

Personal Magic: Love Magic and Magical Harm. Somewhat closer to personalized spirits are the forms of magic that are practiced deliberately by one person at the expense of another. In Chapter 4 we saw examples of love magic, which is feared as a form of weakening and control by another. We also learned of the story of an envious man who attempted to use a magical herb to destroy the crops in another man's garden. Personal magic beliefs are rooted in the assumption that the thwarted or disappointed desire of another will motivate them to use magic either to achieve their desire or to exact revenge. Close to this is the belief that if a man kills an animal he should not, the animal ipugatakeri "takes revenge" by making the man's baby sick (Shepard 1999: 102-103). Although the Matsigenka of Shimaa in 1972 practiced relatively little witchcraft, we can see the seeds of witchcraft beliefs in such personal magic. We will examine the beliefs in good and evil shamans in the next section.

The Spirit World. The Matsigenka believe in a profusion of evil spirits, against which are arrayed only the protective powers of the terira ineenkani (unseen ones) and seripigari

(shamans). Since both of the latter can turn against humans under certain circumstances, the Matsigenka world is indeed fraught with spiritual peril.

What is primarily in peril is the human soul or spirit, isure (m.), osure (f.). The Matsigenka concept of soul is of the ineffable essence of self, whatever it is that goes where the self goes during a dream or in the trance of ayahuasca. As we have seen, all animate beings, and a few plant species, have souls, although plant spirits were rarely mentioned by Matsigenkas in Shimaa nor do they appear in folktales. But animals, humans, shamans, demons and the unseen ones--all animate beings--have active souls that move in and around this world and are capable of bringing about great harm and great good.

In a certain sense, the soul is separate from the body. When a woman, for example, meets her lover for a tryst in the forest, they may play together, run and laugh, make love and share wild fruits they have picked. She will return home with the memory of an afternoon's pleasure. She does not know that it was a demon who adopted her lover's form, who raped her soul with his huge penis, breaking her up. That night she sickens and, within a day or two, she dies. What her soul experienced in that other reality was entirely different from, though in a sense parallel to, what her body experienced in this one.

Yet, although her soul "broke up" and her body died, she did not die. She, or some version of her, has become the spouse of the demon who took her. But her humanity has been stripped, she is now evil and dangerous to humans. Still, she has a (demon) body with desires

and she uses craft, deceit and force to satisfy them. She has become in some sense immortal-- at least, the annihilation of her self has not yet taken place.

To be sure, her tryst in the forest may not have been with a demon and she may live to a ripe old age. With the help of good spirits, she could go on to live a happy afterlife. In that afterlife, she will have a body much like her living body. It will be free from pain and aging, a fine body to enjoy. Then it may also be possible for her to change her body, to become an ant or an anteater without changing her soul.

In this sense the Matsigenka soul may be said to be both embodied and disembodied. Shepard (1990: 18) notes that his informants sometimes contrasted soul and body, but on other occasions spoke of a “spirit-body”:

...Terms like “soul” and “body” are not simple to translate since they involve complex cultural concepts. The Matsigenka soul is a concrete “body” (ibasta) or life-giving “core” (isuire) whose interactions with other such beings in the other half of reality determine matters of life and death in our everyday half of reality.

The soul is capable of leaving its mortal body (through the crown of the head), but is not generally without a body, either its own familiar body or the body of a bird or other creature it becomes while traveling in a spiritual dimension (cf. Shepard 1995a: 13). It may become temporarily as ephemeral as a breeze, but even the breeze is a tangible signal that a spirit is passing by.

We should avoid trying to be too precise in describing the Matsigenka conception of the self. Intuitively, viewed subjectively, my self is the essential me I experience in my daily life, with

all my skills, knowledge and aspirations. But my self also has an “otherness” that I only experience tangentially. For example, when the Matsigenka tell their dreams, they routinely use the expression, “I dreamt I saw...,” as in Andrea’s dream that began,

maika inkara nokisanivagetake nonei noatake oaku notentanaka ina
Now earlier I dreamt. I saw I went to the river with mother.

nonei nokogake koriti
I saw I wanted snails.

In this manner of description, Andrea is both the dreamer (“I dreamt I saw”) and the one who goes to the river and wants snails. This inherent ambiguity of subjectivity is also evident in the standard ending of many dreams. This is from one of Casiano’s dreams:

noneake kañotasanomatakatyo kutagiteri impogini nokireanake ontityo
I saw it was just like day! Then I woke up. It was

nokisanivagetake teratyo arisano.
I was dreaming! It was not true!

The exclamatory suffix, “-tyo,” indicating emphasis or surprise, appears three times in this statement, as if to underline the strangeness of an experience he both had and did not have.

The realism of dreams has an eerie or uncanny quality for the Matsigenka, but they do not for the most part regard dreams as real events in the world. The ending comment essentially says, “It was only a dream!” The dream can be frightening, but not have real world consequences, as in Emelio’s dream of a terrifying encounter with a jaguar:

maika nokisanivagetake inkaara kañotaka kutagiteniku impogini noatake anta
Now, I dreamt before. It was like daytime. Then I went there

nonkenavagetera impogini noatanake noneapaakeri matsontsori vataitaka avotsiku
to hunt. Then I went on, I saw on arriving jaguar seated in the path.

yovataitaka enoku timashitake avotsiku impogini imitaanake tera iragena
He sat up high guarding the path. Then he jumped, not he bit me.

impogini nokentakeri kañomatakanirika kutagitenirikatyo onake kantankicha
Then I shot him. Like real daytime it was! But

ontityo nokisanivagetake impogini nokireavetanaka aiñona aka nonake
it was I was dreaming! Then I woke up, I was there I was in

nomagakera tsarogamatakena kantakena shigeshige teratyo ontityo
my bed. I was scared to death, shaking. It did not happen!

nokisanivagetake
I was dreaming.

Even in telling this dream, which was not fresh but remembered from before, Emelio seems to want to reassure himself that it did not really happen. And, there are some dreams that do have real-world consequences--usually negative (Shepard 1995a: 14)--such as a dream of seeing a deer, or of being perfumed all over. In a fragment of a tale involving Kashiri, a character named Arosa repeatedly avoids being burned by his garden fires until he has a dream: the next day he is roasted by his garden fire and Kashiri eats him. In the tale, Matsontori, below, the shaman dreams that Jaguar takes him deep underground, and after he wakes, he falls ill and dies. These stories tell of dreams where a real encounter with a spirit has taken place.

As we shall see, the Matsigenka imagine all sorts of possibilities for themselves beyond the physical limitations of this ordinary world, but they almost always imagine it happening to them, their essential selves, in a definite embodied form, whether animal, human, or spirit.

Animal Spirits. Many animals and some plants have immortal spirit rulers, itinkame, or spirit “mothers” (inato; cf. Baer 1984: 153) who in folk literature are the founders of the species. In keeping with the ambivalence and splitting that dominates the Matsigenka view of the world, these spirit rulers sometimes appear to be good spirits (terira ineenkani) and sometimes evil ones (often labeled by the suffix -niro [“mother”], as in oshetoniro

(Baer 1979: 110-111). Itinkame look out for the well-being of their species, and to that end may exercise spiritual force for or against humans.

In stories (Chapter 4), the spirit rulers of yairi “howler monkey” and osheto “spider monkey” threatened other protagonists with violence. Tsiroenti “hummingbird” is the spirit ruler of yairi “paper wasp,” whose spirit form is a huge wasp that shoots arrows into people, causing pneumonia (ikentakena yairi “he-shot-me wasp”). As with many demons, yairi can take either male or female form. For example, a married couple, Aradino and Rosa, returned from a foraging trip convinced they had been shot; yet Aradino said “*He* shot me” (ikentakena), whereas Rosa said, “*She* shot me” (okentakena). Both were pale and terrified.

Matsontsori (Jaguar). The category matsontsori includes jaguar, puma and ocelot. It is the largest predator in the forest, besides man, and is the main threat to domesticated animals. But the primary danger of matsontsori is spiritual. Long ago, people and animals metamorphosed (ipeganaka) freely into matsontsori, but in the present, only a limited number of animals are capable of converting into jaguar, including armadillo, squirrel, woodpecker, frog, turtle, and several monkeys and birds. These animals are potentially very dangerous, therefore, and must be hunted and killed with respect. In particular, if the hunter laughs at them, or takes their eggs or their young, they are liable to convert right then and there into matsontsori.

The man who kills jaguar is considered to be very brave, and must be a wise hunter to succeed. Once killed, matsontsori is no further threat, although most people observe a restriction against eating its meat. They say, “I don’t know how, I never learned,” and fear

bloody diarrhea if they do so. The killer, however, need not purify or protect himself from vengeance. The canine teeth of the jaguar, on the other hand, have protective power against demons like segama and kasonkatini.

Matsontsori can take human form or become an insubstantial spirit that can move through walls. The following tale, in which the bird, tsonkivinti (Phlegopsis barringeri, and Formicarius rufipectus) transforms into both a man and a jaguar, offers an example:

MATSONTSORI (JAGUAR)

(Aradino 1973)

A man lived with his wife and daughter. Another man went to the forest to set traps for birds. The daughter went one day to look at the traps, and found tsonkivinti in one. She brought him home alive and kept him until he escaped. She went to look for him, but he changed into a man and met her along the river bank. “Why did you treat me badly when I was your bird?” he asked. And then, “Do you want a husband?”

“No,” she replied. “I want to live with my parents.” She went home and told her parents of her meeting. Her father was making a house. A seripigari drank ayahuasca and knew that Matsontsori was coming, disguised as tsonkivinti. The men did not all believe him when he said the house must be finished quickly, with strong walls, and that the chickens must be brought in from the chicken house. They worked slowly, but finally finished the door before nightfall and went to bed.

At midnight they heard Matsontsori’s footsteps, tin, tin, tin. The seripigari placed ivenkiki on the trail to prevent Matsontsori from arriving like the wind (i.e., as a spirit) and entering the house at will; he had to come now in material form. Matsontsori began to eat chickens and the men wanted to shoot him, but the seripigari said, “Wait for a good shot, so he will die.” Then the seripigari shot and wounded Matsontsori, who fled into the forest.

Men lay sleepless at night, fearing his return. At dawn, they gave chase. On the way, Matsontsori applied tsipana leaf to his wound to staunch the bleeding. The men did not find him

and came home. That night the seripigari had a bad dream. Matsontsori came to him and said, “Why did you shoot me? Now I will take you under the earth.” He took his soul down to where he saw a great fire, but he was not burned.

When the seripigari woke up, his head was all stuffed up like a bad cold. He said, “I am going to die. I have been underground and I saw a great fire. I will get worse and worse until I die.” And he did.

Briefly, in this tale we encounter some familiar themes: Matsontsori is frustrated by the girl’s refusal of his proposal of marriage; people fail to respect the warning of the shaman; the shaman who shoots him dies through spirit attack. Matsontsori combines masculine desire and superhuman power, and perhaps the only safe outcome of the situation would have been if the shaman had killed him outright.

Maranke (snake). All snakes are objects of terror and loathing. They are the most feared of all animal spirits (possibly along with matsontsori) and for this reason are attacked and killed at every opportunity. For the Matsigenka there is no such thing as a harmless snake, because snakes as a group are seen as the arrows of their spirit ruler, who hunts human souls the way humans hunt peccaries. Not mere arrows in the mechanical sense, snakes are intelligent beings (persons) who themselves stalk humans and, when they wound one, call their kin to come and help them finish off their prize (just as human hunters do when they wound a peccary). Maranke spirit eats human souls with the same relish that humans eat the flesh of peccaries. For this reason, when a man kills a snake, he carries it off and disposes of it in the river, so its soul will be carried so far away it will be unable to mobilize its kin to take revenge

on its killer. The Matsigenka expend much physical energy keeping the clearings around their houses weeded and swept to be free of snakes.

If bitten, it is imperative for the victim to get home as quickly as possible and to make noise to ward off another--spiritual--attack that would be lethal. To bang a metal object on stone makes a sound that seems like thunder to the snake, scaring it away. Poultices and teas may be administered to reduce the pain and swelling of the physical bite, but the real danger is further spirit attack. In fact, it is possible to be attacked by snake without ever being physically bitten. To hallucinate a snake (okepigatanake maranke) is a bad sign, portending the possibility of death. The snake spirit bites the soul just as a physical snake bites the flesh.

To eat snake is considered inconceivable. When I asked people if they eat such tabooed meats as jaguar or otter, they simply said "No." But when I asked if they eat snake, they were startled and laughed out loud, the idea was so outrageous. This kind of response was otherwise most rare and completely out of character for the Matsigenka, who were usually extremely patient and respectful of even my oddest questions.

Exposure to maranke carries a serious danger of spiritual contamination. Owing to the danger of further stalking by maranke kin, there is a kind of contagion whereby a snakebite victim should be carried to an empty house and kept isolated from anyone who has ever been snakebitten. Otherwise, the latter will themselves be bitten again. The victim must be bathed in hot water and remain awake all night making noise. In one treatment, food is forbidden, especially fish and meat, for five days (manioc is allowed). When the swelling has abated, the person goes to the river after midnight and eats red pepper in large quantities, then bathes. The

pepper is to prevent another snake bite, since snakes are said to be afraid of the burning of red pepper.

In general, the idea of spirit rulers confirms the cultural importance of a cognized differentiation of the animal (and plant) world into species-level categories. The way Matsigenkas, in both folktales and interviews, go back and forth between referring to individual animals (such as a peccary shot that morning) and the spirit ruler (Peccary, who allows or prevents peccaries from being available to hunters) indicates that they see all individuals of a species as manifestations of a single spirit ruler. But this is more than evidence for a cultural category. When the hunter encounters a male howler monkey in the forest, he is encountering the powerful spirit ruler, the seripigari (shaman) of the origin folktale, made manifest in the body of this particular animal. This is one example of how close the Matsigenka find themselves to spiritual encounters in their everyday lives.

Many animals can take human form in seeking mates. Most prevalent of these is maniro “deer,” who can cause one to have perfumed dreams that will lead to encounters and death. The story of Narani in chapter 4 is another example.

Demons (kamagarine). Beyond (though sometimes including) the spirit rulers of animal species, the Matsigenka world is populated by a host of horrible, lethal demons who, being generally invisible, could be almost anywhere. Demons tend to be exaggerated versions of humans or animals, usually deformed, defective and disgusting in some way. The vast majority of them (including the females) possess huge penises that penetrate a person’s soul and cause it to break up. The motivation of the demon is to possess a human soul, either to eat

or, more commonly, for companionship, just as lonely humans seek a spouse for companionship in this life.

Analogously, when a human spouse has died through contact with a demon, the departed one is thought to lust or yearn after the surviving spouse and to be just as deadly a threat as the demon itself was (see the death of Serafina in Chapter 4). In fact, dead spouses are often said to have become the demons that killed them. Shepard (1995a: 10) writes that,

the term kamatsiri, “dead spirit,” is virtually synonymous with the word, kamagarine, “evil spirit.” Both are derived from the root -kama-, “to die.” The word kamatsiri is a noun made from the intransitive form, “the one who has died,” while kamagarine is derived from the transitive form, “the one who kills.” The two are used almost interchangeably, and both connote sinister and dangerous beings.

Perhaps the most prominent demonic spirit is Moon (Kashiri). Actually, Kashiri has some of the qualities of a culture hero deity (Baer 1984): he came down to earth from the next higher plane of existence, first brought manioc to humans, taught them how to chew their food, and fathered the Sun, bringing daylight to a cool and dimly lit world. But when he left this plane, he also took with him the best and largest manioc. Now he has a weir (shimperetsa) to trap the souls of dead people trying to reach the afterlife on the plane above. Only those souls with spirit helpers to guide them escape; Kashiri catches the rest and eats them, ending their existence.

KASHIRI (MOON)

(Pororinta 1973)

Then a woman dug up “heart of the earth” (anigaki kipatsi) and carried it home. She mashed it-- they drank it like beer. She boiled it and served it with materi fish. People didn’t know how to chew-- they gulped it korón, korón. She asked her daughter, “Are you full?”

Je je “Yes,” she said.

“You must spin now,” her mother said. “You must work.” She was shut up in there [her menarchy seclusion] a long, long time ago.

“Je je,” the girl replied. She spun until late, then she slept. The next day her mother called to wake her before dawn,

“Now, wake up. You have to spin. Don’t sleep.” Her mother squeezed mash through a strainer, kavuse, kavuse. She gave her daughter the fibers to suck, of that which was cooking, that stuff-like-manioc. The girl gulped it down, she finished it off. Her father said, “I’m off to get food.” His wife helped him get heart-of-earth. She carried a caña brava torch for light--it was dim, like moonlight. He built a dam, they fished for materi. They brought the food home with them. They cooked materi. They roasted the “manioc” in the ashes. They gulped their food.

They drank beer. Her mother gave her some in a large gourd. [P.: “You realize it was soil. She drank it. It was soil, but she thought it was manioc”] She drank it all and gave the cup back to her mother. “Give me back some of the materi, also,” her mother said. “Otherwise, when you marry you will be like one who never gives generously. You must give a portion back.” The girl only ate a bit of the plump belly of the materi. She gave the rest back to her mother. Her mother said, “Eat manioc. You must eat in order to get plump, so that you will grow.”

[P.’s sister, Teodora, interrupted at this point to ask, “When they eat that earth, can they get plump?” P.: “I don’t know. I’m not sure. Perhaps when you suck the mash of earth you will be thin and weak. Maybe we are plump today because we don’t eat earth.”]

Anyway, she sucked that mash, tsose, tsose, tsose.... She finished it. “You must spin,” her mother said. “You must first-spin and second-spin. When you have finished, when I allow you to come out of seclusion, I will teach you how to set up the loom. If you don’t know how to loom before I die, you will not learn.” The girl wound the thread into balls. She filled her basket. She gave it to her mother. Her mother helped her wind the thread.

Her mother and father went fishing, leaving her with her little sister to spin. Around noon, she heard the sound of a man walking, tin, tin, tin. Her little sister had gone out somewhere. The man [Kashiri]

looked inside, he opened the door. He said, "Where did your father go?" She said, "He went fishing. He went to get manioc."

"Show me what manioc," Kashiri said. She set out very black soil. "See," she said, "manioc."

"What manioc?" he said. "This is soil." He took four stout pieces of manioc from his bag: "Now, this is manioc," he said. "When your parents return, cut these into small pieces and save some for your mother to eat with the materi. I am leaving. Don't tell anyone I was here."

Her family returned. Her mother mixed beer. She asked her daughter, "Did you finish your beer?" "Yes," she replied. Her mother passed her more behind the screen. The girl slowly poured it out. "Did you finish?" her mother asked. "Yes, I finished." Her mother passed her some more. She dug a hole to pour the beer into. Her mother gave her some of that boiled stuff-like-manioc along with some shivaigi fish. [P., correcting herself: "Materi. Now, shivaigi, she never ate shivaigi. If so, all the beer she would make in the future would be dirty. It was materi she ate."] She ate a little bit of the materi. Her mother said, "If you eat all of that up, when you get married you will never give your husband any." The girl gave most of the materi back to her mother.

She refused to eat the stuff-like-manioc her mother gave her. She finished off the real manioc-- tomorrow he would bring more. Her mother had her finish spinning, then seed more cotton, then spin more, day after day. Then her mother said, "I am going to get manioc now. You spin and put it outside your room. Here is a little beer for you to have at noon." Her parents were gone all day, fishing with barbasco. Kashiri came and gave her lots of manioc. She ate the manioc, pouring out the beer her mother passed in to her. The girl spun and spun. When her mother finished eating, she gave the girl thread. "Here, spin this all. Three days from now, when the moon is full and appears large upon rising, I will let you out of seclusion. You will be big when the moon is full."

Well, she let her daughter out and gave her a bath. She was big. Her vagina was big. [Aretoro interrupted: "If she were here now, I would sleep only with her!" P.: "Je je."] The daughter sat and spun. Her mother said, "I am going to get manioc." Around noon Kashiri arrived. He brought uncooked manioc. [Teodora: "And his cushma?" P.: "He had one!"] He had four big thick manioc tubers. "Look here," he said. "Later, when your mother arrives, tell her, 'See, this is real manioc.'" She

leaned the tubers against the wall, those really long tubers there. "I'm going," he said. "Je je," she answered. He had also brought manioc stalks. It was his yam, a kind of manioc--when he harvested it, it was so huge!

Her family returned, built up the fire, began to eat. Her mother said, "Here, my daughter, have some manioc." "No," she replied, "that is soil. Now see, this here is real manioc." Her father said, "Is that so?" He threw away the soil, vuo, vuo, vuo. She went and cut up the manioc. Its skin was so thick she had to cut it with an axe, kotare, kotare, kotare. She boiled it. When it was done, she put it in a serving basket. "See? Manioc."

They all came near. They broke off little pieces. You know, it was soft. They put it in their mouths. They were all saying, "Oh, yes. This is real manioc!" Now they went and planted the manioc stalks. She cooked manioc. She opened up her seclusion room.

One afternoon, Kashiri arrived. To the girl's mother he said, "Mother-in-law, your daughter will cook the manioc I brought, that I carried on my back. She will make beer for me to drink. "Je je," she said. The next day he brought manioc on his back. The girl opened up her seclusion room and came out. Her mother bathed her. She was pregnant. "Peel the manioc," her mother said, "and make beer." Next day, Kashiri brought more manioc. There were baskets of manioc all over the place there. She mixed in all the sweet potato, otivuta, otivuta, otivuta. The next day it was sour. The next day she mixed it with water. It was ready to drink. "I will come by later," Kashiri said. "I will drink plenty. Mother-in-law, wake me in the morning so that I may go."

He drank, and drank. There was only a little left, two cups full. He slept deeply on the mat. In the morning, at dawn, they still slept. The two daughters woke up. The others were drunk. The girls got up, they sat for a while. The older sister touched Kashiri, "It's morning." She touched him again, "It's morning." A little later, he moved. Now he felt afraid, "I told you before to wake me!"

He was down here now [on this plane of existence]. After he got used to it, he went back up to get more manioc. He cleared a garden, planted, harvested manioc. She cooked manioc. Her belly began to swell. She did not have her period.

Kashiri said, "I am going net fishing." The girl cooked manioc for the trip and went with him. Kashiri said, "You turn over rocks for fish." He went net fishing. He said, "Don't you watch me." She sat down. She hid her face. Then she glanced up. Kashiri sat down in the water quickly. [He turned into impita, a thin water creature with legs] He walked around. She pulled him out of the water. He was making chewing motions with his anus, eat, eat, eat. Now she walked along with her head down. She got her net bag with manioc in it. She took a small piece and put it in her mouth, but she couldn't swallow it. She began to chew. She went way downstream, eating.

Kashiri came downstream. He said, "I told you not to watch me. Now let's get going." They got home. Her father had caught a bird from his trap. Her mother gave her manioc she had set aside for her. She started to gulp it, but then began to chew, tonkire, tonkire, tonkire. Everyone there then also began to chew with their mouths. They all did it, virri, virri. They ate chewing, virri. They bit with their teeth. Kashiri said, "I said before that you shouldn't watch me."

Her belly was growing big. Her fetus [Sun] was growing big, she was sitting there, getting round. Her fetus stayed in longer, a year. She was in pain, she suffered plenty there, for many days, maybe ten weeks, crying out all day long. Then she died, not having given birth yet. Her mother was furious. Kashiri said to her, "Mother-in-law, go put her there at the far end of the garden. Later, two women will arrive with babies in slings." Enraged, she said. "Perhaps you want to eat her! If you don't eat her, then you have killed my daughter in vain!" She said nothing more for awhile, then she went and carried her daughter to the far end of the garden. Kashiri sat there for awhile, thinking. He said to himself, "Wait. I will eat her!" [Teodora: "Will he eat her raw?" P.: "Yes." T.: "Won't he smoke her (meat) first?" P.: "I don't know if he would smoke her. Maybe he did smoke her."] Then the girl's mother went there. Kashiri was smoking her meat, eating it. His son was sitting there. [Teodora: "He cut him out?" P.: "Yes." T.: "He cut her open to get him out?" P.: "Yes"] He was a big, plump child.

The mother-in-law was furious. "You said, 'Take her to the garden's edge. Later two women will come here.' Now here you are eating her." Kashiri said, "Because you told me to eat her." She was mad! She went to get her grandson but failed. Now she was really mad! She beat Kashiri, and beat him. Kashiri said, "Earlier, you said, 'Eat her!' I told you to take her there and later two women would

come. But you said, 'Eat her!' You are at fault for my anger, because you told me to eat her." He didn't want to give her his son. She went home. He took the boy with him up to the sky, along with all the manioc he had brought before. All the manioc he left behind began to wither. Everything died. He took the cotton with him, that long staple cotton, that very long fiber cotton. Whatever he took with him, everything withered. What little remained they set aside in order to plant manioc. [Teodora: "Perhaps he took everything. He took it. Perhaps they went to beg seed from their neighbors to plant." P.: "I am done." T.: "He took Sun (his son) up there." P.: "That's right. I'm finished (with the story)."]

Several aspects of this tale deserve emphasis. To start with, it is one of many accounts of the transformation of humans to fully cultural status. The episode of the introduction of manioc will make more sense if it is remembered that the word for manioc, sekatsi, derives from the root, -seka-, "eat." So wherever manioc appears in the story, one could say "food" instead. They think that soil they are eating is food, but Kashiri shows them real food.

Kashiri is not an ordinary demon. Unlike many demons, he does not kill with a huge penis, although he does bring those huge manioc tubers with him and, as father of the Sun (Poreatsiri) he is certainly a powerful masculine figure. In fact he is a god-like creator figure, an inhabitant of the heavens (enoku), who is also dangerous to humans, illustrating that Matsigenka cosmology does not fit into a simple heaven and hell dichotomy. In the story, a hint of danger enters when the girl begins to lie to her mother and hide the fact that she is eating real manioc instead of soil. Things start to go seriously wrong when the girl disobeys Moon and watches him, after he has taken the form of the water creature, shimpeniari, as he makes scissor-like chewing motions with his forked tail. From this, she figures out how to chew food and teaches

her family. Kashiri reminds her twice that she was not supposed to look. Now she swells up with a baby that will kill her, a frequent theme in demon stories. In fact, in the version of this tale collected by Shepard (1989), her belly swells with a great many snakes, much like the episode in Narani (Chapter 4) where the woman's belly swells with hundreds of baby birds.

The major clash of wills occurs when the mother, furious that her daughter has died, commands Kashiri to eat the dead girl's flesh, rather than follow his order to carry her body to the far side of the garden, where two women with babies in slings will arrive. Later, he explains to her that it was her fault he ate her daughter--it was her anger that caused all the trouble. Had she not behaved badly, women would not die today in childbirth:

Matsigenkas, remembering these episodes, criticize that bad mother-in-law, for, had she not offended her son-in-law Kashiri, the miracle of resurrection he would have performed on his wife's body would have been extended for all time to all women. That is to say, he would have had the power or custom of reviving women who died in childbirth. (F. Periera 1942: 243)

Furthermore, thenceforth humankind would be denied access to the biggest and best manioc, and would face the threat of personal annihilation if caught in Kashiri's trap en route to the afterlife. The relationship between masculine potency and women's death in childbirth, the dangerous consequences of anger, and the suffering that comes from disobedience to powerful individuals are all evident in this tale.

Kamagarini, "death-cause-ones," also known as "rotten," ivegaga (m.)/ovegaga (f.), are in a way the negations of the unseen ones to be discussed below. Kamagarini are invisible beings, often spirit rulers, who are capable of taking human form in order to obtain what they want from living people. Many illnesses are "personalized" as evil spirits who hunt

humans like game or seek them as spouses (Bennett 1996). It was a kamagarini that killed Serafina (Ch. 4). The term kamagarini is often treated in the literature as a cover term for evil spirits (Baer 1984: 175-187), and it was often used this way in Shimaá.

Kamagarini are said to be numerous around Shimaá. Felipe pointed out to me a large nearometiki tree in which there lived an ivegaga who was hairless and possessed a huge penis. Felipe cut down the tree and Mariano removed a tubular piece from the center, called otinkame “ruler” of the tree. It had a rotten smell, but did not seem to have any special aura about it: Mariano gave it to his son to play with. Men say that if they were to see a kamagarini, they would shoot and kill it.

The danger from kamagarini is in not knowing when you are dealing with one. In the tale of Narani we saw how a man, simply by talking to his wife, who had become ovegaga in the course of the story, was fatally damaged. As is common in such stories, the man did not die immediately but sickened and was dead by the next day. After the soul has been broken by the powerful demon penis, the body may live on for a day or two, growing progressively weaker.

The demons Segamairini, Maniti, and Matsiti are variations on a theme: Segamairini is said to resemble tapir, Maniti jaguar, and Matsiti fox: all are similar in being four-legged, having long snouts and tails, and large deadly penises. The penis is likened to the pod (segapa) of the sega palm (Jessenia batava), a very hard, pointed pod more than a meter in length and perhaps 15 cm in diameter. It may be used to beat or impale the victim in chest and stomach, causing them “very rapidly to break up.”

Maniti appears in the tale, Terira Ineenkani, below. Matsiti appears in the tale, “The Woman Killer” (Ross 1947: 64). Taking female form, Matsiti kills a man’s wife and tries to

take her place. She tries to nurse the couple's young son, but he recoils from her long black pointed nipples. When the husband returns from fishing, he knows something is wrong when she is an incompetent cook. When he tells her that she is not cooking either the maize or the fish properly, she says she has just forgotten how. Suspicious, he uses strong torchlight to reveal her long snout, then throws her in a pot and boils her to death.

The demon Sevatatsirira lives in rockpiles (imperitaseku) like those caused by landslides, typically taking the form of the bird, tsimpimpini (heron, Tigrisoma fasciatum). It can also appear as a midget, either male or female, with a large penis. But it is fond of occupying abandoned houses and of assuming a human shape, indistinguishable from one's lover or spouse. Sevatatsirira seduces a person, who becomes entranced and unable to resist. Having sex with Sevatatsirira pulverizes or softens a person's bones. The victim falls ill with fever and nausea, followed by death. Sevatatsirira removes the soul (inoshikapitsatakero osure), taking it away (yagapitsatakero). Just seeing Sevatatsirira may or may not be fatal (it is worse for women), but having sex is inevitably fatal. Although there is no remedy, there is a kind of ivenkiki that can be crushed and spread along the trail to kill Sevatatsirira.

Beyond these demons, which I heard about over and over again, there are many, many other dangerous spirits. In addition to the animal spirits discussed above, a great many animals, perhaps all, are capable of converting (ipeganaka) into demons. As we saw, there is a kind of identity or interchangeability between a physical animal and its spirit ruler (itinkame), leaving open the possibility that any encounter with an animal can turn spiritual. Since animal spirit rulers are often identified with the good spirits, the unseen ones, this is an area of ambiguity, where good and evil spirits blend into one another.

A smaller number of animals, but still amounting to dozens of different species, are capable of taking human form (ipeganaka matsigenka). The typical scenario is that a human encounters one of these metamorphosed creatures in the forest and, taking him or her for a lover, has sex. In addition to deer, kemari “tapir” and tontokoti “screech owl” (Otus sp.) may take human form. Tontokoti, in addition to the common pattern of being able to take human form and kill with a huge penis, has the ability to fly. All of these animals were once human beings: some were told to turn into animals by unseen ones, others became animals through events in the past, like the transformation of howler monkey (yaniri) into a shaman (Ch. 4).

The idea of transforming back and forth between animal, human and spirit is completely natural to the Matsigenka. Children, when playing games, say, “I have become anteater” (nopegakero shiani), using a similar construction to the phrase, “Anteater becomes human” (shiani ipeganaka matsigenka). What seems natural to the Matsigenka here is that any being that had the power would--like a child with fantasies of omnipotence--use that power to become whatever it wanted to be at any given moment.

If it is necessary for a spirit to become human in order to obtain souls to eat or to marry, then of course that can be easily done, as easily as a child becomes anteater or jaguar in a game.

In light of earlier discussion, the demon Kogapakori is of particular interest. According to legend, Kogapakori decided that the poñarona and virakocha had become such a nuisance that he would kill them all. He ordered his assistant to wake him at a certain time, so that he could do so. But his assistant neglected to wake him, and so he failed. Otherwise, he would have killed them all and the Matsigenka would not be bothered with them today. Today, if a

man drinks ayahuasca and is visited by Kogapakori, he turns inherently evil. If one prepares yuca and it turns red, it is a sign one will be visited by such an evil man.

Shamans and the Unseen Ones--.

The Unseen Ones. Countering to some degree the dangerous world of animal spirits, lost human souls, and demons, are the good spirits, the unseen ones (terira ineenkani = not he-is-seen-ones). They are also known as the pure ones (saankarite < -saanka- = pure, clean) although the people of Shimaá rarely used this name when discussing them with me. These good and powerful beings reside at a distance and must be invoked by a shaman (seripigari), usually in a hallucinogen-induced trance. The unseen ones are immortal, beyond pain and death. A shaman can enter into a personal relationship with an unseen one, who then becomes a guide and protector, curing the ills of this world and accompanying one's soul on the perilous journey into the afterlife. A powerful shaman can obtain the help of unseen ones for his family and loyal followers.

Terira Ineenkani (Unseen Ones)

(Julio 1973)

Once there was a shaman [gavagetacharira "ayahuasca drinker"]. He had many sons and daughters. Other men came and said, "Give us your sisters. Give them to us!" The old man spoke up, "Leave them alone! They don't want to give you their sisters." On their way home, one of those men said, "Now, let us wait: their father is getting old. Soon he will die--he will be no more. Then we will take the sisters. We will kill their brothers, so there will be no one to say, 'No!' to us."

The old shaman said, "I am dying." His wife prepared his ayahuasca. He drank it. His soul flew to the land of the Unseen Ones and returned. He said, "If I die and leave you here, they

will kill you so that you cannot prevent them from taking your sisters. I will take you to the place from which I return [the land of the Unseen Ones]. There you will sleep, there you will live.”

The father and sons bid goodbye to their mother and sisters and went far into the forest. A bird flew up. “Father?” said one of the sons [he was asking if it is all right to shoot this bird]. “Where?” asked his father. “No, not that one, he is your (spirit) sister’s pet [the youth’s “sister” among the Unseen Ones has this bird as her pet; to kill it would offend his spirit-sister]. Let’s go on.” Another bird flew up, a spirit sister’s pet, “No, not that one.” This happened again and again.

They went on, far away. The son said, “Father, where is the trail?” “See, there,” he answered, “you walk along there.” They continued. The old man said, “You can say, ‘Father, where?’ You can say, ‘Father, which?’ And I will say, ‘See, go that way.’” They went along far away. The son said, “Father?” His father replied, “See, you go along here. Now, this one here is theirs [the Unseen Ones]. This other trail is the one you use.” As they went, their father pointed out landmarks to them. They came across a beautiful trail. “That is the trail of the terira ineenkani,” said the father [they live inside the mountain, Tasorinkamairorini]. “Do we take that trail, Father?” “No, take this one. Let’s go.”

On they went, until their father said, “We will stop here. Here we will sleep. Make dams here.” When they had dammed up the river, he said, “Now, look for fish.” They looked under rocks and found two maronto (fish, about 15 cm long)—one son got one, another got the other. They brought them to their father. “Yes,” he said, “that’s it.” He opened the dam (pulled the rocks out). “Now,” he said, “I will roast it in leaves for you. We will stay here.” The old man wrapped the fish in leaves and turned them in the fire, shonka, shonka, shonka. “Now,” he said, “keep this one for your mother.” He unwrapped the other one. “Father, what about this one?” “That one is OK,” he said. They ate...they ate... they ate. “Now, give me the bones.” They took them out and gave them to him. He took them and threw them in the river [a courtesy to their spirit ruler, so that more maronto would become available in the future].

“Now, let’s go,” their father said. “Now we will return home” [not having yet completed their journey to the land of the Unseen Ones]. They went on back and reached a path. A bird flew up. “Father?” “OK.” The son shot it. Another flew up and landed on a branch. “OK.” Another son shot it. On they went. Many birds flew up, but their father said, “No, that one is your sister’s pet. Be careful you do not shoot it.” They went and went until they arrived home. His wife greeted him and gave him a maize dish she had set aside for him. He ate a little and rested in bed.

That night, she gave him ayahuasca and he drank it. He sang...he sang, and, clapping his hands, tan! tan! he [his soul] flew away. Then...tan! tan! he was back, walking down the stairs, koren, koren, koren, koren, koren. “My son.” “You have returned, Father.” “I waited there for you,” his father said. “The one-like-your-mother was there, she was waiting for you.” “You went there?” the son asked. “I really went there,” his father replied. [Here the father is speaking both as the shaman and as his Unseen counterpart--both in a “fatherly” relationship to the sons.] The next day, their mother cooked manioc. They opened up the leaves and ate the other fish. They stayed there a long time. Then one day, when their father came back (from his flight to the land of the Unseen Ones), he said, “Tomorrow morning, I will take you again. I will really show you the way to where I return from.”

This time they went farther. They caught the shivaigi fish called mereto, about this big [indicating 25 cm with his hands], two of them. Their father roasted them in leaves. They slept. In the morning, they went back home. At night his wife gave him ayahuasca. He drank, he sang. Clapping tan! tan! tan! he flew away. Later, he returned, tan! tan!, he landed. “There you are, Son.” “Yes, Father. You went there?” “Yes, I really did go.” “Now you have returned.” “I waited for you there,” the old man said, “and your ‘mother’ likewise waited there for you.”

They stayed there a long time, making two more trips, each one farther than the last. Then he drank his ayahuasca, tan! tan! [he went]. He returned purified [itsatimatankera]. “Now,” he told his sons, “I will take you all the way to the place that I visit. They went and went, far upstream there. When they got there, he said, “See? My visiting place. You will stay here, plant your

garden here. Now, never go upstream beyond this point--stay right here!" "Yes, father." They returned home.

Their father said, "Now I have taken you all the way. I have shown you just how to get there to my place. We all went there. When I die, you really have to go there. Watch out for those men! Take your sisters with you." He got sick. He continued to get worse. His wife cooked his food, but he did not eat. He got a very high fever. Early the next morning he died. "Our father is dead," the sons said, "he is no more." They cut wood, patui, patui. They made him a platform and set him up in a singing position, as though he were still alive. They said, "Let's get going."

The brothers and sisters all got their belongings. They went and went, far along. They said, "We will sleep here." They climbed into a tree and made a house of leaves. They brought dirt for the fireplace (for warmth at night). When it was ready, they climbed up. Below, they heard a demon [ivegaga], jiririri. They heard him down there! gushign, gushign,...teron, teron. They heard him from where they were seated up there.

They went on the next day, and the day after. Later, the sisters came to their brothers and said, "We saw a maniti demon." "Where?" said the brothers. "Over there," they said. They went and found Maniti standing, facing the other way. They said, "It's only Father (don't be afraid). Maniti jumped and ran off. They went back, climbed the tree, fixed dirt for the fire. Then they ate (down below) and climbed into the tree for the night. Down below, they heard a lot of noise, jiririri. "It's Father. He told us, 'When you come to my place, you will hear noise. Don't be afraid. Keep going."

They slept. The next day, they ate and then were on their way along trails and across streams. Again they slept in a tree, but not so high this time. Maniti was back along the trail from where they had come earlier. The next morning they went on. That night they slept on the ground. The next day they went on. In the late afternoon they arrived at their father's place, where he had said "You will live here." They slept there. Very soon (around midnight) it was morning. "It's daytime," they said. They got up but did not eat. They went to an old abandoned garden [magashipogo] with plantains still standing in it. They cleared the brush, patu, patu. They cleared

the plantains. The next day it was dry, they burned it, planted manioc, maize. It grew, they weeded it. When the maize was ripe they lived there and began a new garden, extending the first. They had plenty of ripe maize.

The men who wanted the sisters went looking for them at their old site. “They’re not here. Where did they go? They were here before, they had their large gardens of manioc. Where are they now?”

The brothers and sisters lived in their new place. They heard the calls of many birds, but when they went to look for them, they saw none--there was only silence. When they had plenty of ripe manioc, they made beer, they got drunk. Then, one of the sisters went, she saw a man walking, tiron, tiron. He came up to her, “Greetings, Sister” [he is an Unseen One]. He put his hand inside her cushma and fondled her breast...he fondled her. “Sister,” he said, “now you have all arrived. Before, there were those who said, ‘He sleeps with his sister.’ Well, here we are. Now I’m going to marry you.” He came up to her, he reached inside her cushma. She laughed and laughed. “Sister, take off your cushma.” She took it off. “Sister, now I will take you (make love to you). Run after me!” He ran off. She chased him. They made a lot of noise, laughing there. When they were finished playing, she gave him manioc beer. He drank, then he left.

Her (real) brother arrived, tiron, tiron. She cooked him manioc, he ate. She gave him beer, he drank. They lived on. One day, he said, “I’m going to check my traps.” After he was gone, the Unseen One (in guise of brother) came and joked with her. He was just like her brother, the one who went to check his traps, just like him.... “Sister,” he said, “sing!” She sang. He chased her outside. They laughed and laughed. “That’s enough, Sister,” he said. They went inside. She gave him beer, he drank tiron, tiron. After a while, he left. Her (real) brother came back.

The next day, a second ‘brother’ came. And another. The eldest brother had gone with the eldest sister, the second with the second, and so on. They fooled around. They brought meat, cooked manioc. The (real) brothers went hunting. When they returned, they went inside and sat down. Now the Unseen Ones were different. They treated the real brothers as brother-in-law. The brothers could see them now (whereas before they had only been visible to the sisters). They were

different now, not like the brothers. They came to marry them now, the brothers gave them their sisters. They took the brothers to show them their spring, their traps. They drank beer. The brothers' father now arrived. They saw him, he looked just as he had before. He said, "My sons, you have come. I told you, if you went you would find me." They were there. Then they went to live in their own place.

There, now, see? Did you hear? Now, that is all.

This story may be understood on many levels. Most significant for our purposes is the close association between the humans and the unseen ones. The father in the story is a shaman whose soul flies regularly to the land of the unseen ones, where he changes places with his counterpart there, who comes to occupy his body in this world. In the story, it is impossible to tell from the text which he is at any given moment. The man who takes the sons on the journey behaves like an unseen one. For example, he only eats a little meat off the back of the fish, just like the unseen ones are said to do. Yet he is always, "Father." The two are the same, or are aspects of each other (cf. Baer 1979: 118).

And, too, the brothers in the story have their spirit counterparts, who look just like them. These latter seduce their sisters, a subtext of brother-sister incest that is moderated at the end of the story when the unseen ones become brothers-in-law and marry the sisters. The mother, who is a minor character in this story, also has her counterpart in "that-one-like-your-mother" frequently mentioned in the tale.

The unseen ones are idealized humans. As the title of the tale collected by Ross (1947: 45-6) suggests, they are immortal (Terira Ineero Igamane = "Not He-sees His-death"). In her story, they do not suffer or die, they work little in return for ample food and clothing, and they

have great powers. In our story, as soon as the brothers and sisters arrive in the land of the unseen ones, the night passes quickly, cleared gardens dry in a day, maize and manioc grow abundantly, and the hunters' traps are filled with game birds. The sisters play delightedly with their spirit lovers, their laughter pealing through the forest. The unseen ones live lives of perfection (Baer 1984: 155; cf. Rosengren [1987b: 33]). This is heaven.

A key to understanding the unseen ones is their place in the scheme of good and evil. They are clearly good, of course, but they are also judgemental and punitive:

When good Machiguengas die these immortals take charge of them, but when bad people die the immortals do not take them (Ross 1947: 46).

In this respect the unseen ones are linked to other spirits, that may act either helpfully or harmfully. For example, it is said that jaguars are the pet dogs of the unseen ones (Baer 1984: 156). In some tales, like *Peccary* (Chapter 5), the link between an animal spirit ruler and the unseen ones is explicit (Baer [1984: 160] suggests all spirit rulers are unseen ones). In other tales the link is implicit. For example, in the story *Piitiro* "Cricket" (Ross 1947: 37-8), a man encounters Cricket (in human form), who promises to take him to *Meshiarineku* "the River of Skin" (the Milky Way), where he can renew his skin and become immortal. He must agree never to reveal this secret to any other human. But he thoughtlessly tells his neighbors, who, desiring immortality for themselves, rush to find Cricket. The man dies, and his wife laments,

In vain he told you not to tell. Now, you see, you have lost your chance at immortality. You've chosen to die!

What is crucial here is the man's disobedience. As so often happens in *Matsigenka* stories, failure to respect and comply with a powerful being results in bad consequences

(Shepard 1998: 323-24). If we return to the tale of the unseen ones, we find that a main theme of the story is the sons' obedience to their father. This father is a kind, protective and expert parent whose task is to instruct his sons in life-saving knowledge before he dies and "is no more." Time and again in the story, the sons ask their father if this or that is all right. He continually tells them what to do, and they reply "Uh huh" (je je). He not only passes on to them the expert knowledge they need to find the path to the land of the unseen ones--this is part of the apprenticeship of any new shaman--he also instructs them in basic morality: they are to save a portion of the meat to share with their mother, they are not to be greedy hunters ("that is your sister's pet," "three birds is enough"), and they are to dismantle the dam when through fishing and return the fishbones to the water as a courtesy to the spirit ruler of the fish.

Terira Ineenkani, then, is a story about how good children go to heaven. The parents are represented as a united pair, where the father is the central figure and the mother is his helpmate. Both parents are linked to their spirit counterparts who already live in the land of the unseen ones. Their sons are represented as dutiful, respectful and eager to learn. They never protest or rebel. Their only feistiness is that they do not want to give their sisters to the threatening men who want to take them by force, and even here it is their father who expresses their objections and provides them with the wherewithal to defend themselves. The sisters go along with the program, which includes representations of guiltless incestuous romps, and everyone ends up completely happy (except the would-be in-laws).

In this sense, then, the unseen ones are idealized parent figures who know what is right and amply reward good behavior. Even here, however, ambivalence is not far to seek. In several episodes (summarized in the present version) the father is represented as the terrible

demon, Maniti, one of those hyper-phallic monsters of long snout and penis who kill by raping human souls. The sons and daughters reveal their terror by building a tree house where the four-legged creature cannot get at them. Yet they discover him to be their father in disguise and gradually overcome their fear. So father appears here split in two: he is both the terrible phallic demon who kills, and the pure wise spirit who protects. If the good child deserves the good father, perhaps by implication the bad child deserves the demon.

The Shaman (seripigari; also, shinkitacharira). The most common term for shaman is seripigari, from the roots seri-, tobacco, and -piga-, hallucinate or inebriate. Shepard (1990: 31-2) also finds a semantic connection to the root -pega-, to transform. So the seripigari is “one who inebriates himself with tobacco and transforms himself.” As is the common pattern of tobacco use by shamans in South America (J. Wilbert 1973: 452), the shaman’s breath is believed to be charged with sacred or magic energy that is enhanced through the use of tobacco smoke. Hence, the healing practice of blowing tobacco smoke over an afflicted person. As Matteson (1954: 84) notes among the Piro, “Whenever a death or serious illness is mentioned the question is quickly asked, ‘Who blew?’”

Beyond his healing breath, however, the shaman’s power depends on his ability to connect with good spirits. In Terira Ineenkani the link between the childlike, vulnerable brothers and the unseen ones was provided by their father, the shaman. The unseen ones become visible to the shaman by virtue of his mastery of hallucinogens (Shepard 1998). Over time, the shaman builds a set of relationships with unseen ones, or inetsane (“visitors;” Baer 1981: 49-50), whom he calls “Brother,” “Brother-in-law,” “Aunt,” and so on (like humans, unseen ones do not have personal names). He may activate this network of spirit-friends to assure good hunting, combat

illness, and acquire guides for the journey to higher planes of existence after death. Although it is said that some women in the past drank ayahuasca, my data refer only to male seripigari.

Rosengren (1987b: 342) reports that the “separation of the genders is legitimized by reference to the greater pollution of women, and men’s consequently closer relation with the sáangarite.”

In Shimaá people made occasional reference to the shinkitacharira, a more powerful shaman than the seripigari. The distinction is between the seripigari as a “tobacco shaman” and the shinkitacharira (< -shinki-, inebriate) as an “ayahuasca shaman.” The latter is more powerful than the former, because ayahuasca gives more powerful visions than tobacco and is a more reliable means of travel to the land of the unseen ones. But, in daily conversation, people used the term seripigari most often, and meant by it to indicate the user of ayahuasca, which is by far the main hallucinogen they recognize. Seripigari is thus the best general term to translate our concept of shaman, and in Shimaá sometimes acts as a cover term for the various kinds of shaman.

In the Matsigenka conception a seripigari works by changing places with his spirit helper (or counterpart, or double) among the unseen ones. Working only at night, the seripigari drinks ayahuasca and climbs the ladder or notched pole to his platform (menkotsi) in the roof beams of his house. According to Shepard (1990: 32), the seripigari’s counterpart simultaneously drinks ayahuasca and the two trade places, occupying each other’s bodies. The spirit is now present in this world to help treat those who need his powers.

Let us say, for example, that Wasp shot me (ikentakena yairi, pneumonia). One way of describing this would be to say that Wasp, being an invisible spirit, has shot an (invisible) arrow into my (invisible) spirit. But perhaps a better way to express this is that, in addition to this

world, there is an equivalent, co-existing world where a real, gigantic wasp has shot a real arrow into my real tangible spirit. Being only of this world, I can see nothing of that. I only know that something feels wrong, and I know without doubt that this other world exists and that I will die if the attack on my soul is not treated.

This explains the urgency and dependency with which I seek the seripigari's help. The seripigari, like me, occupies both worlds, but unlike me he does so with full awareness and with power to act in both. He (his spirit counterpart) sees the arrow embedded in the body of my spirit and sucks it out. The real wound to my spirit has been treated and I am on the mend.

His work done, the shaman's spirit counterpart flies back to the land of the unseen ones (nopigarora, "from where I return") and the shaman returns to his mortal body. Although the two in many ways act like aspects of each other, they are conceptually distinct. In fact, it is most important for a shaman who has travelled to the land of the unseen ones to return to his own body before dawn or he will become so attached there that he will stay and his mortal body here will die. The Matsigenka conceive this land to lie at a great distance, not like a parallel universe that is right here in some other dimension all the time.

The shaman's spirit can fly to the land of the unseen ones because ayahuasca enables him to take a form such as kimaro, a game bird (kanari). To be successful, he needs the help of spirit guides (iserepito) who reside in sorcerer's stones (yogevuroki) that were given to him by unseen ones. He must sing (imarentaka) to call the guides, whose owner (shintaririra) he is: they help him find his way, keep him from falling in flight, and protect him from the traps Kashiri sets to catch human souls. Only years of drinking ayahuasca and practicing to sing enable the seripigari to obtain spirit guides and to make use of them.

In the folktale, Shintori “Peccary” (Chapter 5), the seripigari is able to command the peccaries because he changes places with the peccary spirit ruler, who is an unseen one. Out of respect for the spirit ruler, or because he becomes the spirit ruler, the seripigari must abstain from the hunt--he may only command the peccaries to come, and direct the hunters to their quarry. Once the peccaries have been killed, the seripigari warns the men not to be greedy, to finish the meat they have before hunting for more peccaries. He returns the souls of the dead peccaries by offering their teeth to peccary spirit, who removes the souls from the teeth. Only then may the women use the teeth to make necklaces. Of course, it is because of his gluttonous disobedience of the seripigari that the hero of the story is captured and enslaved by the peccary band.

Ayahuasca (kamariampi) is a beverage prepared by boiling the fibrous bark of the vine, Banisteriopsis sp (kamarampi). Unlike dreams or visions (itsavitetara), the experiences a seripigari has with ayahuasca are believed to be real events. You really fly, you see the unseen ones, you visit their homes in Mamoriku or inside the mountain, Tatorinkamairorini. Julio’s father, Yokari, had actually visited Mamoriku, although Julio had not. Experienced seripigari achieve levels of intoxication from tobacco and manioc beer that allow them to see their spirit allies, but ayahuasca is the royal road to their land. With ayahuasca, you meet only good spirits on your spirit journeys.

It is tempting to translate kamarampi as “death medicine,” (<-kama-, ‘death’, and -ampi, ‘medicine’). Shepard (1991: 6), however, finds the more natural root to be -kamara-, ‘to vomit.’ Kamarampi would then be “vomiting medicine,” accurately referring to an inevitable

and much desired consequence of drinking ayahuasca, since they associate vomiting with cleansing and seek it as a property in many medicines:

Among the Matsigenka, observation and experimentation with plants has led to empirically-based perceptions of bitterness, toxicity poison, purging, dizziness, and hallucinogenesis, which are linked with symbolically laden notions of purification and shamanistic ecstasy in the term kepigari. (Shepard 1991: 8)

The Matsigenka also include datura (saaro) in their pharmacopoeia. Datura grows along trails and in housegardens, but the people I spoke to were nervous about datura and used it in carefully controlled ways. This is because datura is seen as too powerful for regular use. Most men I spoke to had tried it but once, or not at all (nopinkake, “I am afraid”). Their usual description of datura was, pogemparora pishiganaka, “You take it, you run away.” Many men told me about how they took datura and lost control, running disoriented in the forest for several days until they came out of it or were found and guided back home by relatives. None of the men I spoke to had taken it more than once.

They prepare datura by boiling the leaves into a thick syrup (seri, “tobacco”). They soak cotton balls in it and, when dry, store them. When they are ready, they chew and swallow many of the cotton balls (perhaps 15 to 20). People in Shimaa avoided datura root, which they regarded as too powerful. They regard datura as a poison (okepigate), and described two cases of suicide (irogamagakempara ikiro) employing it. For this reason, datura is most likely to be used in milder preparations. Leaves may be boiled and the steam allowed to bathe the eyes of a sufferer of conjunctivitis. A single seed of datura may be chewed for headache. Preparations of leaves are used for fever and for rubbing on body sores.

A seripigari is seen as a powerful force for good in this life. The tale Terira Ineenkani and many others portray the shaman as a loving but authoritarian guide who, like a father, must be obeyed. The ambivalence toward powerful beings that we have come to accept, however, attaches to the seripigari as well. One who has power to do good certainly has power to do evil, just as parents (and others) not only satisfy, but frustrate and punish.

The dark side of the seripigari is the matsikanari [= Man-Guan?: < matsi, “human” + kanari, “guan”], a witch who serves only him/herself and causes suffering and death to others. In Matsigenka belief, a seripigari can never be a matsikanari, and vice versa. The problem is, it is not possible for ordinary people to tell which is which. A matsikanari has one or more sorcerer’s stones, with spirit guides in them, obtained not from the unseen ones but by drinking ayahuasca and searching the beach looking for stones that have spirits. The matsikanari’s stones look the same as the seripigari’s: smooth black stones, 3-15 cm in diameter, with flecks of white. But the spirits that dwell within, although also known as serepitontsi, are evil, whereas the helper spirits given by the unseen ones are incapable of evil. As owner (shintaririra) of the stones in which they dwell, the matsikanari commands them to do his bidding. They are his arrows (chakopi).

Men and women who become very old without getting sick are suspected of being matsikanari. They cannot cure others, but their wisdom and spirit helpers may be used to cure themselves. And they can direct their spirits to kill others. Their spirit arrows seek out the intended victims and eat their heads (that is, the heads of their souls). In this world, their bodies sicken and die within a few days. To kill matsikanaris you must go to their houses, steal their

sorcerer's stones and throw them into the river. Then their urine will dry up and they will grow cold and die.

Whereas the seripigari labors in love, the matsikanari labors in rage:

yo'viigaka igamaran'pite ine'akero o'sure 'yoinato
he-drinks his-ayahuasca it-converts his-soul [plant]

ipega'naka matsika'nari ikisae'gakeri to'vaiti
he-converts-into witch he-enrages plenty

yogama'gakeri matsigenka
he-kills people (Baer 1979: 131)

That is to say, "He drinks ayahuasca. His soul converts into the yoinato plant. He becomes a witch. Full of rage, he kills people." Just as the shaman in Terira Ineenkani was split into a kind, protective father and a potentially lethal demon (maniti), so are the shamans of today split into seripigari and matsikanari (cf. Baer 1984: 221).

Although the splitting does construct the seripigari as a pure, selfless, all-loving and all-powerful father, even seripigaris who are not matsikanaris raise doubts. We saw in the tale Yaniri how the lazy and gluttonous howler monkey became a seripigari by the violent action of his cross-cousin. His presence in the forest is far from comforting: his howler roar is called by the same name as a shaman's singing (imarentaka), and hunters fearfully ask if the monkey they have wounded is seripigari. Furthermore, in a fragment of a folktale I never identified, Seripigari was a culture hero who brought maize to humans from the land of the unseen ones, but when angered he took back the biggest and best varieties, leaving only inferior seed for humans. Even today, when a seripigari dies, all his manioc withers because he has taken it (that is, its soul) with him to the other world. According to Julio, seripigari living in the next level above this world

wear shining armor and carry large guns that they fire off in anger when they have no ayahuasca to drink; we hear the sound as thunder.

Casiano remembers being cured by a seripigari in his childhood, when they used to drink ayahuasca. His illness--chest pains--went right away and he was well. Memories like this are the basis for a deep faith in the power and benevolence of seripigari. The image of the seripigari blowing tobacco smoke, sucking out deadly spirit arrows, and passing bamboo fronds back and forth over a patient is very strong even today, when the disapproval of the missionaries and exposure to western biomedicine have thrown doubt on the old practices. But, by virtue of this very profound dependence on the curative power of the seripigari, there persists an ambivalence, a basic skepticism about the goodness of others, even one's own family. The ambivalence is not often openly expressed, but it finds its way into the core religious beliefs of the community.

Self and Cosmos: The Personalization of the Matsigenka Universe

Matsigenka cosmology begins in a generic division of the world into good and not good, where good refers to aspects of the world that bring pleasure and satisfaction, and not good refers to those that bring unpleasure and frustration. In this guise, their world view is fundamentally self-centered and amoral, like that of the culture hero Kashibokani, the Self-Creating One (Chapter 3). The all-powerful trickster acts spontaneously and without restraint, as he creates himself and then brings new features of the world into being, including monkeys that people enjoy hunting and eating. But he also threatens the very existence of humankind and waits bound at the edge of the sky for human contact that will enable him to destroy the world.

As this story is told Shima, interestingly enough, these acts are attributed not to Kashibokani, but to Tasorintsi himself.

Will--. Such a self-willed creature is not just familiar but taken for granted by the Matsigenka. It reflects the sense of irreducible and often uncompromising individuality that Matsigenkas experience in themselves and attribute to others, and that manifests in many ways in behavior and belief. There is no true or best version of Matsigenka culture, for example. Given that people feel entitled to be honest and express themselves honestly, two honest individuals may disagree with one another and never resolve the disagreement. Should disagreement be pointed out and made an issue, it is likely to be met with a slight shrug of the shoulders and, “Well, that’s what I heard.”

As with sedges (ivenkiki), so with people: each is an individual, with its own unique characteristics. Individuals may vary from the expected without surprising the Matsigenka. You must know the individual ivenkiki plant to know what it is good for. A variant of this was their explanation of the large differences in growth of my hybrid maize seeds: since hybrid seeds are genetically identical, I could only attribute differences to environment, but they insisted the differences were intrinsic to individual seeds--if I took the “nurture” side of the debate, they took the “nature” side.

This attribution of a strong core of willfulness to all beings originates in Matsigenka childcare, where willfulness is allowed to develop more or less freely through the early months of life, even into the third year. Every effort is made to calm and satisfy the small child and to respect its initiative. Even when the child is being corrected or encouraged to reign in its will and meet the expectations of others, wide latitude is given to its reluctance, its will to oppose.

Commands are issued over and over without any sign of compliance, yet everyone continues to delight in the essential charm of a small child that, enthusiastically and without embarrassment, expresses itself and seeks gratification rather than do what it is told.

The Matsigenka seem not at all dismayed by the grandiosity of small children, the ways in which they keep pressing to do what they want, straining at the leash both figuratively and literally, and issuing demands like imperial majesties while barely able to stand on two legs. Adults do not automatically gratify willfulness: Some of the child's wishes would put it in danger while others would greatly inconvenience the operation of the household. But the child is seen as entitled to want what it wants, and much effort is expended in keeping it happy. When the inevitable frustration comes, it takes the form, "You can't have that," rather than the more destructive form, "Who are you to want such a thing?"--or still worse, "Why do you pain me so by always wanting things you cannot have?"

Even when this period ends in the storm of the temper tantrum phase, the child's outrage is understood and accepted--one might say, forgiven. Earlier, the child was not rebuked for wanting too much, although often enough it was simply ignored and expected to do without. Now, the child's grandiose effort to control mother and father is thoroughly frustrated. But the child is allowed to rage against the offending parents without too severe consequences. Matsigenka culture, in the form of tolerant parents, is both accepting the child's right to be angry at its loss, and encouraging the child to give up its outmoded dependence and accept the autonomy that lies before it.

This amounts to a cultural acceptance of a high degree of individual integrity. There is, for example, a cultural acknowledgement of the intrinsic impulsiveness of human desire,

although, as we have seen, this acknowledgement usually takes the form of stories about impulsiveness gone bad. The child's grandiosity is also preserved in the belief in the shaman's power to command game and to defeat the often stupid or ludicrous efforts of demons (cf. Roe 1982: 220-230), and in the belief in the magical responsibility of the maize planter for the health of his maize.

Much of the time the Matsigenka present themselves, and accept others, in the light "I am as I am and I do as I do." We have seen this reflected in individual differences in planting practices, small differences in manufacture that stamp artifacts with a personal signature, enjoyment of crop diversity for its own sake (in housegardens), and intense respect for individual ownership of artifacts, knowledge, and individual spaces. It is also evident in the hard bargains they drive, and in the essential separateness of co-wives in the close orbit of their hearths.

From an ecological standpoint, the tolerance of willfulness in childcare and the cultural construction of integrity are simply aspects of family-centered individualism, which is rooted in an emotional capacity to be alone and self-reliant in the small family group for much of one's life. Economic self-sufficiency, personal autonomy, and a real indifference to the opinions and desires of others beyond the close family circle are adapted to the low-density, "competitive" human ecology and help to perpetuate it. The challenge this presents to group living is seen in the difficulty of coordinating multi-household cooperative ventures, and in hostility toward other households and a desire to escape the crowded conditions of hamlets via dual residence.

From Not Good to Evil--. But the Matsigenka recognize that self-centered impulsiveness represents not just a threat to the larger group, but to the family itself. They

cannot escape the human dilemma of having to discipline their desires to conform to cultural rules. From the nettles hanging on the wall, to the gentle but implacable pressure of commands continuously issued by parents and older siblings, to the warnings and injunctions in folktales against impulsive sex, eating, and aggression, Matsigenka children encounter an environment that, for all its tolerance for individuality, persistently channels character development toward culturally constructed ideals.

A system of ideals always implies positive and negative evaluations, notions of good and bad. In the amoral sense, good and bad are attributes of the world, according to the test, “Does it please me?” A system of ideals becomes a moral system only when the focus shifts from the environment to the self, “Am I/Are you a good or evil person?” We begin to see this in the Matsigenka belief that much of what is bad was not simply created at the beginning of time but resulted from the wrong behavior of primordial humans. Had Moon’s mother-in-law not become wrongly enraged, women today would not die in childbirth; had Spider Monkey’s mother cooled her rage, the demon Oshetoniro would never have existed; had Woolly Monkey shared his beans with Howler Monkey, there would be no dangerous seripigari Yaniri. According to Baer (1984: 188), even sickness and death originated in the disrespectful behavior of the first humans toward Tasorintsi. The clear message regarding these transgressors is, “Had they controlled their impulses, today we would not suffer.”

We can see these morality tales as culturally constructed warning signs posted along the way to help people make decisions that will protect their families from being torn apart, but is there any evidence that these ideals have been internalized in the form of a conscience or superego (Spiro 1987; D’Andrade 1992: 36; Strauss 1992: 4)? In a sense, this question asks

to what degree the Matsigenka may experience guilt. Before working through the ethnographic material for this book, I was inclined to say that the Matsigenka do not experience guilt.

Although shame (shyness, embarrassment) is both named (pashiventagantsi) and readily observable among them, guilt is neither. Compared to my experience of my own culture and of peasant communities in Latin America, where guilt is easy to spot, I concluded that the Matsigenka were too self-assured and impervious to blame to feel guilty about anything.

Although guilt is less evident among the Matsigenka than in the more complex societies of my experience, and therefore perhaps less effective as social control (or, obversely, less debilitating to individuals), something like it is nonetheless active and influential in their lives. The primary evidence for this is the psychological mechanism of splitting, whereby the Matsigenka disavow unacceptable impulses, wishes or parts of themselves and project them onto others. Splitting only occurs when it is too painful for individuals to admit to themselves that they harbor this or that desire. This pain, a consequence of the belief that only evil people harbor such wishes, is a component of the complex process we call guilt, according to the syllogism: “I wish to do X; only evil people wish to do X; therefore, I am evil (and evil people are punished).”

Fearing the consequences of my evil--especially illness--I must repudiate it and (as humans are wont to do) locate it somewhere outside myself. And, lo!, the world around me is filled with demons. Dramatic evidence of the firmness of this split among the Matsigenka is their belief that spiritually powerful humans may be either good (seripigari) or evil (matsikanari), but never both at the same time. The tragedy (or irony) is that it is usually impossible for ordinary people to tell which is which.

Matsigenka religion is based on splitting: “the kama’garini are the reverse of the saanka’rite” (Baer 1984: 176). As we see in the folktales, the primary characteristics of demons are their aggressive and self-centered desires for sex, companionship, and food (although just as often, the evil done in folktales flows from humans). Of the seven deadly sins, the ones most prominent in Matsigenka stories are Anger first and foremost, followed by Lust, Gluttony, and Sloth (all of which can cause anger). Greed and Envy make occasional appearances, as perhaps does Pride if we count self-centered disregard of others and willful disobedience. We know these impulses are treated as sins in the tales because the protagonists who act on them are punished, almost always by death, loss or metamorphosis into animals or demons (Baer 1984: 187). And we know that individuals are afraid that their own transgressions will result in spiritual attack.

On the other side of the split are the unseen ones. Their living is easy, they eat little and yet all their wants are satisfied. They are pure, imperturbable, immortal. The shaman who seeks their help must avoid sexual intercourse before drinking ayahuasca, and must in general live an exemplary life (Baer 1979: 115).

Yet into this happy dream comes an unwelcome intrusion: even the unseen ones are not unambiguously good to us. They can be offended by our bad behavior, and so we must be careful lest they withhold the benefits we seek from them. Like the ambiguity surrounding animal spirits, who can either help us or harm us, the ambiguity of the unseen ones signals the reservoir of ambivalence, originally felt toward parents and other loved ones, in which the splitting originates.

There is a rough parallel here between the Matsigenka triad of

KAMAGARINI	MATSIGENKA	TERIRA INEENKANI
Demons	Humans	Unseen Ones
Savipatsakunirira (below-dwellers)	Kipatsikunirira (earth-dwellers)	Enokunirira (above-dwellers)

and the Freudian triad of id-ego-superego (Freud 1923). In both, the self (ego) is split into two idealizations: a positive idealization (superego, unseen one) that is right-minded and proper, and a disavowed negative idealization (id, demon) that indulges evil wishes and behaves badly. In both also there is an implicit Nature vs. Culture dichotomy: the negative idealization is animal-like (cf. Baer and Snell 1974: 67), while the positive idealization epitomizes cultural values. In the Matsigenka case, demons have animal characteristics like four-leggedness, long snouts, large penises, hairy bodies, filth, unrestrained sexuality and violence, whereas good spirits are beautiful, clean, modest and refined. In space, the demons inhabit the lower plane (savipatsa, “underground”), humans the surface (kipatsi, “earth”), and the good spirits the elevated and exalted plane above (enoku; Baer 1983: 2; Roe 1982: 132). In implicit body imagery, this splits off the purity of mind from the defilements of the flesh. A major class of demons are i-, ovegaga “rotten,” and virakochas and poñaronas, coming from underground, bear this demonic stigma (Baer 1984: 124-5).

Many Matsigenka folktales end on a plaintive note: “Had you not done that, this evil would not have happened.” The complaint is a laying of blame and a warning to the audience: “Do not act thus or the same will happen to you.” Some tales are also instructional: the girl who becomes Moon’s wife is cautioned to eat only a fraction of the fish she has been given, or

she will grow up to be one of those wives who is stingy with her husband; the sons of the shaman are taught to kill only as many birds as they need and to set a share aside to take home to their mother. In this sense a Matsigenka folktale has a moral message that is intended to promote the internalization of proper values and to reinforce that internalization.

Apart from the folktales, there is other evidence that internalization of ideals is successfully accomplished by the Matsigenka. We found that adult men and women frequently project evil tendencies onto others, particularly in-laws and nonkin in other hamlets. This reflects the same splitting found in folktales, whereby individuals try to ally their essential selves with goodness while locating evil in others.

Something like this appears to be happening in Casiano's poignant dream about his son's death (Chapter 4). In the dream, when his son says, "Papa, you got angry at me, you abandoned me," Casiano replies, "You died. If you hadn't died I wouldn't have abandoned you." The dreamer has constructed an accusation levelled at himself (projected as coming from his dead son), and then has defended himself from the accusation, implying he feels some sense of guilt or responsibility for the separation from his son. He might also blame his dead son for abandoning him in anger--the two contradictory accusations are not incompatible in one dream. In either case, the air is full of hurt and blame, the same evil air that causes people to abandon their homes when a loved one dies for fear of the angry, hurt, lonely spirit left behind when the physical body is gone.

An "animistic" belief system like that of the Matsigenka might more accurately be called personalistic (cf. Murdock 1980: 19). It is not just a belief that nature is animated, but that it is personal, in the sense of having desire, initiative, and intelligence. What has happened is that by

means of splitting and projection, personal attributes that the Matsigenka cannot accept or acknowledge as being part of themselves are located instead in other animals, people, and spirits. This process is as central to their adaptation as any other aspect of their family-centered existence, helping them balance the contending demands of individual will and social control.

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