

CEDI - P. I. B.
DATA 24/10/88
COD KPD017

Campa Cosmology¹

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extraído da coletânea Native South America
org. por Patricia Lyon / 1974

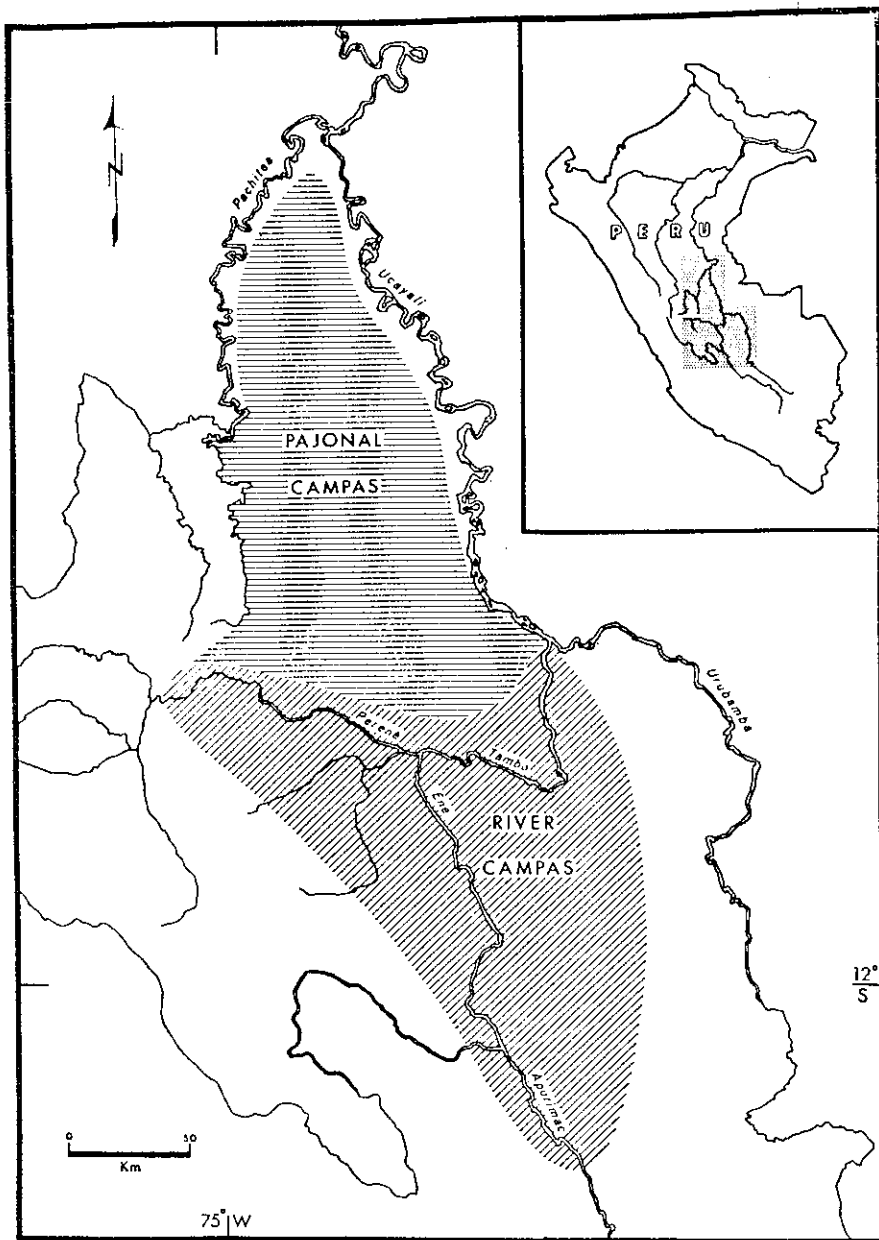
The Campa of eastern Peru, who number perhaps 30,000 (Fast 1962), occupy a large territory that includes the watersheds of the Ene, Perené, and Tambo rivers, plus the Gran Pajonal (see Map 1). These four geographic terms—Ene, Perené, Tambo, and Gran Pajonal—correspond to four cultural regions differing to a certain degree in dialect and other cultural details, the Gran Pajonal region being the most divergent. Between the Campa of the Ene, Perené, and Tambo rivers and those of the Gran Pajonal there is long-standing enmity, little contact, and very little intermarriage. This situation suggests that there may be not one but two Campa tribes, which might be called the River Campa and the Pajonal Campa respectively, with two different cultural systems. The information on cosmology set forth in this paper was drawn from the River Campa cultural system, though undoubtedly the Pajonal Campa hold many similar beliefs.

A further qualification should be made explicit. No single Campa has in mind all the ideas and details that will here be set forth as River Campa cosmology. Each idea, each detail, has its own distribution, its own frequency of occurrence, within the River Campa population. Some surely are universal in that population, others nearly so, but many are more limited in their occurrence. Nevertheless, certain general understandings are shared by all members of the tribe in terms of which their more specific cosmographic and cosmogonic ideas make sense. The result, it seems, is that these ideas are by and large compatible with each other even when they are not held by the same individuals. When the cosmological ideas elicited from different informants are pieced together, the result is not a collection of heterogeneous elements but rather a single completed picture of which each individual Campa has come to possess some fragment, however large or small. In addition to these distributional differences there are variational differences, e.g., different versions of the same myth, but again the differences are not as important as what is common to the several versions.

THE CAMPA UNIVERSE

The Campa identify themselves as *asháninka*, "our fellows."² They understand themselves to occupy a definite region on a flat earth extending out in all directions to unknown limits. They recognize that they are surrounded by neighboring tribes and peoples, each occupying its own territory: the Amuesha (*amáisha*), the Cashibo (*kashivo*), the Conibo (*konivo*), the Shipibo (*shiptivo*), the Piro (*shimirintsi*), the Machiguenga (*machikénka*),

MAP 1: Campa Territory



and the Highland Indians (*chóri*). Finally, there are the invading Caucasians (*virakócha*), believed to have been fished up initially out of a lake in Campa territory, a lake within which they originally resided, but whose present homeland is far downriver in the vicinity of the river's end.

The land beyond the circle of neighboring tribes is largely *terra incognita*, until the limits of the conceptualized or "known" world are reached. Good spirits reside there, and it is there that two important geographical features are located: River's Beginning and River's End. The main river that courses through River Campa territory—the Apurímac-Ene-Tambo-Ucayali—has its source at River's Beginning (Intatóni) at the southernmost point on the rim of the known world, and its termination at River's End (Otsitiríko) at the easternmost point, where the main river falls through a hole into the underworld, to proceed no one knows where. Many Campa believe that a gigantic crab (*antári oshéro*) lives in this hole, and that its movements regulate the river's level. Both at Intatóni and at Otsitiríko there are important settlements of good spirits.

Another important spirit center on the rim of the known world is Irimáka, located in the west, and quite possibly derived from reports of the existence of Lima (if not the old spiritual center of Rimac). Some Campa extend the radius of the known world a little farther, speaking of settlements of good spirits beyond those mentioned, such as Otiríáni, the place of the thunder spirits, situated just beyond Otsitiríko. What lies beyond these frontiers of the conceptualized world—whether there is land or anything—is completely unknown. The earth, as thus described, is commonly and quite simply referred to as *kipátsi*, "land"; those Campa who give it a specific name refer to it as Kamavéni, "the land of death," because it is on the earth that all mortal creatures, including man, dwell.

The Campa view Kamavéni—the earth which they inhabit—as one of a series of strata arranged one above the other to form the complete universe. Each stratum is inhabited by its own class of beings, for whom it is as solid underfoot as the earth is to us. The sky, Inkíte—also referred to by the term *henóki*, "up"—consists of an indeterminate number of such strata, all inhabited by good spirits. Through the sky flows an invisible river called Hananeríte (perhaps derived from the Milky Way but not at present identified with it). Between the sky and the earth lies the intermediate stratum of the clouds (Menkóri), also inhabited by good spirits. Beneath the earth, some Campa recognize the existence of a stratum called Kivinti, again a residence of good spirits. The lowest stratum of the universe is Sharinkavéni, the stronghold of demons.

THE GOOD SPIRITS AND GODS

For the Campa the universe is inhabited not only by the living forms that they can observe, but also by hosts of beings normally invisible to human eyes. These are the spirits—immortal, powerful, capable of rapid flight and of instantaneous transformation. Through such transformation a spirit takes on one or another visible form or reverts to its true form—human or humanoid but invisible. Two main hosts of spirits are recognized: good spirits and evil spirits.

The good spirits are frequently called *asháninka*, "our fellows," which reflects the close friendship and even kinship ties that the Campa feel to exist between themselves and the good spirits, for many of the latter were

once Campa here on earth. A more specific term applied to the good spirits is *amatsénka*, which might be translated as "our spirit fellows." Good spirits are also known as *manñkari*, the "hidden ones."

The good spirits reside in settlements located (1) on the mountain ridges in Campa territory (these are the *otishisáti* or "mountain ridge dwellers"), (2) along the rim of the known world (these include the *intatonisáti*, the *otsitirikosáti*, and the *irimakasáti*), and (3) on other strata in the universe—the celestial strata, the stratum of the clouds, and the first subterranean stratum inhabited respectively by the *henokisáti*, the *menkorisáti*, and the *ktivintisáti*. In these abodes the good spirits live in their true or human form, much as the Campa live except that they have all good things and know nothing of sickness, misery, or death. They periodically rejuvenate themselves by bathing in Hananeríte, the celestial River of Eternal Youth.

Some of the *henokisáti* or "sky dwellers" are visible as stars (*impókeró*) in the night sky. The Pleiades are Mashíkinti with his family; as a Campa here on earth, Mashíkinti was the first to use *kamárampi* (the hallucinogen ayahuasca, *Banisteriopsis* sp.) and to instruct the Campa in its use. Mashíkinti and his family reached a state of perfection by taking ayahuasca with suitable continence over a period of time, and flew to the sky and immortality on a raft. The belt and scabbard of Orion is Porínkari. In one version, Porínkari was Mashíkinti's brother-in-law, whom Mashíkinti so loved that he let down a rope from the sky for Porínkari and his family to clamber up. In another version, Porínkari was a Campa pursued by a warrior wasp (still in human form at that time); Porínkari escaped by climbing a rope connecting earth and sky and then cutting it, but not before receiving an arrow in his leg. Another *henokisáti* is Kirákiri, the red star Antares in Scorpio; a nearby dark streak in the Milky Way is *itsakáménto Kirákiri*, "Kirákiri's digging stick." Kirákiri taught the Campa how to cultivate their gardens; when Kirákiri is overhead at nightfall, it is time to plant maize (*shínki*). Other features of the night sky are recognized. For example, the Campa have names for the planets, and they identify the Larger Magellanic Cloud as a sloth (*soróni*) and the Coal Sack in the Southern Cross as a bees' nest (*aéri*). But the Campa do not presume that all the stars are *henokisáti*, or even to know what they are.

As with mortals, there are both male and female spirits, and they have offspring. The good spirits, however, are equipped with diminutive genitalia, lack the passion of lust, and reproduce by means other than sexual union. Furthermore, they are spared the burden of infant and child care; their offspring are born standing, and reach adulthood in a single lunation or so.

In their true form, the good spirits are human in shape but invisible to the normal human eye. Only shamans have the ability, because of their special powers, to see spirits in their true form, both when good spirits come to visit and when the shaman himself (or rather his soul) goes to visit them at their places of residence. The good spirits, however, do take on visible forms when they visit or pass through Campa territory. Lightning flashes mark the passage through the air of good spirits or of the souls of shamans traveling to or from distant places.

Good spirits can also assume the guise of certain species of birds and animals. The sacred birds of the Campa—those which are good spirits in visible form—include *ashivanti* (the swallow-tailed kite, *Elanoides forficatus*), *tsonkiri* (hummingbirds, fam. Trochilidae), *neorónke* (a particularly small species of hummingbird), *kamévira* (a particularly large species of hummingbird), *tsiróti* (the yellow-rumped cacique, *Cacicus cela*), *manñóri* (the scarlet-rumped cacique, *Cacicus uropygialis*), *pichoti* (the paradise tanager, *Calospiza chilensis*), *pitóroro* (the barbet, *Eubucco* sp.), *yorini* (the cock-of-the-rock, *Rupicola peruviana*), *áavo* (the white-necked heron, *Ardea cocoi*), *katári* (the anhinga, *Anhinga anhinga*), and *shankéti* (the timelo, *Parra jasanya?*). These are the most commonly recognized sacred birds; there are others whose recognition is less common. The highest-ranking sacred bird is *ashivanti*. In each case, the visible bird is understood to be the "clothing" of the good spirit appearing in its form.

Significantly, the Campa have chosen as the material manifestations of their good spirits living forms possessing a power denied to themselves—that of flight—and especially the forms most beautiful in plumage or most stately in flight. Their sacred animals are the otters, both the small and the large species (*parári* and *charavapána*). Generally speaking, these sacred birds and animals are referred to as *itómi Pává*, "sons of the Sun." The Campa also believe that good spirits, when they so will, can materialize in visible human form to lead and instruct a group of Campa for a time; an interesting case is reported by Padre Sala (in Izaguirre 1923-29: x, 532-533, 546).

Certain game birds are understood to be raised and thus provided by the good spirits who reside on the mountain ridges. The Campa call these birds *ivira itómi Pává* or *ivira otishisáti*, "creatures raised by the children of the Sun, or the mountain ridge dwellers." They include the toucan *chári* (*Ramphastos ambiguus*), the razor-billed curassow *tsamiri* (*Mitu mitu*), and the guans *kanári*, *sankáti*, and *tsióni* (*Pipile cumanensis*, etc.). The mountain ridge dwellers also raise the game animal *kapéshi* (the coati, *Nasua nasua*) as their equivalent of the dog (*irotsúite otishisáti*). The peccary (*shintóri*), an important game animal, is *ivira Pává*.

In addition to the sacred beings mentioned, there are a few creatures with an ambivalent status; they are good spirits rather than demons, yet they do only harm of some sort. One is the *yaanáite*, described as a kind of arboreal beast living in the mysterious, uninhabited mountain reaches of Campa territory. These *yaanáite* kill and eat any Campa intrepid enough to enter their habitat, yet they are not demons for they are identified as *itómi Pává*. It is impossible to determine from its description whether the *yaanáite* is an entirely imaginary creature, an actual species of animal that lives at higher elevations, or a composite of several animals.

Two species of birds may be noted in this connection: *amémpore* and *etsóni*. From its description, *amémpore* would appear to be the condor. In Campa thought, Amémpore—i.e., the "father" of the *amémpore* birds—resides between earth and sky. The danger is that the soul of a Campa may encounter Amémpore, take him to be the "true God," which he is not, and remain with him. *Etsóni* is another species of bird, with dark plumage and a white throat. What seems to have caught the imagination

of the Campa is the sight of flocks of these birds wheeling in circles in the air. The shamans say that when *etsóni* fly in circles, they are playing panpipes and dancing (as if they were human). The souls of recently deceased Campa rising to join the good spirits in the sky are intercepted by *Etsóni*, i.e., the "father" of the *etsóni* birds, and flung back down if they are not sufficiently good. Souls which fall thus from the sky are seen as meteors. Amémpore and *Etsóni*, the "fathers" of the *amémpore* and *etsóni* birds, are recognizable as "species masters," each being a spirit which personifies and controls an entire species.

Sacred plants include the tobacco plant and the hallucinogenic ayahuasca vine (*Banisteriopsis* sp.), used by shamans to perfect their powers. Associated with each species of sacred plant is a specific group of good spirits. From among their number a shaman takes one or more spirit "wives," with whom relations are purely spiritual. Shamans use a special word, *nomankiáro*, to signify "my spirit wife, my narcotic drink."

At the pinnacle of the hierarchy of good spirits stands a small number of beings, the most powerful in the universe, whom we may identify as gods. The Campa term for them is *tasórentsi*, the substantive form of the verb "to blow." The Campa believe that these beings have the power to transform one thing into another, that the typical way they effect such a transformation is with a simple puff of breath, and that the universe as it exists today is partly the result of many such transformations. Another term used by the Campa to refer to their gods is *pinkútsori*, "ruler," literally "he who is feared." The most important of the *tasórentsi* are Avírerí, Pachákama, Inkanítari, Kashíri, Pává, and Inka.

Avírerí is the great mythological transformer of the Campa. According to the mythology, Avírerí was originally a Campa; he lived with his grandson, whom he carried on his back wherever he went, and habitually visited his sisters to drink manioc beer and to socialize. In the course of time, as related in a lengthy myth cycle, Avírerí transformed many of his nephews into rocks, monkeys, and nests of insects, thereby bringing these things into existence; he created the alternation of day and night, of the dry and wet seasons; and he attempted to dam the main river at Kentipánko on the Tambo, only to abandon his project (the dam-like mountain of Kentipánko is the remains of this earthwork).

A number of natural features along the Tambo River are understood to be human beings or objects transformed by Avírerí into imperishable rock. On the face of a cliff overlooking the little salt spring of Tiviha on the right bank of the Upper Tambo is a natural rock formation roughly human in outline. This was once the "owner" of the spring, a malevolent person whom Avírerí, passing by, transformed into rock. A large stone of unusual shape, on the left bank of the Tambo below Tonkáma, is regarded as the petrified remains of a woman caught in her bath by Avírerí and transformed. The huge rock called Manihiróni (the Peña de Wertheman), located on the right side of the Tambo just below the mouth of Onkonéni, was formally a launch manned by Caucasians heading upriver to molest the Campa, transformed to stone by Avírerí.

Avírerí's life among the Campa ultimately came to an end. A sister became so angry at him for transforming her sons that she plotted with her husband to get rid of him. The brother-in-law excavated a hole under the dancing area of the settlement, leaving it covered with a thin roof of earth. Avírerí, invited for a visit, was induced by his sister to dance, whereupon he fell through into the hole. When he was not given any assistance, he transformed his sister into the tree *shimashiri* and his brother-in-law (who had wrapped himself in his sleeping mat out of fear) into the armadillo *etini*. He then used his power to extend the hole to Otsitiríko, River's End. Here he emerged and was greeted by Pachákama who, not wanting him to return and wreak more havoc, requested his assistance in holding up the earth. A strangler vine wrapped itself around Avírerí, and there he remains to the present day. The hole into which he fell (*imóro Avírerí*) is still to be seen just above the tributary Yorináki on the left side of the Upper Perené River.

Avírerí's grandson, Kíri, who had been left behind, was heartsick for his grandfather and set out for Otsitiríko. However, he was pursued and overtaken by a number of the other relatives. They tried to kill him for his complicity in Avírerí's activities, but were unable to do so. Finally, on Kíri's instructions, they drove a wooden stake into his head, down through his body, and into the ground, whereupon he was transformed into the *kíri* or pihuayo palm (*Guilielma speciosa*), whose fruit is used today by the Campa to make a wholesome fermented drink. In another version of the same myth, the figures of Avírerí and Kíri are not distinguished, and it was Avírerí who became the *kíri* palm.

Pachákama is the god who holds up the earth at Otsitiríko. He seems to have certain tree-like properties. The distinction made by the River Campa between Avírerí and Pachákama does not appear to be made by the closely related Machiguenga, who use the two names interchangeably in referring to the equivalent of Avírerí in their mythology (see García 1935-37, 18: 11). This suggests either that the Campa have divided one deity into two, or that the Machiguenga have merged two into one. In either case, the name Pachákama is surely derived from that of Pachacamac, the deity worshiped on the coast of Peru in pre-Conquest times. While Avírerí is widely known among the River Campa, the recognition of Pachákama appears to be limited for the most part to the Perené region.

Inkanítari is the god of rain (from *inkáni*, "rain"). He resides at the level of the clouds and is the ruler of the good spirits of that realm. He does not play a part in Campa mythology.

Kashíri is the moon. He is male (as are all the Campa gods) and is the father of the sun. At first, the Campa knew nothing of cultivation and subsisted on a diet of earth, specifically the nests of the termite *katsikori* (from which the Campa themselves had originally been fashioned). At that time Kashíri appeared to a young girl in her menarche hut, introduced her and her people to manioc and its cultivation, and took her to wife. She became pregnant and gave birth to the sun, but was burned to death in doing so. Kashíri's stay on earth ended in the following manner. He began taking

his nephews (the sons of his sister) on hunting trips into the forest, where he slaughtered and ate them. Finally, when his brother-in-law found out and threatened to kill him, he escaped by rising into the sky, where he now resides. His cannibalistic tendencies still continue; the waxing of the moon is understood as the filling of Kashíri's belly with the souls of the dead that he has succeeded in capturing.

Sometimes the Campa use the term *Tasórentsi* to mean not "god" but "God." When they do so, it is usually possible to determine that they are in fact referring to the sun, commonly called *Katsirinkáiteri*, "he who is hot," but spoken of in a theological context as *Pává*, "our Father." It is true that the paramount god of the Campa is *Pává*, the sun. From *Pává* flow all good things—warmth, light, the useful products of the earth, the good order of the universe. The Campa are forever grateful to him and at their festivals dance with panpipes in his honor.

According to Campa mythology, *Pává* was born on earth as a Campa, but he gave off so much heat that he burned his mother to death. The young *Pává* matured rapidly, and his body heat also increased until it became clear that he would incinerate the earth if he were not raised to the sky. The manner in which this was accomplished varies in different Campa accounts. According to one version, *Pává's* mother's father carried him in tongs to the western end of the earth and set him in his trajectory. Another version states that a number of different flying creatures attempted to carry *Pává* to the sky, until at last one species of bird, *kentíparo*, after wrapping him in layer after layer of new cushmas³ to protect themselves from the heat, succeeded in the difficult task. Yet another version describes how *Pává* ascended to the sky with members of his terrestrial entourage by means of a vine connecting the earth with the sky, after the tiny hummingbird *neorónke* had carried one end of the vine to the sky and attached it there. In any event, *Pává* is today a celestial being, rising at *Otsitiríko* in the east and setting at *Irimáka* in the west. How *Pává*—or, for that matter, any of the celestial beings—returns from west to east is a matter concerning which the Campa readily admit that they have no knowledge.

One other deity should be mentioned. The Campa believe in a technological genius named *Inka*. Originally an important man among the Campa, *Inka* was swept on a raft in a flood downstream to *virakócha* territory, where he was taken captive by the Caucasians. It is he who has given his captors their superior material culture. His attempts to return to Campa territory have failed thus far, because the Caucasians do not want the technological imbalance between themselves and the Campa reversed, but time may be on the side of the Campa since *Inka* is immortal.

Generally speaking, the quality of the good spirits lies in their being good, not in their doing good. They are paragons of virtue, of chastity, of beauty, of excellence, and so are admired and revered by the Campa. Though they personify Campa ideals, however, they are not expected to be beneficent toward human-kind. They come and go, appear and disappear as they will. They are contemptuous of human frailty, and no Campa expects any good spirit to come to his aid no matter how desperate his circumstances.

THE DEMONS OR EVIL SPIRITS

Demons, who are legion, are called *kamári*, a term applied in a broader sense to refer to anyone or anything repugnant, malevolent, or reprehensible. If the good spirits keep themselves aloof from mere mortals, the demons consider human beings (i.e., Campa) their legitimate prey. Indeed, it would appear that the hordes of evil spirits in the universe are driven by an insatiable urge, automatically triggered, to attack and inflict maximum damage upon any human being they encounter. The breeze stirred by a passing demon (*atántsi kamári*) causes sickness; the attack of a demon, or even the mere sight of one, causes either immediate death or a form of a madness in which the victim does himself physical injury until he is finally killed by his own people out of fear.

Sharinkavéni, the nethermost stratum of the universe, is the abode of vast numbers of demons and is ruled over by the Lord of Demons, *Korioshipíri*. Belief in the existence of *Sharinkavéni* is probably indigenous among the Campa since it was reported more than two centuries ago (Adam 1890). But demons also abound on the stratum of *Kamavéni*, the earth. Here they inhabit, not the ends of the earth as do the good spirits, but actual Campa territory itself, lurking in its forests and teeming in its waters, and thus constitute an ever-present danger.

Among the different kinds of terrestrial demons distinguished by the Campa, the élite are the *mankóite*, who reside within the great cliffs of Campa territory. They are described as human in form, but with mane-like hair, dressed in old cushmas, with a red parasitic plant (*anánta*) instead of proper red macaw feathers stuck in their wicker crowns. The *mankóite* are mighty demons, with powers approaching those of the gods. A Campa who sees a *mankóite* can expect instantaneous death. Usually, however, the damage they do is to cause sickness by their *atántsi* (the breeze of their passing). Living as they do in the cliffs overlooking the rivers, their specialty is capturing the souls of children voyaging on the rivers with their elders.

The *katsivoréri* are demons that live in caves in the hills and go abroad at night. They are small, black creatures with wings, and each carries a smaller companion on its back. From such a demon there emanates a light, which can be seen flying through the air as the demon makes its nocturnal forays. The demon will attack any human being it encounters, holding him with its powerful grip and driving its gigantic penis into his body, thereby killing the victim or transforming him into another *katsivoréri*.

Sashinti, another type of demon, is distinguished by its extreme thinness, a quality which the Campa disparage, probably because they associate it with the emaciation due to sickness. When a *sashinti* appears to someone, it "breaks" his body into pieces, then reassembles and blows on them to revive him. The victim, remembering fully what has happened to him, returns home to sicken and shortly die.

The *irampavánto* are demons who raise *opémpe* toucans (*Ramphastos cucivieri*) as domesticated fowl. An *irampavánto* may appear to a man alone in the forest in the form of an attractive woman, with an *opémpe* on her

shoulder, and excite him to coitus. Or it may appear in the form of a man to a woman with the same results. Afterwards, it informs its victim of the truth, thereby frightening him into helplessness, and beats him "to death." The victim later revives, returns home with full remembrance of what has happened, sickens, and dies. Alternatively, the victim becomes insane.

A *mironi* is a demon that takes the shape of a large tapir or mule with huge eyes and a gigantic penis, or alternatively, of a little old man dressed in an old cushma, carrying a walking stick, and possessing the same genital abnormality. In either form it is a powerful demon. It will attack a solitary man in the forest, driving its member into his body. The victim dies and is transformed into a female *mironi*.

A *hasónkati* likewise appears either as a large tapir or mule, or in human form. This demon has a hole in one or both knees, into which it blows to produce a fearful noise. It likes to kill people by crushing their bones.

The *korinto* are man-devouring monsters as big as houses. They are no longer to be found in Campa territory; shamans long ago trapped them all in a cave near the headwaters of the brook Tsikiréni, a tributary of the Ene River.

The *imposhitóniro* and *shonkatiníro* are water demons who live in the whirlpools and bad passes of the river, where they wait to drown and eat voyagers passing by. The father of the *shonkatiníro* is Tsomiriníro, who collects the souls of drowned Campa in his stomach and then transforms them into *virakócha* to be the husbands of his daughters. The *keátsi* are spirits in human form who live in the rivers and lakes. They are not actually demons, for some are good and some are bad. When a drowned person's soul does not return to make noises, it is presumed that the person still lives but has joined the *keátsi*.

In the foul places of the rivers and streams reside demons in the form of zungaros marked with longitudinal stripes. They collect food wastes thrown into the water and practice witchcraft with them, bringing sickness to those who ate the food. A rainbow is the smoke from the campfire of one of these demons, or else, some Campa believe, is the demon's cushma. Both the demons and rainbows are called *oyéchari* or, alternatively, *tsavirétsi*.⁴

Another kind of partially visible demon is the small whirlwinds or dust devils that kick up dust and leaves and swirl around the clearings of the Campa settlements from time to time. They are variously called *kaviónkari*, *tiviónkari*, and *shinkireri* and are believed to cause *atátsi* sickness.

A number of insects are demons. The morpho butterfly (*Morpho* sp.), called *sánta* or *ankáro*, is one example. Another is the owl butterfly (*Caligo* sp.), called *maatsarántsi* or "old clothes" because it has the drab color of old cushmas and is supposed to be what becomes of the old clothing of a bad person when he dies. The adult ant lion or *shiénti*, (fam. *Murmeleonidae*), with its thin body, is also a demon. All these insects cause sickness. In addition, the scorpion (*kitóniro*) is a demon, and all verminous insects are believed to be of demonic provenience.

A number of birds are demons, including all owls (*mamáro*), the vulture

(*tisóni*), and the *aróni*, an unidentified large black bird of rapine with a white breast. The drab-colored hummingbird *tsiísanti* is unique among the hummingbirds in being regarded as a demon. Several other species of birds are also believed to be demons, as well as a number of animals including jaguars (*maniti*), bats (*pihiri*), and rabbits (*kima*).

The Campa have also adopted the widespread *pishitáko* belief of the Peruvian Highlands, according to the Campa form of which there are diabolical Caucasians in the towns who kill Campa to extract the grease from their bodies for use in automobiles and airplanes. The Campa, indeed, cast a suspicious eye on all Caucasians; there is something demonic about them, for they are powerful yet not benevolent, wealthy yet not generous. Are they human, are they mortal? There appears to be a tendency for the Campa to consider the *virakócha* as *mankóite*.

Witchcraft constitutes a special category of demonic activity. The Campa term for witch is *mátsi*, and the Campa believe in the existence of both human and nonhuman witches. Nonhuman witches are the various species of ants and bees. They take food refuse and exuviae to their nests to practice witchcraft upon them, producing sickness in the individual from whom the materials came. The symptoms vary with the species of ant or bee involved. When someone falls ill, and the shaman's diagnosis is that a particular species of ant or bee is causing the sickness by witchcraft, the members of the community go out to search for the nests of these insects in the vicinity, to destroy them and with this hopefully the materials being used for witchcraft.

Human witches are almost always children, usually girls, who bury such materials as pieces of mat, bones, and manioc cores around the house; these materials then enter someone's body and make him seriously ill. Children are seduced into witchcraft by any of a number of species of demonic insects and birds. The katydids *shínti* and *tsináro* (fam. Tettigoniidae) and the cricket *tsivivinti* (fam. Gryllidae) are demons that teach witchcraft to children. There is also supposed to be an insect which only witches can see, called *tsempokiririti*, that does the same. The birds *tsiváni* (the squirrel cuckoo, *Piaya cayana*) and *centiopéti* (unidentified) are likewise demons that teach witchcraft to children. When they appear to children for this purpose, they do so in human form. A child approached in this way is innocent but defenseless, and once it becomes a witch it is a social menace. When a shaman diagnoses an illness as being due to human witchcraft, he designates some child in the community, perhaps even in the victim's family, as the witch. This child is treated brutally and forced to dig up the materials it has buried. If the victim recovers, the accused child may be let off with a warning to desist from further witchcraft; if the victim dies, however, the child is killed or traded to the Caucasians.

The demons of the Campa universe are both real and imaginary beings that embody some combination of repulsiveness and harmfulness. The qualities which the Campa consider demonic can be identified with particular clarity in the demons that are not wholly imaginary. Whatever can do serious physical harm to human beings is a demon; thus jaguars and blood-

sucking bats are demons. Whatever is excessively thin, thereby recalling the emaciation due to severe illness, is a demon; therefore the extremely thin *shiénti* (adult ant lion) is a demon. Whatever has the drab color of decay—the color that the Campa call *kamára* or *kamárari*—is a demon; therefore the drab-colored hummingbird *tsísanti* and the butterfly *maatsarántsi* are demons.⁵ Whatever appears to be other than it is—whatever presents a false appearance—is a demon; therefore the katydids *shiínti* and *tsináro*, insects that look like leaves, are demons. Whatever would serve as a bad example for human imitation is a demon; therefore the *tsiváni*, a bird that is not only ugly in Campa eyes but also a slovenly nest-builder, is a demon. The same qualities, in various combinations, are attributed to the imaginary demons as well. It is the imaginary demons who do the greatest harm in inducing sickness, madness, and death; if they wear clothes, it is old clothes (*maatsarántsi*) with their characteristic *kamára* color; and one important category of demons—*sashínti*—is distinguished precisely by its extreme thinness.

Certain other characteristics which are repulsive or even frightening to the Campa are attributed to some of their imaginary demons. Among these characteristics are old age, with its decay and presentiment of death, and excessive sexuality; thus some demons are seen as little old men, and some are visualized as possessing enormous genitalia. The Campa themselves, of course, do not make such interpretations as these; they are content to recognize the several categories of demons with their distinguishing characteristics. But Campa demonology does appear to lend itself to this kind of interpretation.

THE NATURE AND DESTINY OF THE HUMAN SOUL

Every Campa is mortal—he will die. But within him is his soul (*ishíre*), which can leave his body in dreams while he is alive, and will survive his death to join one or another of the hosts of immortal spirits. An individual's soul looks like him, though it is normally invisible. The soul is centered in the heart; indeed, the same term is used for both: *noshíre*, "my soul, my heart."⁶ The soul is what animates the body; if it remains away from the body for any considerable length of time, as when it is captured by demons, the body will waste away and die. For short periods the soul can leave the body without ill effects, as when one's soul goes abroad in one's sleep, or when a shaman sends his soul on a flight to distant places. One point of interest should be noted: an individual says that he has gone here or there in his sleep, and a shaman that he has flown to distant places, thereby apparently expressing a belief that an individual's soul is that individual. Indeed, the Campa say the body is only the "clothing" or "skin" of the soul. In general, Campa thought seems to vacillate between a view of the soul as something that "I" have (e.g., "my" soul) and a view of the soul as the essential "I."

When a Campa dies, he (i.e., his soul) may join the good spirits as a *manínkari* if he was sufficiently good in his lifetime. However, with their strong sense of human frailty, the Campa consider it far more likely that a

deceased individual's soul (*ishíre*) will become a malevolent ghost (*shirétsi*, "unpossessed soul"), revisiting the settlement where it had lived and attacking the living there. For this reason, the Campa commonly abandon a settlement where someone has died, moving some distance away to establish a new residence. *Shirétsi* can wander the forests in their human, though normally invisible, shape at least for a time; they can join one or another category of demons, becoming one of their number; or, alternatively, they can become *peári*. A *peári* is the soul of a dead person or of any demon that takes the form of a game animal or game bird; it looks like that animal or bird but is in fact a demon. When a hunter bags an animal or bird and discovers that it has no body fat, is infested with worms, or has pustules, tumors, patchy fur, or unhealthy looking organs, he knows that it is a *peári* and is consequently unfit for human consumption. The suffix *-niro*, meaning "looks like," denotes particular *peári*; thus a *peári* in the form of a peccary (*shintóri*) is a *shintoriníro*, and a *peári* in the form of a deer (*maníro*) is a *maníroníro*.

The soul of a Campa attacked by a demon will, after death, become a demon of the same type. When a witch is executed, its soul joins the particular class of demons that taught it witchcraft and becomes one of them. To prevent this from occurring, the corpse of a witch or madman is sometimes cremated in the expectation that the potentially dangerous soul will be destroyed by the flames along with the body. The souls of those who, in their lifetimes, committed such heinous offenses as incestuous fornication, are punished by torture in *Sharinkavéni* by *Korioshipiri* and his demon cohorts. In the end, the tortured soul is eaten by the demons, or becomes one of their number, or else is purified and joins the *manínkari*.

THE CAMPA COSMOS

In Campa thought, the universe in its present form came into existence through a series of transformations and, at some time in the future, will be destroyed by the will of *Pává*. For the Campa there is no such occurrence as the creation of something out of nothing, but only the transformation of something out of something else. Consequently, in their thinking, the original condition of the universe was not nothingness but somethingness. The general structure of the universe existed to begin with, as the stage on which all the dramas of Campa mythology were to be acted out. When the curtain goes up, the actors are already on stage: the primal Campa, human beings living here on earth but immortal, many with powers exceeding those possessed by mankind today. There were some special features, later to be changed; thus the sky was much closer to the earth, and the earth spoke. Whatever else existed in the universe at that time is indicated only sketchily in the mythology, but it was an impoverished universe lacking many features that would come into existence through transformation only with the passage of time. Campa mythology is largely the history of how, one by one, the primal Campa became irreversibly transformed into the first representatives of various species of animals and plants, as well as astronomical bodies or features of the terrain. In each case the mechanism of change was either the action of a transformer deity or auto-transformation.

The development of the universe, then, has been primarily a process of diversification, with mankind as the primal substance out of which many if not all of the categories of beings and things in the universe arose, the Campa of today being the descendants of those ancestral Campa who escaped being transformed. Mortality came also to be added as a feature of human life and, with the increasing frequency of death, the earth gradually ceased to speak. The widening gap between mortal life and that of the good spirits was punctuated by the moving apart of the sky and the earth. When the present universe is destroyed, the Campa will be destroyed with it and a new world will take its place, with immortal inhabitants. The sky will again be close to the earth, and the earth will speak once more.

And what is the nature of the universe in which the Campa find themselves? It is a world of semblances; for example, what to us is the solid earth is airy sky to the beings inhabiting the strata below us, and what to us is airy sky is solid ground to those who inhabit the strata above. It is a world of relative semblances, where different kinds of beings see the same things differently; thus human eyes can normally see good spirits only in the form of lightning flashes or birds whereas they see themselves in their true human form, and similarly in the eyes of jaguars human beings look like peccaries to be hunted. It is a world in which there exist beings with powers out of all proportion to their appearance; thus, for example, the gods, though visualized as human in size and form, can bring about sensational transformations by simply expressing their will or with a puff of breath, and have the physical strength to throw up mountains. It is a world operating according to mechanical principles of the sort we would call magical; thus, as a form of homeopathic magic, both prospective parents during pregnancy refrain from eating turtle meat, for fear that this would make their child slow-moving and slow-witted, and, as a form of contagious magic, a witch supposedly utilizes someone's food refuse or exuviae to strike him with sickness—these are examples of "action at a distance," the distinguishing characteristic of magic. It is, again, a world of transformations, of beings and things passing in and out of visibility, in and out of tangibility. It is, finally, a world which, for the Campa, is one of death, of debility, of sickness, of tragedy, because as "mere mortals" they are the weakest of beings and are in constant danger of being crushed by the greater forces of the universe. Yet, despite their understanding of their predicament, the Campa laugh, act vigorously, cling to life, and survive.

It would be easy to dismiss the cosmological thinking of the Campa as false in its assertions of fact, as absurd in its premises, and as childish in its simplicity. But to do so may be an error. We must recognize that the Campa, like every other human group, have attempted to make sense out of existence, have had to do so on the basis of limited information, and have succeeded adequately for their purposes. They may personify forces that we would view as impersonal, but this permits them to think concretely instead of vaguely about matters that affect them intensely. What would be the point of telling the Campa that a diseased game animal is not really a demon, when its flesh

is actually dangerous for human consumption and the central meaning of *kamári* is "deadly"?

With a clarity that can best be obtained from simplicity, the Campa have incorporated into their cosmology a number of fundamental moral concepts of the utmost relevance to the human predicament. They distinguish between good and evil, dividing the beings of the universe into two great hosts on this basis, and they revere the good while despising the evil. They recognize the difference between good and bad actions, wishing that their actions could be only good but knowing that bad actions are all too easy, and their mythology is full of cautionary tales about Campa who were transformed into lesser creatures as punishment for objectionable behavior. They have intuited the contrast between chastity and lust, cosmologically expressing their admiration for the former and their contempt for the latter by the way in which they describe both the anatomy and the actions of the good spirits and the demons of their universe. And they have grasped the essential ingredient of human dignity, that of acting properly and with pride in self, rather than corruptly and ignominiously. The Campa recognize their own imperfections and limitations, and consequently in the ideal cosmos of their imagination they place themselves in an intermediate position between the cosmic forces of good and evil, and far less powerful than either. In contemplating data such as these, we may well ponder with special irony the earlier view, as Darwin (1936: 489) expressed it, "the low morality of savages, as judged by our standard."

NOTES

1. The author's field work among the Campa was conducted between 1960 and 1964, funded in part by the American Museum of Natural History, National Science Foundation, and Social Science Research Council. The present paper is a summary of a much more extensive report on the subject (Weiss 1969).
2. The River and Pajonal Campa are more likely to call each other by the less friendly term of *ayóm̄pari*, "our trading associates." The Pajonal Campa are referred to as the *keshisáti*, "grassland dwellers," by the River Campa.
3. "Cushma" is the local Spanish term for the cotton robes worn by the Campa and neighboring tribes. The Campa name for the garment is *kítsárentsi*. When new, it is clean and white, with woven stripes, and is worn only on special occasions. Once soiled, it is dyed brown and used for everyday wear, becoming increasingly dark, dirty, and tattered.
4. Zungaros are the giant catfish of these rivers. They do not have longitudinal stripes. The stripes ascribed to the demons of this category are therefore imaginary, and probably relate to the stripes of the rainbow on the one hand and, on the other, to the vertical stripes on the cushmas worn by Campa men.
5. *Kamára* is a color category that includes the various shades of cream, khaki, tan, brown, olive drab, and lead. The term is translated as "drab" in this paper as a simplification.
6. An alternative term is *nasánkane*, with the same double meaning.

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