

# nelkan

*'I must create a system, or be enslaved by another man's; I will not reason and compare: my business is to create.'*

(William Blake, quoted in the Penguin Classics, Upanishads, p.22)

## Introduction

**nelkan** was created for a restricted but specific purpose. by concentrating on only one small area of experience, it can attempt, within its framework, to be a much more precise tool of expression than other languages. the lexis reflects this desire.

it has been put to me that one should only write in one's mother tongue, since one cannot fully realize the the complex of associations, connotations and symbolism of any other. this seems to me to be stating a real but not insurmountable difficulty. more care can be taken, in the form of dictionary and thesaurus, to ensure that the 'foreign' language is not violated by the insensitive user.

furthermore, it is precisely the difference of semantic fields, areas of associations and heritage of symbolism will necessitate and vindicate languages other than one's own being used - since experience finds its best expression in the best language medium available.

i believe the conscious creation of an artificial language to be defensible, both philosophically and linguistically - it is the next and logical step in the chinese-box puzzle which is language. previous steps have variously been described by, by example:

- 1) d.a.m. binnendijk: een protest tegen de tijd, amsterdam, 1945, pp.15-16:  
USE OF: 'beeldende taal'---'beschrijvende taal'--- 'beeldende taal'
- 2) s. møller kristensen: digtingens teori, copenhagen, 1958, p.83. this critic corroborates binnendijk's first two categories.
- 3) e. cassirer: the philosophy of symbolic forms, I, yale, 1966, p.118 - on the 'magical' aspect of language. also described as the 'mythical' aspect, c.f. v. van vriesland: grondslag der verstandhouding, amsterdam, 1966, §§ 63-65.
- 4) h. adams: c.f. the discussion on the outer/inner edges of poetry, in: the contexts of poetry, london, 1965, p.171. also: pp.101- 102; chapter 8; p.163.  
for a discussion in linguistic terms, see:

- 5) b. malmberg: nya vägar inom språkforskningen, stockholm, 1962, p.340 - the use of the terms **inåtvänt** and **utåtvänt**.

all views referred to above show a desire to come to terms with the possibility of indirect communication, with what has misguidedly been called 'hermeticism'. what is so often forgotten is that there *is* a desire to communicate in hermetic poetry, but that the desire is gratified by the creation in a poem of an enclosed system, in which each word keeps its appointed place. the unity of a poem is composed of its elements - words. words can be set off against each other, compared, contrasted, revealed - but only in terms of the system. the hermetic poem functions as a catalyst - it being the reader's first task to understand the system at each smallest (word) unit. (c.f. nowotny, the language poets use, athlone press, 1965, p.120) it is not simply, as binnendijk and kristensen might seem to indicate, a recapturing of language as 'magic', 'incantation'; because it is now a conscious process.

**nelkan** is attempting to create a language for indirect communication, but it is a language which has no validity as a means of direct communication - it is for this reason that i described it as representing a further step into the labyrinth. but a system known to only one person is technically meaningless, and my desire *is* to communicate; something which i can only do by supplying a way into **nelkan**. i have therefore given as full a grammar and glossary as i can and, unwillingly, supplied transcriptions in english - since otherwise the reader would probably dismiss the poems as being, at least, proof of eccentricity; or, were he more 'gentle', spend an inordinate amount of time for what might be little profit. i write 'unwillingly', since the transcriptions are in a language whose inadequacy necessitated **nelkan** in the first instance.

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## GRAMMAR OF **nelkan**:

### prefixes:

rel-	that which has existence until moment of observation, or, until action on part of observer
nel-	which observation, act of observer, brings into existence
mel-	that which has existence before and after observation, act on part of observer
a-	at threshold level as experienced by the senses
â-	has both connection and separation; and
i-	negation
keitü-	effecting a synthesis of image and negative image
mil-	this
tü-	forms a negative image, but retains essential characteristics
kâ-	critical, essential

### suffixes:

-byd	onto	-r	ascending, upwards
-bydæ	on	-re	concerning
-dri	with	-ræ	up (state)
-êrk	up towards	-rk	expanding horizontally; towards
-fra	from		
-irk	down towards	-rkæ	horizontal
-je	possessive form	-så	by means of
-k	descending, downwards	-si	between
-kæ	down (state)	-sim	at (place)
-laje	whose, whom, which of	-ta	until
-le	plural form	-ti	through and/or beyond
-mi	if (conditional)	-tim	with halo-like after-image
-mort	against, anti-	-timö	fluctuating, pulsing
-mûr	in	-vû	by (agent with passive)
-muwr	into	-zi	among, merging with

### nouns:

- nouns can be either simplex or compound
- compound nouns are formed without modification of either element
- if a looser link is required, then the link -â- is used, since it implies both connection and separation
- most compound words are formed by the addition of prefixes and suffixes:

bluw	tree
bluwɾ	tree with ascending branches
dyllebluwɾ	tree, as above, in leaf
neldyllebluwɾ	tree, as above, coming into leaf
aneldyllebluwɾ	tree, as above, poised on coming into leaf
aneldyllebluwɾtim	tree, as above, with halo-like after-image
pâj	sky
tüpâj	sky, during night
apâj	dawn, dusk
atüpâj	dusk sky, as it becomes night

- e) nouns are formed from adjectives by the addition of -ûj
- f) all plurals are formed by the addition of -le
- g) there are no definite or indefinite articles
- h) the possessive function of the noun is denoted by -je

verbs:

- a) there is no verb 'to be'
- b) tenses are formed by the prefixes: rel-, nel-, mel-
- c) all verbs are formed by adding -o to the noun
- d) all passives are formed by adding -os to the noun
- e) the agent is denoted by -vû
- f) present participles are formed by adding -bråd to the verb
- g) past participles are formed by adding -bruwn to the verb
- h) the personal pronoun is post-enclitic. the pronouns are:

dâ	i	dâje	my
chuw	thou	chuwje	thine
chuwâ	we	chuwâje	our
præd	they, others	prædje	their
prâêd	your	prâêdje	your

- i) the interrogative is formed by the addition of 'chi' as the initial word in the sentence
- j) if the noun stem ends in a vowel, it is omitted before the addition of a verbal suffix

example of verbal forms:

kansül	song
kansülo	to sing; he/she/it sings, there is singing
kansülodâ	i sing

kansülochuw	thou singst
kansülochuwdâwe	sing
kansülopræd	they sing
kansülochuwle	you (plural of thou) sing
relkansülodâ	i sang
nelkansülodâ	i will sing

### pronunciation

a	as in french 'la'	ou	as in german 'schau'
â	as in swedish 'mat'	u	as in dutch 'nut'
æ	as in french 'mère'	ü	as in french 'lune'
å	as in swedish 'båda'	uw	as in swedish 'bok'
e	as in english 'men'	û	as in swedish 'hus'
ê	as in french 'tête'	j	as in english 'jam'
ei	as in nynorsk 'stein'	g	as in dutch 'geest'
i	as in english 'bin'	ch	as in english 'cheese'
î	as in french 'ni' ñ		as in french 'vigne'
y	as in dutch 'mijn'	s	as in english 'sea'
o	as in english 'box'		double consonants are
ö	as in french 'feu'		pronounced as such

## A BASIC VOCABULARY OF NELKAN

â	and (c.f. prefixes)	âdou	window
amelû	god	âñâflôm	drowning
anü	whisper	aprödri	slowly
ârû	mist	bilt	day
bluw	tree	bluwflôm	trunk, body of tree
bluwö	sap	bræł	rib
bâr	point, spot	chîpal	back
chöla	sand	châk	evening
del	suddenly	devra	pride
dilîta	mild	dimmü	last
dorm	hoof	dou	glass
drimmo	to enforce	düg	shell
düj	ear	düjo	to hear
duwm	difficulty	dyl	leaf
ei	or	fa	where
fâl	stone, pebble	fêla	path
flôm	body, identity	fonda	deep
glub	bubble	grêlô	hæmmorhage
imâra	hate	inü	sound
jag	but	kan	language
kanö	word	kansül	song
kanû	voice	keichuwdâ	chase
(keitü)dou	eye	keitükanö	emotion
keitükansülö	poem	keitümâra	love
kit	so that, with the result	kril	paper
krildyl	sheet of paper	kruw	fire
krüm	shake	ksâ	mother
ksei	daughter	ksö	moon
ksou	sea	ksouñâprö	swell, surge
ksuwl	star	kûł	it is so
la	which, who	lâmo	to move
libüti	eager for	limma	small, soft
lîna	beech	löp	smooth
mâra	dream	mel	eternal (present)
meldâ	mind, heart	melflôm	world-cosmos
melmûr	life	menka	vulnerability
mer	it is possible	mino	to lessen
môg	skull	mûro	to implode
ñâ	water	ñâirk	river
ñê	child	ñêstrâl	wonder

nêtim	nucleus	nîla	bird
niprîn	strap	nirît	mark, point of reference
nivâra	concealment		
nü	silence	ö	blood, energy
pâj	sky, heavens	prædzi	death
præn	melting	prö	movement
reisa	large, giant	relnel	now, this moment
rit	crack, split	semp	blessing
sân	care, attention	servo	to find
shâ	father	shei	son
shluw	eagle	shö	sun
shuwl	flower	silla	light(ness)
skeida	power, force	skormo	to impose upon
skrâto	to restrain, hold back	skreino	to wade
skrîno	to mock	slæpo	to bend, incline
slîk	scythe	sorm	black
soum	night	souv	deep purple
stîg	stiff, solid	stîlo	to tread
strâlo	to hope	strêlo	to look for
sül	music	syll	bright, light (colour)
tâko	to praise	temma	then
ter	only, single	trælo	to sense, perceive
trîm	sacrifice	trind	mauve, crimson
trûl	thick	trûn	mesh
tüdâ	shadow	tüdou	mirror
tükan	echo	tükanö	thought
tümâra	everyday experience	tüstrâl	fear
û	breath	vamö	gale, strong wind
vî	white	vîka	grotto
vînü	snow, foam, froth	vioja	hand
vittar	morning		

1.

melö

relshöktimö aneldyllebluwrtichuwje  
atüpâj keitüdoumûrdâje  
bluwör tûshör  
â ksuwletimöti douletimöchuwådâje

2.

prænû

grêlormûr atüpâjkeitüdouje  
ânâflômo nîlale  
relbârsim anelkansülo ksuwletim  
sommâradüjmûr ksouñâprö ksoudâje

3.

'und in den wipfeln wie ein auferstehn' [rilke]

ksouñâprö pâjmôgkansülzidâje  
skreinodâ duwmdri trûl tûmâraksouti  
keitûmârkchuwje  
shö chîpalbydædâje niprînobruwn  
trîm libüti  
ei neldâo ksouzi  
nelfâlta löpobruwn  
ei fonda chölamûr stîgobruwn  
la nirîto brællejedâje shluwr



4.

ñâmîn

ksou skrâtos  
kandouvû  
trûnmûrlaje  
melduwm dri  
aneldoumort  
stîgpröleo glubnîla  
kansüllaje  
milkeitükansülö

5.

bluwtrûn

[en forvandling af per langes digt skoven, str.1-5]

stîlomuwr víkale syll bluwtrûnje  
strêlo nirîtk amelûje dorm  
temma neldüjochuw skrînobrád kanû  
shâdâje jag tübluwtrûnlezi låmo

ilåmomi fêlarksim adou istîgdri  
bluwflômmort slæpo â melfômchuwje  
temma neldüjochuw bluwñüje devra  
anüore melmûr bluwshuwletimje nelrel

anülibüto så skeidale vamöje  
anelksouñâprö dylleti meltimö kansülo  
ksouflömta stîgpröbråd nelpröbråd â  
melchuwje nelkruwos libüti keichuwdá

areltrælochuw slík souv vamöje  
bluwshuwlemûr vînöbråd â reisa  
düjchuwta del kansül aneltrælochuw  
anelkansülr inüledri dügmûr shâje

chuwla ñêstrâlöbråd bluwtrûn dilîta  
reltâkochuw ksa ví kansülchuwje  
düjochuw kansül limma nelshuwleje  
bluwshuwlemûr lînaje kansülöle ilimma

6.

keitükansülö ikûl  
nivâra ei mâra isyll  
jag ter relflôm kûl  
la mer dâiflômbyd mûrobråd skormo

kit dügritle krilos  
kit keitüdou servos  
skrâto tümâraflôm

l  
e  
melkeitüdou la n

e  
l  
drimmo tümâratrûn

(fa mer niritle strêlos)

jag mero melmâra

keitükansülögrêlô milkrildylchîpalbydæ kûl  
la sândri meritüdouos meldâvû  
menkalaje milkâtrûlûjvû 3/1000" minobrâds

keitükansülöje strâl

meldâo melchuwo

keitümâraså

## transcriptions of **nelkan**

1. eternal blood// the descending, fluctuating-pulsing sun, which exists up to this point, (is) through and beyond your tree with rising branches, which is scarcely perceptibly coming into leaf/ a dusk-merging-into-night sky (is) my resolving eye/ the sap (is) rising/ and through and beyond fluctuating-pulsing stars (are) our fluctuating-pulsing eyes//
2. melting-breath// in the rising hæmmorrhage of the resolving-eye of the dusk sky, as it merges into night,/ the birds are drowning (on the point of separation, of becoming identified with the water)/ at the points of departure (points which existed up to this moment) the stars, with halo-like after-image, are on the point of singing/ in the night-dream's ear (is) the swell of my sea//
3. the surf is (forming) an indistinguishable part of my heaven-skull's song/ i am wading with difficulty through the thick sea of everyday experience/ towards your love/ the sun strapped on my back/ eager for the sacrifice/ or becoming part of the sea/ smoothed to a pebble/ or petrified deep in the sand/ which marks the rising eagle of my ribs//
4. the water-clock// the sea is held back/ by the language-glass/ in whose mesh/ with lasting difficulty/ against absorption (into the glass)/ (there) struggles the bubble-bird/ whose song (is) this poem//
5. enter the clear grottoes of the forest (and) look for the sign below on the ground of a god's hoof; then you will hear a mocking voice: but my lord moves among other, negative-image, forests.// if you stop moving in the middle of your journey along almost invisible paths and gently incline your full-being against the tree-cosmos; then you will hear the pride of tree-silence concerning the present life of the pulsating rising-tree flowers.// be eager for this whisper: because of the powers of the gale the incipient swell forms a surging song through the foliage, until the sea-cosmos sluggishly begins to move and your being is fired and eager for the chase.// you were just able still to sense the deep purple scythe of the gale moving through the foaming and gigantic crests, until suddenly your ear can just make out the faint rising song with sounds in the lord's shell.// you who, wondering, praised the mild forest, the white mother of your song, you can hear the soft song of the blossoms (and) the majestic poems in the crests of beech.//
6. it is not so that the poem is concealment or the obscuring of the dream, but that it is the only form still extant which it is possible to impose onto the personal imploding negation of cosmos, with the result that the shell-cracks are (may be) papered over, the resolving-glass found - the permanent resolving-glass which: will hold back the external world of phenomena; will enforce an external world-mesh, where it is possible for bearings to be sought; and yet make uninterrupted dream possible. It is the poem-hæmmorrhage on the back of this

sheet of paper, which, with care, can be unmirrored by the mind,  
whose vulnerability is being lessened by this critical thickness  
(which is)  $3/1000$ ". the hope of the poem is: eternal self-  
fulfilling for me and for you through the resolving power of  
love.//