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1987

## Calling Back the Soul of Zhyge Alu

*Soul, come back!  
Why have you hastily left your dwelling  
To float about the whole world?*

QU YUAN

I wish for you to again shoot down the suns,  
But no matter where I look, I cannot find you.  
I wish for you again to shoot down the moons,  
But no matter where I look, I cannot find you. (1)

I wish for the eagles to circle in the skies above, (2)  
But the sunlight is too strong.  
I wish for the mothers to sit beneath the eaves,  
Weaving their cloth,  
But the moonlight is too cold.

I wished to break tigers to ride as stallions, (3)  
But never imagined my horse would become a tiger.  
I wished to capture a snake to make a rope, (4)  
But never imagined a rope would become a snake.

I wished to capture *muntjac* and water deer to tame, (5)  
Like sheep and cattle.  
But never imagined the family kitten  
Would become a beast.

Where smoke rises, lightening strikes. (6)  
I wish you to cut a heap of firewood and  
Strike a blazing fire.  
Strike a fire when it is cold,  
And bury the coals when it is hot.  
No need for the Sun,  
No need for the Moon.

When the male, female, and boy rivers are drunk  
Dry by the male, female, and boy stones, (7)  
I wish you to shoulder buckets of water  
To make great, deep lakes.  
Let them dry in the droughts,  
Let them fill in the rains.  
No need for the Sky,  
No need for the Earth. (8)

When egg doctoring, the whites are clearer, purer  
Than mountain spring water.  
When wood doctoring, the slivers show no unlucky signs. (9)

When a *sunyi* divines the future  
His chants are as fragrant as *shohma* flowers, (10)  
*Hati*, the book of crow calls, can give no answers; (11)  
*Zhamo*, the book of divination, can give no answers. (12)

Is it day and night that have changed places?  
Is it life and death that have been reversed?  
How is it that with parents so young  
You  
Have gone on first? (13)

We have searched desperately within the clan,  
Searched among the ritually reunited relatives, (14)  
Searched among the relatives by marriage.  
But we cannot find you,  
Cannot find you.

According to legend,  
You changed, it is said,  
Into the *apu yoqo* bird, (15)  
The tiny black *apu yoqo* bird  
Flitting here and there  
Around the house.  
Is the fireplace that you flew through in the sky  
Still burning?  
Do you remember still the secrets of mankind?

You changed, it is said,  
Into the ritual *yyrx yyr* grass. (16)  
The rich, green grass grows  
Forever on the rocky hillsides.  
The history of the *yyrx yyr* grass  
Is indeed like a head of flowing tresses.  
The story of *yyrx yyr* grass must include  
The smooth river stones.

Can it be that there are  
People who lack self-respect?  
Can it be that there are  
Livestock that lack salt? (17)  
Good seeds  
Need but a handful  
Of black earth  
To sprout.

*O la*, come back!  
*O la*, come back!  
If you are playing among the earthen clods,  
You must return.  
If you are playing among the stone walls,  
You must return.  
Those Yi ghosts of the upper roads, (18)  
Those Han ghosts of the lower roads—  
Do not believe their lies.  
The half blood relative,  
Half blood by marriage  
Ghosts,  
You must not believe.

*O la*, come back!  
*O la*, come back!  
If you walk where the mountain crow roosts, (19)  
You must also return.  
If secluded in the magpie's nesting gullies, (20)  
You must also return.  
We do not want a substitute spirit, (21)  
We do not want a substitute soul.

Present a fine steed to the *bimo*. (22)

Present fine pants to his disciple.

At home, quickly separate seed from husk.

In the Tur Lyr Mountains, quickly separate root from stem. (23)

*O la*, come back!

*O la*, come back!

If chained somewhere you must break the links;

You must also return.

If bound by hempen ropes you must break the strands; (24)

You must also return.

A white colored thread will be your road home,

A white colored needle will be your walking stick.

Should you turn into a *shyx go* or a *hmix ry* ghost, (25)

Appearing under the midnight moonlight

As a newborn,

Then why not quickly enter the realm of dreams?

On arrival, the *shyx go* lights up the room;

On arrival, the *hmix ry* drills into one's heart;

Let those who deserve it, slit their bellies;

Let those who deserve it, hang themselves.

If you have changed into a *ssep zie* ghost, (26)

The moment you go against your family has come.

Come, like a ferocious storm, fast as lightning,

Come, like a landslide, in a jumble of trees and rock.

The rice *Abbo* and *Amo* have prepared is steaming – (27)

The rising steam has no soul.

In the four directions all is sunlit—

The sun's rays have become icicles.

Every heart is becoming a wooden compote (28)

Searching in every direction: east, west, north, south. (29)

Screaming,

Crying,

Shouting—

Calling back the soul. (30)

*O la*, come back!  
*O la*, come back!  
Whether in the Yi areas,  
Come back!  
Whether in the Han areas,  
Come back!  
Awaiting you like awaiting a father,  
Awaiting like awaiting a mother.  
If you become a guardian spirit,  
You will be our guardian spirit.  
If you become a demon,  
You will be our demon. (31)

*O la*, come back!  
*O la*, come back!  
Pull the string!  
*Ha!* (32)

1987