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## Anthropology of Religion

### Africa



#### **STRANGE BELIEFS**

**SIR EDWARD EVANS-PRITCHARD, 1902-1973**

**STRANGERS ABROAD**, programme 6 of 6.

*A Central Independent Television Production*

52 minutes, 1986. Director and Anthropologist: André Singer, Writer / Presenter: Bruce Dakowski

Central Television's major documentary series looks at the first anthropologists to stop 'armchair theorising' and go out to live among the peoples they are interested in. University professor Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard was the first trained anthropologist to do fieldwork in Africa, where he lived among the Azande and studied their beliefs in witchcraft.

### Asia



#### **A CELEBRATION OF ORIGINS: WAI BRAMA, FLORES, INDONESIA**

45 minutes, 1980. Filmmaker/Anthropologists: E. Douglas Lewis, Patsy Asch and Timothy Asch

This film is a record of the *gren mahe* rituals of the people of the domain of Wai Brama. The *gren mahe* is the largest religious event of the Wai Brama ceremonial system and requires the participation of the whole community. The film examines ceremonial leadership and the role of evolving religious practice in a changing society.



#### **SPEAR AND SWORD: A PAYMENT OF BRIDEWEALTH ON THE ISLAND OF ROTI**

22 minutes, 1988. Filmmaker/Anthropologists: James J. Fox, Timothy Asch and Patsy Asch

This film explores the ritual of bridewealth and the social complexities that accompany this cultural tradition between families.



## TWO FILMS ON CREMATION IN BALI

### ***Releasing the Spirits: a village cremation in Bali***

44 minutes, 1979. Filmmaker/Anthropologists: Patsy Asch, Linda Connor and Timothy Asch

In 1978, as part of the preparations for the island-wide ceremony *eka dasa rudra*, religious officials urged all Balinese to cleanse the island by cremating their dead. Many were forced to pool resources and hold group cremation rituals. The film shows preparations for such a ceremony and its cycle of rituals



### ***Ngarap: fighting over a corpse***

17 minutes, 1993, Anthony Forge

In 1993 Anthony Forge filmed the cremation of an older woman from an affluent 'commoner' family. As her body was moved from her family compound to the cremation tower, men of the ward seized the body and began to fight over it, as was traditional in that part of Bali. Forge juxtaposes his recording of this event with Gregory Bateson's 1937 footage of a *ngarap* and footage of Balinese paintings.



## **GODS AND SATANS (Dieux et Satans)**

87 minutes, 2005. Filmmakers and Anthropologists: Martine Jounet, Gerard Nougazol

Indo Pino is a highly-recognized shaman amongst the Wana people, semi nomads from the Indonesian (Sulawesi) forest. Her nephew, who is also a shaman's son, converted to Christianity some months ago and is now preaching that his visions come from God, whereas the visions of the shamans come from Satan. The film explores the struggle between various religious conceptions.



## **DABA / NA SHAMAN**

40 minutes, 1999. Filmmaker and Anthropologist: Hua Cai

After more than a quarter of a century without any form of religious ceremony, the Na, an ethnic group living on the Himalayan plateau, began openly practising their religion again in the early 1990s. Their priests are called *daba*. Among the few old shamans who are still living today, Dafa Luzo is the most remarkable. As the main character in the film, we see him looking after his farm and his family, as well as performing rituals to expel all unclean spirits and demons and honour the ancestors.



**KEEPERS OF THE FAITH: THE BUDDHIST NUNS OF SAIGANG HILLS**

51 minutes, 1996. Filmmaker and Anthropologist: Hiroko Kawanami

In the Saigang Hills, 12 miles from the ancient capital of Mandalay are hundreds of pagodas, stupas, monasteries and nunneries which form a focal point of worship for Buddhism in Myanmar. In 1986 the filmmaker lived as a nun for 15 month in the Thameikdaw Gaung nunnery. Returning several years later, the filmmaker provides an intimate depiction of everyday practices of the nunnery as well a portrait of the monastic economy and the nunnery's interactions with society.

**Oceania**



**WAITING FOR HARRY**

57 minutes, 1980. Filmmaker: Kim McKenzie, Anthropologist: Les Hiatt

Set in Arnhem Land, east of Maningrida, Northern Australia, we witness Frank Gurrnamana as he prepares the final mortuary ceremonies for his dead brother, assisted by anthropologist Les Hiatt. The coffin is to be a hollow log covered with meticulous paintings. At the climax of the ceremony, all his close kin will be expected to be present, including Harry Daima, nephew of the dead man. As the relatives gather from outlying regions, Harry's unexpected absence provides a test of Frank's organisational ability.



**THE HOUSE-OPENING**

45 minutes, 1980. Filmmaker/ Anthropologist: Judith MacDougall

When Geraldine Kawanka's husband died, she and her children left their house at Aurukun on Cape York Peninsula. In earlier times a bark house would have been burnt, but today a 'house-opening' ceremony – creatively mingling Aboriginal, Torres Strait and European elements - has evolved to deal with death in the midst of new living patterns



**GOOD-BYE OLD MAN**

70 minutes, 1977. Filmmaker and Anthropologist: David MacDougall

A last request of a Tiwi man on Melville Island, Northern Australia, was that a film be made of the pukumani (bereavement) ceremony to follow his death. The film follows his family, from the days of preparation to their final leave-taking of the old man.



**BRIDEWEALTH OF A GODDESS**

\*\*72 minutes, 2000. Chris Owen

The film provides unique insight into a secret spirit cult among the Kawelka people in the western highlands of Papua New Guinea. After a dream, a clan leader initiates a long and complex 'work', when he and a group of male supporters seek to make marriage with the spirit goddess Amb Kor.



### **THE GUARDIAN OF THE FORCES**

52 minutes, 1991. Filmmaker: Anne Laure Folly

Sikavi, a 'fetish priest' in Lome, Togo, controls the spirits of several voodoo gods. The film explores the significance of sacrifice and possession in communicating with spirits of ancestors and voodoo deities. Tradition and modernity are contrasted in this colourful documentary, which provides insight into healing practices of life and death.

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