

Appendix A: Glossary

!Dala (! dahl uh) –

A species of rare, venomous spider that is coal-black and has excess hair. It is about a centimetre wide. The !Dala spider is a symbol of bad luck to the Mgalearan people, and the proper action to take if you see one is to run. Legend has it that Kan|oki, the leader of the first mgargwi, was bitten by a !Dala spider and died. The spider has therefore become associated with ruin and misfortune.

alkan!oka (owl can !ok uh) –

1. Soul

2. The unique set of beliefs possessed by each individual. The alkan!oka is subdivided into many parts. There are the beliefs about the physical world, comprised of truths such as the appearance, texture, and sound of physical things. There are the beliefs about ethics, consisting of the individual's moral truths, such as the wrongness (or rightness) of cold-blooded murder. There are aesthetic truths, such as the beauty or ugliness of another. Finally there is the ulun#e, the set of beliefs about the afterlife. It is important to recognise that the alkan!oka is not a set of opinions, but rather a set of true beliefs which, though not immutable, are not doubted by the individual.

3. The beliefs held in common by two individuals, and the manifestations of those beliefs. For example, if two people believe in the existence of this book, then the book itself would have an alkan!oka, equivalent to the shared space of those beliefs. Through this form of alkan!oka, interactions can take place between individual alkan!oki.

4. (the ~) The collective consciousness formed by the union of all alkan!oki (except, of course, those in their ulun#i).

alkan!okan|u (owl can !o khan |u) –

Soul mate. Specifically, an alkan!oka's "shape" in the ugankari fits perfectly with that of its alkan!okan|u. Not all alkan!oki have alkan!okan|i – those that do not are considered independent, or complete by themselves. Those that do have an alkan!okan|u are considered incomplete, and are not whole until they are untied with their alkan!okan|u. When this happens, if the union is ideal, the two alkan!oki become one, and all beliefs are agreed upon and shared. The alkan!oka and alkan!okan|u go to the same ulun#e.

Note that an alkan!oka may have more than one alkan!okan|u. In order for a fractured alkan!oka with two or more "holes" to become complete it must be with all of its alkan!okan|i simultaneously. Since incomplete alkan!oki are not gender-specific, the mgargwi passed a resolution recognising marriages in which a woman takes on multiple husbands, provided that all of the grooms agree that the bride is their alkan!okan|u. (This has not yet happened, however.)

dokagchoki (dough kag choke ee) –

The belief that there is nothing but the empty ugankari. Occasionally a piece of the nothing will invent itself and other things into some shadows of “reality”, but it is not real. Anything that thinks it exists, or that other things exist, is deluding itself. However, it is necessary to live in the illusion, so laws are made to keep society functioning. There is no morality, so laws are not moral, but instead are designed to keep society from destroying itself.

The core belief of dokagchoki is that words such as “truth” or “reality” are as irrelevant as the concepts they are trying to describe. Nothing is *false*, as nothing is *true*.

kulum!a (coo loom !a) –

Circumcision. In Mgaleara male circumcision is performed in two parts. The first kulum!a, performed in the transition from infancy to childhood, merely takes a small wedge of flesh from the tip of the child’s katako. The second kulum!a, marking the passage from childhood to manhood, removes the remainder of the skin, thereby completing the circumcision.

kan!oko (can !o ko) –

An elaborate wooden structure used to prop up the bodies of the dead, used for funeral purposes. It is used to display the body, which is laid on the wooden platform and covered up the head with cloth. The kan!oko is rectangular, and is about eighty centimetres wide and two metres long. It is supported by four posts extending downward from each of the corners, usually about a metre tall. Often the kan!oko itself or the cloth covering the body is decorated with designs or images from the life of the deceased.

marajuke (mah rah |oo keh) –

The wilderness found beyond the borders of the village. Technically it begins once the village is out of eyesight. Other nations’ villages are not considered part of the marajuke, nor are abandoned villages that have not yet grown over. In legend, the marajuke is full of dark and treacherous beasts, and wandering into it alone is never a good idea. However, this advice is often ignored, and commonly men will go out into the marajuke alone to hunt. More traditional or superstitious Mgalearans, however, still hunt in groups of four or more.

mgarke (mm gar keh) –

1. Focus

2. A concentrated form of consciousness that can have strong effects on the realities of those who believe in it. Technically, mgarke does not exist, but it is a medium for the transfer of beliefs. One person, traditionally an obeche|u, focuses and creates mgarke that is real for himself or herself. The other person is then told of the mgarke, and expected to believe in it. If he or she does so, the belief becomes part of both their alkan!oki.

mdaki (mm dah key) –

An herb with healing properties. The herb is boiled in water to make a strong tea, and is often blessed by an obeche|u, before being given to the sick patient. It is very unpleasant, and not very common, and so it is used only as a last resort.

mutaki (moo tah key) –

A deadly, venomous plant renowned for the swiftness and efficiency of the poison in its leaves. Legend has it that two leaves will kill even the mightiest man.

naka|oro (nah kah |ore oh) –

A bittersweet drink made from a variety of fermented fruits and berries. It is used commonly in festivities, for the pleasant buzz it gives the drinker.

ngoche (nn go chee) –

1. Husband.
2. A respectful title wives use to address their husbands.

obeche|u (oh bee chee |oo) –

An Mgalearan priest. Obeche|i are not any more powerful than civilians, but they understand the workings of the world more thoroughly. This understanding of oken|uko allows an obeche|u to give blessings, etc. Ceremonial roles are also given to the obeche|u, such as that of sanctifying a marriage.

oken|uko (oh ken |oo koh) –

The set of beliefs of Mgaleara. Oken|uko claims that there is no world, and that the world that appears to us is merely an invention of our own minds. The only *real* things are the various alkan!oki, and the ugankari. Two or more alkan!oki can share and agree on beliefs, thus making them true for a group. In this way, the world, and various moral laws are constructed.

See alkan!oka, alkan!okan|u, ulun#e, and ugankari.

ugankari (oo gan kah ree) –

The great space that all alkan!oki inhabit. It is empty except for the alkan!oki. It is one of the few truths of oken|uko, and its existence does not depend on one's belief of it.

ukinga (oo kin guh) –

1. An exile from Mgaleara. ukingi are outcast into the mara|uke, and forbidden from entering the village, or from contacting any Mgalearan. Traditionally they are believed to learn witchcraft and practice it in the mara|uke. In reality, only a few of them remain in the mara|uke – most of them join other

nations, becoming servants, or, if they are lucky, citizens.

2. A witch, or anyone practicing witchcraft.

ulun#e (oo loon #eh) –

1. A part of the alkan!oka that contains the beliefs on the afterlife. These may be optimistic, pessimistic, or the belief that there is no afterlife.

2. The final state of an alkan!oka. When an alkan!oka believes it is dead, it severs all ties with all others in the ugankari and retreats into its ulun#e. From the ulun#e there is usually no escape, as resurrection was not a prevalent belief of the Mgalearans. Except in the rare occurrence of alkan!okanji, alkan!oki are alone in their ulun#i. Hence, there are absolutely no restrictions over one's control of the afterlife, and those aware of this can bend their ulun#e to their will even after death.

An interesting consequence of ulun#e is that those who believe in judgement and damnation become their own judge. If they believe they deserve hell, they will get it. If they believe they have been good and should go to heaven, such is the result. If they believe in purgatory, they will burn for however many years they believe they should before transforming their ulun#e into a better place. This is no different from the Zuka idea of a God judging you based on a moral code, except that you create your own moral code (see oken-uko).

If one believes that nothing follows death, then, as his or her alkan!oka is shut off from all others and feeling nothing internally, he or she truly does cease to exist.

umbu#u (oom boo #oo) –

A very respectful title usually used to refer to an elder or someone in authority. It is traditionally only used to address men.

unam#i (oon ahm #ee) –

A tough, fibrous plant, used for weaving rope in dry climates. The fibres expand and come apart when they get wet, so the practical use of the unam#i plant is limited in Mgaleara.