

Mythology of Kolkha

Neolithic [12,000-3,000 BCE] peoples worshiped sacred entities of the natural world: specific rock outcroppings, springs, meadows, and trees that had a discernible spirit-presence. The worldview was animistic (sacred agency embodied in the physical world including animals and humans, plants, rocks, geographical features such as mountains and rivers, thunder, rain, wind, shadows, stars, etc.) and localized (each specific spiritual essence was unique). These sacred natural features are still referred to as the Old Gods.



The only god image was a fleshy, fertile female “Deyda” or “mother” made out of clay or stone. These were carried as talismans, used in home altars, and buried with the dead.

They represented the fertility and material abundance of the earth [in a specific place] or female ancestors.

Phallic images of pottery and stone were also popular, though far less common.

Worship was both personal and communal (public rituals for birth, death, and seasonal cycles). Communal rituals were euphoric celebrations including song, dance, drumming (and other music), sex, eating, and drinking. Personal rituals could involve any of the same elements on a more intimate scale.

Ecstatic communion (journeying) with the sacred spirits was achieved using an altered state of consciousness (through poppy syrup or “mad” honey). The goal was to balance or mend the spiritual essence of the individuals or the community. Journeying was not relegated to a specialized caste, though shamans with special aptitude developed over time.



Toward the end of this period [4000-2000 BCE], colossal stones were erected. Many were carved with sacred symbols. Some were standing stones, others formed “homes” for the sacred spirits and “wombs” where the beloved dead could be reborn.

Many of these “wombs” had a round hole to receive a stone phallus: a ritual conducted when the dead were interred to help them be reborn into their new life.

There was no concept of an “afterlife.” Just as animals, plants, and rivers disappeared and returned with the change in seasons from winter to spring, so human dead were thought to disappear at death and return in a new form.

Bronze Age [3500-1500 BCE]

Peoples became more specialized, particularly in the fertile plains where agriculture predominated along with pastoral herding. Crafts such as pottery, weaving, baking, milling, stonework, and metallurgy became increasingly professionalized. Specific sacred entities became more generalized: the embodied sacredness of a specific pear tree became generalized to all pear trees, a pine tree to all pine trees. Sacred stones came to represent the spirit of Stone, spring and rivers were manifestations of Water, the ripening crops represented the fecundity of Earth [Deyda].



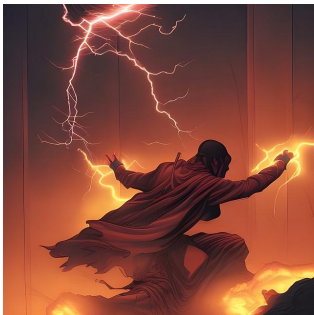
Deyda's water-serpent aspect became the star/sky goddess Tiamar (a variant of Tiamat) who embodied the firmament and gave birth to Twilight (Bindi), a third-gendered god; Sun Woman; and the male Night Rider.

Over time, female divinity came to be seen as a source of fertility, nurturing, and rebirth; the male aspect was sacrificial, an offering of the self for the good of the larger community. The third gender, *shua*, embodied transformation and balance.

Most worship still took place in natural areas, but stone temples were also built to "house" the sacred spirits. Most images within these temples were abstract: a piece of driftwood, a rough stone, but over time anthropomorphic features appeared.

Journeying became professionalized in the urbanized areas with secret practices to enhance effectiveness. A priest caste developed who trained individuals "called" to the practice. These priests had similar skills to the earlier shamans: the power to heal the sick (restore spiritual balance), communicate with spirits (give prophecy), and escort souls of the dead to the gods-realm.

Iron Age [1500-500 BCE]



"Professional" journeying transformed into sorcery in the early kingdom of Dia'okhi, where sorcerer-priests drew upon the life essence of other living beings (including their students) to enhance their powerful magic.

This had disastrous consequences in the Great Battle, when federation priests were able to reflect back the death magic and all Dia'okhi sorcerers and their students at the battle were killed.

In the urban areas of the new federation of Kolkha, the priest caste transitioned away from shamanism and relied on rote prayers and prescribed offerings to "sway" the gods and help restore balance. These priests were still

healers and prophets, but travel to the afterlife was now achieved by specific songs and burial practices. Sacred sexuality, always a part of communal rituals, was now provided by priests in the temples.

Communal worship in the cities was conducted by the priests in large stone temples or outdoor venues during festivals. Individual and family worship occurred at home altars or grave sites in the case of ancestor veneration, which became common with the shift in belief to an afterlife (influenced by the influx of the new “nobility” from the northern steppe of Sukuda after the Great Battle). Many urbanized Kolkhans came to believe the dead dwelled in the gods-realm for some indeterminate period of time before being reborn.

The gods continued to become more “specialized” and diverse as successive waves of migrants and refugees (fleeing the Ashurian Empire) brought new mythologies. Deyda became All-Mother, and her Spring Maiden and Crone Reaper aspects were now regarded as separate entities. In subsequent generations, Deyda was demoted to a localized goddess of fertility. Tiamar evolved, embodying seasonal changes in weather and, as the Spring Serpent, the life-giving waters of the rivers and streams. Sun Woman became conjoined with Tabiti (ancestral flame) of northern Sukuda.



Many skill clans developed their own patron deities, the most popular being Amirani the Smith, who seduced the fire goddess Tabiti and created the first forge [or Tabiti may have been the forge who seduced Amirani].

In most versions of the myth he sacrificed himself to give this gift to humans--in keeping with the male sacrificial god myth, which included the annual reaping of Grainman or the goat god Bochi-ocho.

A multicultural society dependent on international trade, Kolkha tolerated diverse religious practices. In addition to the main temple complex in Upper City and the wide variety of skill clan and hereditary clan temples, peoples of different nationalities were free to construct temples to their gods.

The resiliency of Kolkhan culture, which was both agricultural and pastoral, rural and urban, multicultural and heavily invested in trade, helped them absorb external pantheons [whereas insular cultures were often “defeated” by invading sky gods during this period].

This tolerance was challenged by the Mazdian monotheists of the eastern tribes who preached against the native gods, eventually leading to the “temple riots” of 583 BCE. The riots ended only when the sovereign gave supremacy to All-Seeing Tiamar by royal decree (reinforced by the city guardians).