SHAMAN

Journal of the International Society
for Shamanistic Research

Articles in this volume are dedicated to

MIHÁLY HOPPÁL,

the President of the
International Society for Shamanistic Research

on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday.

Part One

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Front cover: After a drawing on an Altai Turkic shaman's drum
(A. V. Anokhin, *Materialy po shamanstvu u altaitsev*)

Back cover: After a Yakut rock drawing
(A. P. Okladnikov, *Istoriia Iakutii*)

ISSN 1216-7827
Printed in Hungary

SHAMAN

Volume 10 Numbers 1 & 2 Spring/Autumn 2002

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Mihály Hoppál Is Sixty

ÅKE HULTKRANTZ STOCKHOLM

If there is anybody in our times who has inspired the renewed interest in shamanism, particularly shamanism among the Siberian peoples, it is Mihály Hoppál. The earlier great authors on the subject (Mircea Eliade, who was a literary genius, and Michael Harner, the father of neo-shamanism, for instance) were primarily scholars; Hoppál is both a respected scholar, and a charismatic instigator of scientific interest in classical shamanic beliefs, myths and rituals. No one has done as much for the study of traditional shamanism and its fantastic revival in our times. There is hardly any meeting of "shamanological" interest where Mihály is not present, and active as chairman, inspirer or formulator.

My first encounter with Mihály took place in 1970. Earlier, I had met his teacher, the excellent shamanologist Vilmos Diószegi, at a congress on shamanism in Finland, and had planned to collaborate with him and the late Ivar Paulson of Stockholm on a book on eastern shamanism. The meeting in Budapest was meant to prepare this work which, unfortunately, fell victim to other concerns. It was, however, on this occasion that I had the pleasure of meeting the man who, quite clearly, was destined to be Diószegi's successor: Mihály then a young, gifted and knowledgeable research fellow. I was impressed by his energy and his dedication to what has proven to be his passion, native mythologies and shamanism. How much so is well illustrated by his latest book, *Studies on Mythology and Uralic Shamanism* (Budapest, 2000).

When Diószegi died two years later, in 1972, Mihály became the leader of shamanic studies in Hungary, and thus the foremost mediator between East and West—between Western Europe and the Russian–Far Eastern region. He became a diligent organiser of seminars, congresses and meetings on shamanism and mythology. Together with Ádám Molnár, he has made Budapest a centre of shamanic research. Hoppál has published book series and journals, for example *Shaman* (published

since 1993, with Molnár) and *Bibliotheca Shamanistica* (whose first volume appeared in 1995). It was largely on Hoppál's initiative that the International Society for Shamanistic Research was constituted in 1988; he has been the President since 1991 (with Taegon Kim as co-president in 1994–1996). *Shaman,* the bi-annual journal mentioned above, is the voice of this society.

One expects Mihály Hoppál to be present at practically every meeting of shamanologists in the Old World. His influence on the Eurasiatic scholarly tradition cannot be exaggerated. Mihály spellbinds his readers and listeners with the same exciting power and charisma that Eliade exerted over his audience twenty-five years ago. This is not to say that the two scholars are alike. Eliade built his fame—and according to some circles, his faults—on his seminal book on the role of ecstasy in shamanism (*Shamanism. Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy.* Princeton, 1974). Mihály is more practically engaged. He is certainly interested in theoretical questions, but his work is primarily motivated by concerns about the continued growth of shamanic research, and the expansion of the shamanic field. For instance, very few scholars have promoted the use of filming in shamanic interviews like he has, or have so encouraged the precise enactment of cultic acts.

Mihály is constantly writing books on shamanism. The topics range from Hungarian, Uralic, Siberian, and Japanese shamanism to world shamanism on the whole. The most important of the latter group of works is his monograph *Schamanen und Schamanismus* (Augsburg, 1994), the first collection published so far presenting pictures of shamans and shamanic instruments from different parts of the world. (Another book by Hoppál with a superabundance of shamanic illustrations from Eurasia will be published in 2002). The range of his publications is quite astounding; the interested reader is referred to the fine bibliography of his works published by the European Folklore Institute in Budapest.

There can be no doubt that all these publications have their *fons et origo* in a very dedicated author's love of shamanic phenomena as such, as well as the originators of these phenomena, the inspired ecstatics of the Asiatic plains. Indeed, of all the peoples whose deepest dreams and thoughts he has transmitted to the non-shamanic world. We thank Mihály Hoppál for his brilliant contributions, and wish him a fruitful career for another sixty years.

Shamans Across Space, Time and Language Barriers*

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Using legends, epics and oral histories culled from fieldwork in the Sakha Republic, this essay reviews cases of significant Tungus (Even and Evenki) – Yakut (Sakha) interaction, and mutual Tungusic-Sakha shamanic influences. Written in honor of Mihály Hoppál's work on Inner Asia, it contributes to general arguments concerning the "impure" and complex legacies of cultural traditions, and to specific discussions of the multiple roles of Tungus-Manchurian and Turkic peoples in the history of Asia.

INTRODUCTION

The diverse powers of Siberian shamans, much discussed in academic analyses and traveler accounts, extend across space, time and language barriers.[1] Shamans mediate not only cosmological worlds, they also bridge inter-group relations. Debates concerning the interethnic relations of Tungusic (Even, Evenki) and Sakha (Yakut) ancestors often revolve around the degree of assimilation of Tungusic peoples and the extent of their early warfare, described in epics and legends. Initial Tungus–Sakha contacts included the spirit-fighting competition of shamans, including female shamans, acting on behalf of their peoples. However,

* Transliteration for this article is in the Library of Congress system, unless exceptions have become standard (eg. Yakutia not Iakutia).

[1] For contrasting definitions, see especially Siikala and Hoppál (1992), Atkinson (1992), Basilov (1992), Eliade (1964), Hamayon (1990), Harner (1990), Hultkranz (1993), Humphrey with Onon (1996). For ethnographic depth, see Shirokogoroff (1935), and for cross-cultural excerpts of classic descriptions, see Narby and Huxley (2001).

strong influences flowed, and continue to flow, in multiple directions. For two centuries, Sakha have acknowledged that Tungusic shamans are often stronger, more attuned to spiritual connections and healing powers than Sakha shamans. Sakha also differentiate male shamans, *oyuun,* a Turkic word, from female shamans, *udagan*, a word with Mongolic roots.

Particularly intriguing is the historical phenomenon of language transfers during shamanic seances, when, for example, Sakha shamans chanted and sang in Tungusic languages. A twentieth century example is the famed and respected Konstantin Chirkov, who had a Tungusic helper spirit, although his everyday knowledge of the Tungusic (Even) language was inconsiderable.

Using legends, epics, and oral histories culled from fieldwork in the Sakha Republic, this essay reviews cases of significant Tungus–Sakha interaction, and mutual Tungusic–Sakha shamanic influences. Written with respect for previous work on Inner Asia, especially that of Mihály Hoppál and Vilmos Diószegi, it contributes to general arguments concerning the "impure" and complex legacies of cultural traditions, and to specific discussions of the multiple roles of Tungus-Manchurian and Turkic peoples in the history of Asia.[2]

Darkness and Light, Competition and Power

Many Sakha today acknowledge that Evenki and Even (Tungusic) shamans were and are perceived to be stronger in both curing and cursing than their Sakha counterparts. This was reinforced by the positive reputation of the recently deceased, great female shaman Matriona Petrovna Kurbel'tinova, who secretly helped supplicants throughout the Soviet period regardless of their ethnic identity.[3] Ideas concerning the spiritual power of Tungusic shamans probably date as far back as the period of first contacts among the ancestors of the Turkic Sakha and indigenous Tungusic peoples. They are reinforced by the classic work on Siberian

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[2] See especially Hoppál (1994), and Diószegi and Hoppál (1978).

[3] My collection (Balzer 1997) is dedicated to her, and has Nadezhda Bulatova's description of her *alga* blessing ritual. Several excellent films, including by Viacheslav Semenov, have been made of her.

shamanism of Sergei Shirokogoroff (1935). As with shamanic encounters in the Americas (Taussig 1987), newcomers in Siberia were frightened of the spiritual prowess of the local shamans they encountered, for these shamans were perceived to know more deeply their local natural and spiritual landscape. Shamans were at once "wiser" and "more primitive" in a particularly threatening way.

In 1994, the Sakha elder Philip Tretiakov of Khatingaakh village told me a long legend concerning the early contact period of today's Srednaya Kolyma ulus. The legend, "Yréuguchchéleekh Yeulék" [Triumph of Yeulék], detailed warfare between Urangkhai Sakha and Tungusic peoples in pre-Russian or early Russian times. Most striking, it involved the competition of two shamans, a Sakha *oyuun* and Even (Lamut) *udagan,* who used their extraordinary powers to defend their communities from death and destruction. The Even female shaman eventually was captured, tortured and completely defeated. Her group had to retreat, with their river running bloody, giving way to Sakha in the area. The Sakha incursion was allegedly sparked after an earlier retreat of a Sakha man, Yeulék, who had lost two friends to Even warriors years earlier. He had returned to the more central regions of what is currently the Sakha Republic until he was able to come back with greater numbers to wreak revenge several years later. Petr Tretiakov's tale concluded:

"The Even *udagan* had said that the Sakha would have arrows from the bones of deer, and that there would be smoke coming out of them. And so they did. Each time an arrow was shot, an Even would die, she predicted. And so they did. The people of Oro left in Spring, especially to attack, though some of the Even ran away to Birigei. During the struggle, many were hurt, some on both sides. But on the side of Yuelék, only three were killed. And the *udagan* was captured, alive. They tied her to a post, on which they had earlier tied a dog. They put a sharpened pole through her. At the place where she had been, blood flowed for three days, into the river. The place was called Omok Sena, river of a foreign people. The place also was called Krivoi in Russian, or Kéltégei in Sakha. They tried to bury the *udagan*, but each time her skull came back up through the earth. The Sakha became masters of this place. Thus ends the arrival of the Sakha to this place, more than 300 years ago. My father told me this."

This legend makes many uncomfortable today, for its highlighting of interethnic conflict and the bloodiness of war and torture. Yet it also reveals the significance of how shamans, including *udagan,* were used as clairvoyants in war, and as strong proxies for their people's competition. The Even were defeated as much through the capture of their *udagan* as through a battle with fire arrows. In the tale, told from a Sakha point of view, the Sakha shaman and group clearly triumphs, at least temporarily. One detail of the legend concerns the Even *udagan*'s skull refusing to be buried. This may well be stressed in Even versions. To confirm his story, Tretiakov mentioned: "when we tried to create an ice preserve pit for food, we found the remains of axes where the battle had been."

In the Kolyma region, at least some shamans maintained competition well into the twentieth century. The Sakha shaman Parilop, usually known for such benevolent deeds as putting out forest fires and curing people, was said to have taken such offense at an insult of a local Evenki shaman that he took the form of a wolf and devoured much of the Evenki's reindeer herd.[4] Legends of intergroup competition between shamans are widespread. In the Abyi region, two shamans, Sakha and Even, engaged their "mother-animal" spirits to fight a spiritual battle in which the Even's animal spirit-self was mortally wounded. On this battle is said to have depended the settlement of the village Suturukhakh on the riverbank opposite the current town of Belaia Gora.[5]

Similar legends told from Even and Evenki points of view make the winner of such animal spirit competitions "Tungusic" rather than Sakha. In one interethnic variation, two Viliuisk shamans, one Sakha, taking the form of a wolf and the other Tungus, taking the form of a bear, ganged up on the Yakutsk region shaman Biutee-Ilii and killed him, just after he had warned his wife of impending doom.[6] The moral of

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[4] I am grateful to Arsan Laptev for this tale.

[5] I am grateful to Alexandra Konstantinovna Chirkova, surgeon and *udagan,* daughter of Konstantin *oyuun,* for this tale, for hospitality in 1993 and 2000 and for many wonderful conversations.

[6] The story comes from Mikhail Bogorov of Borogonsk ulus, 1924, probably about an early twentieth century death (Ksenofontov 1992: 229–230). For the rich metaphorical language of Evenk references to animals, especially predators, see Myreeva (1988: 9–30).

this story is that ethnic competition can be transcended in the face of a common threat.

Galina Varlaamova Keptuké's dark yet touching memoir (1989: 54) gives further insights into socialized Evenki values that help children cope with unfairness and defeat, worldly and shamanic, inter and intra-ethnic. Following the unjust arrest of the Evenki shaman Cherikté, who had saved Galina's leg, her father explained: "We must be patient with all in this poor struggling land of ours, for every person is from the land, her children. And remember, daughter, that bad people live the longest. They have long lives because they drink the blood of good people, they extend their lives with that of others." He continued on a more practical note: "Life is a complex thing. The literate person can live more easily, knowing laws and how to protect oneself."[7]

Competition and Cooperation Among Shamans in Olonkho (Epics)

While debates exist about the timing and origins of *olonkho,* it is likely that these great epics were created in part as narratives about the formation of the Urankhai Sakha people *in relation to* other peoples, Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic.[8] Relations were both warlike (Vasil'ev 1995) and cooperative. A delightful passage towards the end of the epos/*olonkho* "Kyys Débéliie Bukhatyr" [Raging Girl Warrior-Athlete] describes a multi-ethnic *yhyakh* [annual Summer Solstice renewal festival][9]:

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[7] Keptuké (1989: 54). Defensiveness was incorporated in their world view, indicated early in the memoir with mention of their extended family's "izgorod-marylia [a sacred fence of young larches], [ritually] placed by shamans of the Keptukhé clan" (Keptuke 1989: 3).

[8] Compare theories stressing the political construction of ethnic boundaries, for example Barth (1969); Eley and Suny (1996). On *olonkho* history, compare Gogolev (1986, 1993); Nikolaev [Somogotto](1992).

[9] From Burnashev et al. 1993: 276–277, lines 4738–4759, Russian and Sakha parallel translation. My English translation follows. Nikolai P. Burnashev was an epic singer from Ust-Aldan, whose version of this epic was recorded in 1941 by Stepan K. D'iakonov.

In three big circles guests gathered,
for the celebration of the Yakut [Sakha] tribe,
to honor the upper benevolent *aiyy* spirits,
to the table came the Khoro tribe
the Chukotsk people were treated,
the Russian people were feasted, as at a wedding,
to honor the upper gods.
to pacify the lower spirits,
an unending feasting-festivity,
a deep whirl [of activity] was created,
peoples heads were spinning here,
the best heads [brains] were collected here,
everyone gathered together, on each other's heels,
people came as fast as their legs carried them,
in seven places the calls of song rang out,
in eight places the celebratory blessings were heard,
in nine places the sounds of *olonkho* tellers were heard,
here the fat became fatter,
the hungry ate their fill,
the sickly became well,
the thin took on fat;

At this festivity, the identities of Chukotka ancestors and Russians, who may have been added in later versions of the epic, are clearly marked. But the identity of the "omuk [people] khoro" is less clear. The distinguished Sakha folklorist Nikolai V. Emelianov explains they are "a tribe met in folklore not speaking in the Yakut language. According to historical legends, their ancestor Uluu Khoro (Great Khoro) with his numerous people came from the east on a bison-skakune" (Burnashev et al. 1995: 307). They can be distinguished from other peoples with whom Sakha competed further south, who Feodor Zykov (1992: 102) has linked to Mongolic groups (possibly Buryat ancestors): the "adzharai," sometimes transformed to evil spirits, "abaahy." "Adzharai" are identified by the directions south and west. Who then are the "Khoro" of the east? Perhaps they are Tungusic ancestors of the Even and Evenki.[10]

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[10] Sakha ethnographer Anatoly Ignatievich Gogolev and Even scholar Anatoly Afanasievich Alekseev (oral communications, summer 2000) agreed after some debate

In the *olonkho* "Kuruubai Khaannaakh Kulun Kullustuur" [Obstinate Khan Kulun Kullustuur] another passage catches attention, clearly linking Sakha and Tungus, their shamans, and the issue of interethnic marriage or wife capture:[11]

Your older brother sent me to you.
He said "A Tungus shaman
by the name of Ard'amaan-D'ard'amaan
took from your uncle Toion Niurgun his wife;
In deep suffering, with great vexation he is coming.
See if you cannot find the shaman,
Follow him, correct the wrong done to your uncle!
You meanwhile sit here [reassured the hero],
Do not leave your place,
And I will set out,
I will try to follow and defend
I will ask the gods to help your captured wife.
I do not know, where I will find [them]
With what kind of [spiritual] help I will have
to out-maneuver, to overcome, the clever Tungus shaman
And extract your elder aunt?!
Farewell for a long while!
Urui, aikhal! [Salutations!]"

Here, the hero is chasing after a Tungus shaman, to outsmart him and get his stolen aunt back. Because this is *olonkho* told from a Sakha point of view, the plan to recapture her is successful. (It involves tricking the somewhat "naive" Tungus hunter-wife-stealer by having

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that the Khoro were likely a Mongolic component of both the people who became Tungus, and the people who became Sakha. Ksenofontov (1992: 214–217) recorded a story from Aleksei Petrov of Western Kangalask ulus in 1925 concerning an Oduninsk region (Kuraanakh-Kiuel) clan (*rod*) named "Khoro," whose ancestor-founder was the shaman Khoro-Biukteen. The story concerns the tragic death at an *yhyakh* of the son of a shaman named Ardzha. The name Ardzha is similar to that of a Tungus shaman, Ard'amaan-Dard'amaan, who figures as a wife-stealer in the *olonkho* Kulun Kullustuur, as indicated ahead.

[11] Timofeev-Teploukhov 1985: 249 (Sakha), 509 (Russian), lines 9760–9779. Innokenti G. Timofeev-Teploukhov sang the epic to ethnographer Vasily N. Vasiliev in 1906.

her nearly seduce the disrobed Tungus, and then turning her into a golden ring.) The passage shows the degree of intimate interrelations between Sakha and Tungusic ancestors, and the whole *olonkho* reveals opportunities for mutual influence. Much earlier, Kulun Kullustuur, an orphan who was the first Sakha in the region, had greeted a local man in the Sakha language and was answered back in Tungus: "Tongustuuta n'ochubuo!... and where did you come from?"[12] Such dialogues confirm the Tungus were indigenous, and the Sakha were newcomers to the Lena river region.

Mutual Influences and Shamanic Power in Later Periods

Tales of fighting and competition between shamans of ethnic groups that were themselves historically in flux were balanced by other, later traditions that confirm increasingly complex relations. Over time, Sakha, Even, Evenki and Yukagir groups intermarried. Wealthy Even (Lamut, Tungus) reindeer breeders of the Verkhoiansk area helped support poorer local Sakha (Khudiakov 1969: 102). The different groups visited each other's summer festivals, and nineteenth century exile Ivan A. Khudiakov observed (1969: 101): "local Russians and Yakut are in ecstasy over the summer Lamut festival." Powerful Sakha shamans took on the spirit helpers of Tungusic shamans, and sometimes spoke in the Evenki or Even languages during their seances, even when they did not use these languages in their everyday life. Symbolic aspects of shamanic dress and ritual in the Sakha and Tungusic traditions came to be so intertwined that it is difficult to deconstruct what is "Sakha" and what derives from the material manifestation of Tungusic beliefs and cosmology (cf. Hoppál 1994:108–161; Tugolukov et al. 1997: 123).

The Tungus shaman Semen Popov Kékén, who died in 1860, was revered and held in awe by both Tungus and Sakha as an *iuer,* a kind of ghost, well after his death. People said that "from his grave they heard the sound of a drum and the rattle of his [metal ornamented] clothing" (Khudiakov 1969: 412).

Two other shamans were Sakha sisters, Chuonakh and Manchikai, who had been captured as brides by Tungus near the river Yana in the

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[12] Timofeev-Teploukhov 1985: 19 (Sakha), 296 (Russian), lines 510–515.

late eighteenth century (Khudiakov 1969: 407–409). "Two of the best Tungus" became their husbands, having killed their parents to get them. When their adopted Tungus nomadic community had trouble with people and animals going crazy, the elder sister Chuonakh was asked to shamanize [*jaja* (*ld'en*?)].[13] She sang to her deceased father:

> Father mine, Kiktei-shaman! When you were on this earth
> you were renowned far and wide, and you had quite a memory
> Those Tungus spilled your dark blood, cut your thick skin.
> Turn their place so, that it would seem no one has been
> here, that grass will grow on the place they live.
> Lower their high reputation, shame their white faces;
> Wipe them from the face of the earth! [*Imnérittén salghaa*!]
> Treat them just as they treated you!

After this seance-curse, everyone in the Tungus community of seven yurts died. The girls returned to their homeland to live. Chuonakh later was baptized as Agrafena, and lived in Yakutsk. Manchikai became Nastasiia. But both maintained reputations as shamans, including after death, with Sakha and Tungus of their region. Out of fear, no girl of either group wanted to be baptized with the names Agrafena or Nastasiia.

A more benevolent, productive Tungus–Sakha encounter occurred with the nineteenth century Sakha shaman Tius'piut. He told the Polish ethnographer Serioszewski (1993: 605) that he had gained a main protector spirit ["amagiat," also *émégét*] unexpectedly: "when I was travelling in the North, in the mountains, I stopped at a wood pile for dinner. I used some of its wood for the fire. It turned out a famous Tungus shaman had been buried there; that is how his spirit came to me." Tius'piut's *amagiat* spirit was easily distinguishable during seances when Tius'piut "muttered Tungus words and [enacted Tungus] gestures." Other, lesser beings who visited his seances included a capricious, vodka-demanding "nuchche tangaralakh"—a Russian spirit. The spirits

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[13] Khudiakov (1969: 407). Words for shamanizing in the Tungusic dialects are quite similar, eg. *jaja, iaia, iaia(n)*, probably revealing their antiquity and Even and Evenk common ancestry. Even consider shamanic ancestry passed through the female line especially strong. Compare Petrov (1988: 69), Tugolukhov et al. (1997: 122–124), Robbek and Dutkin (1979: 157).

themselves did not seem to put much effort into ethnic boundary maintenance or language barriers.

The great Konstantin *oyuun* (Konstantin Ivanovich Chirkov) of Abyi region provides a Soviet period example of the use by a Sakha shaman of Even (Lamut) spirit power. Occasionally during seances, he confounded participants by breaking into the Even language. One of his spirit helpers perhaps had come from a deceased Even shaman, according to his daughters Aleksandra Chirkova and Matriona Chirkova. His cloak (now sometimes worn by his daughter Aleksandra) has elements of Yukagir and Even symbolism. Until he died in 1974, his reputation was strong enough to have semi-secretly drawn patients from all ethnic groups of the region (including Russians) in his far flung, broadly defined mixed ethnic community.[14]

Conclusions

In much of "post-modern" Western anthropology, the concept of "culture" as belonging to a single people through time, or as constituted by a process of synthetic "ethnogenesis," has become fragmented and elusive (Fox 1995; Appadurai 1996; Balzer 1999). People in groups, and individuals, have cultural values, traditions, socialized standards of behavior, and politics concerning all these, without all adhering to the same things in the same ways, whether now or in the past. Their internal tensions and debates are as revealing of changing cultural values as their shifting solidarities. This is especially relevant when hundreds of years of intensive interethnic mixing has occurred, even in sparsely populated territories like the North and Inner Asia. Many ethnographers have for years committed the not-so-minor sin of overgeneralizing about peoples and their cultures, or describing whole peoples as "winners" and "losers." One way to reverse the process is to look closely at specific interethnic relations and at languages: interpenetrating, adaptive and constantly taking on new life with new vocabularies and forms, within both conscious and subconscious cognitive frameworks.

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[14] Konstantin had a mother who was Yukagir. My main sources on Konstantin *oyuun* come from three who were inspired by him: his youngest daughter, Alexandra Chirkova, his eldest daughter, Matriona Chirkova, another relative, Matriona Ivanovna Yakovleva, and the son of one of his *kuturukhsut* (helpers), Petr Nikolaevich Iliakhov.

The best of the European Siberianists have been sensitive to these issues long before they became fashionable.

The linguist G.M. Vasilevich (1948: 253–254) in his *Ocherki dialektov évenkiiskogo (tungusskogo) yazyka* created a chart comparing the similarities and differences of key words in Evenki and Yakut (Sakha). That chart can serve as a partial metaphor for what I have begun here: to show mutual influences over time despite an initial history of considerable ethnic violence between Sakha (usually newcomers) and Tungusic (usually indigenous) peoples. While much assimilation (or acculturation) occurred in the direction of Sakhazation, far from all of it did. And Sakhazation as a term masks significant Tungusic cultural, conceptual continuities.

Many of the (hi)stories told here, whether from my own fieldwork or from classic *olonkho* and legends, are told from Sakha points of view. Similar accounts told from Even or Evenki points of view come out quite differently, especially regarding definitions of victims and heroes, or the moral nobility of victims. An important field technique is to match accounts of legendary and historical figures, such as the shamans Ard'amaan-D'ard'amaan, Kékén, Cherikté, Matriona Kurbel'tinova, Kiktei, Chuonakh, Manchikai, Tius'piut, and Konstantin Chirkov, as told by representatives of various ethnic groups.

The focus I have chosen, shamanic relations and mutual influences between Tungusic and Sakha communities through time, requires a great deal more research. Especially productive areas to look for the interpenetration of shamanic world views is in closer study of seance song (especially spirit calling) texts, in spirit helper cross-overs (cases of speaking in neighborly tongues), in legends of spirit proxy competitions, and in concepts of reincarnation (cf. Mills and Slobodin 1994; Siikala and Hoppál 1992; Balzer 1996, 1997).

Acknowledgments

I am indebted to the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), Yakutsk State University, the Academy of Sciences Institute of Languages, Literature and History in Yakutsk (AN IIaLI, now the Humanities Institute), the Sakha Republic Ministry of Culture, and to the Kennan Institute of the Smithsonian's

Wilson Center for fieldwork and/or research support. Fieldwork relevant to this paper was begun in 1986 and 1987, continuing periodically from 1991–2000. I am deeply thankful to my Sakha language teacher, Klara Belkin, with whom I began studying in 1983, and to many Sakha friends and colleagues, especially Zinaida and the late Vladimir Ivanov for sharing their home.

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VOL.10. NOS. 1-2. SHAMAN SPRING/AUTUMN 2002

Kootenai Divination

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The Kootenai Indians of North America are briefly characterized culturally and geographically. Their spiritual practices are briefly described, with a conclusion that they are in a general way, shamanic in nature. Divination as seen as a central aspect of their shamanic work that has been a factor in their secret and self-reliant adaptive autonomy. Finally, their precarious cultural position vis a vis *the larger Euroamerican cultural context is attributed to a continuous presence of ethnocentrism.*

BACKGROUND

The Kootenai (*sánka* or *ksánka*, meaning 'one arrow stuck in the ground') reside in the northeastern part of the Plateau culture area of native North America. Kootenai band societies were located along the Kootenay River and its environs from its source near Columbia Lakes in British Columbia to where it enters Kootenai Lake after passing through northwestern Montana and the northeastern corner of the panhandle of Idaho. Although population figures are unreliable, they seem to never have been a large group. Figures suggest that they probably numbered no more than a thousand or so at any time between 1880 and 1950 (Chamberlain 1892, 1907; Coues 1897; Boas 1889; Powell 1891; Turney-High 1941; Levine and Lurie 1968; Schaeffer 1937). Surrounding groups such as the Blackfoot to the east and Salishan speaking groups to the south and west were larger, particularly considering that neighboring bands belonged to large, cooperating groupings of linguistic kinsmen. The Kootenai have no close linguistic neighbors; their language has typically been considered an isolate. Regardless of whether this is borne out by ongoing research, the Kootenai have long been a small, isolated group surrounded by non-Kootenai, many of whom were regarded with

mistrust or as outright enemies. Even the Cree, whom the Kootenai regarded as friends, were termed *kuckíawe,* 'the liars' (Brunton 1974).

The broad-spectrum economy of the Kootenai was focused on hunting deer, elk, bear and such upland game as mountain sheep and goat. Caribou and moose were also hunted. Bison were taken in the western Plains which were reached by crossing dangerous passes through the Rocky Mountains from Kootenai country. The risk of this enterprise was heightened by the presence of the large and powerful Blackfoot groups in these western Plains. Waterfowl were netted on the sloughs of the lower Kootenay River Valley. The Kootenai fished the waters of the area and gathered various plant foods such as berries, tree moss and roots (Schaeffer 1940). Despite this variety, their area, though picturesque, was apparently not provident in terms of food resources and the Kootenai seemed to have faced chronic scarcity (Yerbury 1975: 28–31).

The Kootenai were divided into two groups, principally on the basis of economic, territorial, and language differences. One group, the Upper Kootenai, resided along the River upstream from the sacred Kootenay Falls and were more oriented toward hunting. They were involved in bison exploitation, tended toward being tribal in organization, and exhibited Plains cultural features such as a warrior society and the Sun Dance. The other, or Lower Kootenai, were found below the Falls. They were more Plateau in subsistence pattern, focusing on gathering plant resources, fishing, and netting waterfowl. Their less extensive involvement in bison hunting led to less Plains cultural influence (Boas 1889; Chamberlain 1907; Coues 1897; Brunton 1974; Garvin 1951; Schaeffer 1937, 1940; Turney-High 1941).

Contemporary Kootenai are found concentrated on small reserves in British Columbia, Canada, on a small reservation near Bonners Ferry, Idaho, USA, and on the Flathead Reservation in Montana, USA. Others are scattered throughout the western United States and Canada, either living on non-Kootenai reserves and reservations, or mixed in cities and towns with the dominant Euroamericans.

Kootenai residing on the Flathead Reservation live in the northern part of the Reservation where they are relatively isolated from the much larger Salish community. In addition to this physical isolation, they intentionally isolate themselves culturally from their reservation-mates. An example of this is their exclusion of Salish from distinctly

Kootenai ceremonies. They represent the more traditional, and less acculturated segment of the Reservation population and they feel alienated from reservation political power (Brockmann 1968; Brunton 1987).

Their exclusion of the Salish typifies Kootenai relations with all non-Kootenai. They consider themselves a closed community; all others are outsiders. This isolationist attitude is certainly an artifact of their early social environment. It also found expression during their adaptation to reservation life. Schaeffer (1936) reports early Kootenai success with horticulture introduced by Euroamericans. However, much to the chagrin of White change agents, the Kootenai banded together and developed communal gardens instead of breaking down into small, independent, household gardeners. A contemporary example of this is what Walker (1982) has called the "doctrine of secrecy." This is experienced by anthropologists and other outsiders as a wall of silence, sidestepped questions, withheld information, and intentional misdirection. Information on religion is particularly susceptible to this doctrine (Brunton 1987).

The Kootenai approach to survival has thus long been one of self-sufficiency. Feeling alienated by others, they stood apart as a group. The ethnic pride I saw as a fieldworker among them and the satisfaction they showed when they used their language openly without fear of being understood gave testimony to their cultural isolation. Kootenai people express an attitude of aloofness when they discuss this with outsiders. They justify their secrecy doctrine in terms of a "limited-good" (zero-sum game) philosophy. They reason that to tell another about something is to give it away and, since everything is in finite supply, giving some away diminishes what you have (Brunton 1987).

Despite ethnographic limitations resulting from their doctrine of secrecy, the Kootenai have provided outsiders with considerable information about their culture. This paper is largely based on my fieldwork conducted among the descendants of the Libby-Jennings band of Upper Kootenai, who now reside principally in Elmo, Montana along the west shore of Flathead Lake on the Flathead Indian Reservation (Brunton 1974). It was conducted in the late 1960s, early 1970s and again in the late 1980s. Claude Schaeffer, whose extensive fieldnotes and writing I consulted, did his work in the mid-1930s. Other ethnographic work, spanning the early 1890s through the 1970s, also was used.

Shamanism

Like other native peoples of the Plateau, the Kootenai are philosophically animists, whose spiritual practitioners, called *wámu*, are best seen as shamans. These persons, both male and female, seek personal relationships with one or more spirits of nature (*nupík?a*) on a vision quest. This relationship is transformational in that it changes the visionary fundamentally and sets him/her on a course for the rest of his/her life. The quest is normally undertaken around puberty. It can be precipitated by contact with a spirit while alone in the forest. In this case the spirit announces that the person in question needs to seek power on a quest. Another, often cited circumstance leading to a vision quest is where parents, tiring of their children's antics, "send them out with a whipping," admonishing them to find "something" to give their life a proper direction. Shamans aid seekers by providing information obtained from their own spirit helpers regarding the specifics of the latter's quest.

Meeting a spirit out in nature for a Kootenai is a frightening experience. Alone, naked, and in an isolated place known for such spiritual encounters, each person keeps an overnight vigil. With luck, a spirit approaches, captivates the vigil-keeper with its gaze, teaches rules to follow, gives specific information regarding the nature of power to be conferred, and gives its essence to the visionary, changing the person's soul in the process. Some are granted shamanic powers (such as healing ability) and are recognized as such in later life after they have demonstrated their abilities and have joined with the other shamans of the community in one of the shamans' societies.

A shaman's power includes a specific ability to treat certain maladies and the more general ability to make contact with spirits on behalf of individuals or the community, and to acquire knowledge from them. The former results in the familiar practice of healing through extraction. The latter involves divination. Here the shaman engages in specific activities in order to secure critical information for a client or for the community. It is this divinatory activity that is the concern of this paper.

Divination

For the Kootenai the World/Universe exists in two phases: material and spiritual. An important aspect of the spiritual phase for Kootenai divination is that it precedes the material in time. Thus, if a shaman gains information from spirits, this information applies to the future of the material phase of the world and allows the Kootenai certain advantages: bad outcomes can be avoided and good ones seized. According to informants, this constitutes a major aspect of shamans' work.

Sometimes divinatory information comes spontaneously while a shaman is doing something else. He/she might be conducting a ceremony such as a "Jump Dance" and "something will begin to come in" (from the spirits). The shamans stop what they are doing at this point and concentrate on this source of information. At other times the divining is intentional. In this case it is often in a ceremonial context. Several Kootenai ceremonies are (or were) ideally suited for this, among them the Sweatlodge ceremony, the "Blanket Dance" (also known as "putting up the blanket" and "conjuring"), the "Bluejay Dance" (midwinter spirit dance similar to those of the Salish), and the "Medicine Doings."

The Sweatlodge ceremony is normally a group activity involving both men and women. It can be used to provide spiritual divinatory help for virtually any kind of practical problem. Each person attending can have an individual purpose in mind and there can be a group one as well. In the case of shamans, the Sweatlodge can be used to help in difficult healing cases.

Participants assemble at one of the low-domed structures in the evening. After they enter, an attendant closes the door. The person in charge pours water on heated stones to the accompaniment of a spirit song. The interior of the lodge is dark except for the glow of the red-hot stones and it is incredibly hot. Breathing is difficult. Near the floor the air is a little cooler. Participants kneel forward on their shins and keep their heads down. During an inning in the lodge, three or seven songs are sung (the most important ritual numbers). An equal number of measures of water are poured on the rocks. The songs thus pace the rise and fall of heat and provide the ceremony with its tempo. While heat and song fills the lodge, participants concentrate on their purpose. They peak their awareness for any message. Messages may

come visually, aurally, or by intuition. After the proper number of songs and water, the person in charge of the sweat calls to the doorkeeper, who lifts the door covering. The participants exit the lodge and take a cold plunge in a lake or stream located nearby. After discussing their experiences for a time, they reenter the lodge and conduct another inning. This is done a total of three or seven times and for a total of three or seven days consecutively. After each completed session, participants discuss their experiences related to group concerns so all understand and can follow any rules and other procedures given by the spirits. Private information is kept secret (Brunton 1974: 103–108).

The appropriateness of Sweatlodge as a divinatory source is underscored by the fact that the Kootenai consider the spiritual manifestation of Sweatlodge to be a sort of ultimate "master spirit" in that Sweatlodge is a metaphor for the World, which is seen as an island surrounded by water, overarched by the dome of the sky. To illustrate this, my principal informant told me that the spirit, Sun, lives in a great sweatlodge whose dome is the sky. Kootenai utilizing Sweatlodge for divination are thus communing with the World for specific information: the ultimate source.

For the Blanket Dance, shamans were called by someone in need. Such things as healing in a particularly difficult case, finding lost items of importance to someone, and locating enemies or game were occasions for the ceremony. A planned gambling venture against neighboring peoples also was an occasion for a Blanket ceremony. After those taking part entered the lodge (ideally a tipi), the fire was extinguished and a juniper smudge was made that filled the darkened lodge. One of the three shamans conducting the ceremony was wrapped in a robe with his thumbs tied together behind his back with a thong. Another thong was tied to this one and protruded from the rolled-up robe. He was rolled behind a screen made by hanging two robes or blankets skewered together across the back of the lodge. The thong protruding from the robe was passed over the screen. It was given a tug and two thuds were heard behind the blanket as the shaman was "cut in two." After this he often emerged totally unbound from behind the blanket. He then sang his spirit songs and blew on his whistle, going behind the blanket from time to time to see if spirits were coming into the lodge. One time he emerged again tied by the thumbs. After this demonstration

of power, he went behind the blanket and remained for the duration of the ceremony. During the time he was behind the blanket he was "carried away by the Owl Spirits" to various places in the region.

Spirit songs were sung to summon the *nupík?a*. When they entered the area behind the blanket, it shook and the noise of deer dew claws affixed to it told those in the lodge that a spirit had entered. While a spirit was in the lodge, one of the shamans offered it a lit pipe containing strong tobacco (*yaqáit)* provided by a participant. After the spirit took a few puffs, the pipe was retrieved by the shaman and was given back to its owner. This person then smoked and asked for information important to him/her self, or for the group. Each participant was given the opportunity to query the spirit before it left and another was called in. Each round went as just described. The spirits were said to "scream" their answers in an archaic form of the Kootenai language and these were translated by one of the other shamans. After spirits no longer entered the lodge, all participants discussed the information to reach a consensus of understanding. The efficacy of the spirits' teaching lay in following their rules and other instructions to the letter. Otherwise, the power was said to "backfire."

The Medicine Doings (MDs) seems to have replaced the Blanket Dance. This ceremony begins in the evening and is a "spirit calling" ceremony in that it involves efforts on the part of shamans to call spirits into the Medicine Doings so that information may be acquired. In this it is like the Blanket Dance. To this end, spirit songs are sung to call the spirits. The specific purpose of this ceremony, like that of the others, is healing and gathering information critical to individual or group pursuits (Brunton 1988). Any practical problem can serve as a focus for this divinatory ceremony. Shamans function as masters of ceremony and as recipients and interpreters of spirits' messages.

The Bluejay Dance is a midwinter ceremony conducted in the evening. In pre-reservation days they were held at first one village and then another throughout the winter. Today, they are held simultaneously at various locations, thus promoting competition between hosting shamans. Shamans with power from Bluejay lead the ceremony, which includes power demonstrations, healing rituals, feasting, dancing, and the singing of power songs (Brunton 1970). Shamans also acquire and transmit divinatory information to participants. One interesting element of this

ceremony is that the hosting shamans with Bluejay power (those who have received lifelong help from the Bluejay Spirit during one of their vision quests) will shapeshift into Bluejays. Perching in the rafters of the lodge, calling in the voice of the bluejay, they exit through the smoke-hole in the roof and fly away. The evidence for this latter feat, my informant offered, is that their tracks on the snowy roof end abruptly at the roof's edge.

It is interesting to note that even the vision quest can be considered divinatory for the Kootenai. This aspect is manifest in what the Kootenai call "rules of the spirit" (Brunton 1970). Here, the successful visionary is given a sometimes elaborate set of rules to follow by his/her spiritual benefactor. These rules must never be broken or the power granted by the spirit will wane. In extreme cases the spirit can withdraw its power totally, resulting in the death of the human due to the intimate fusion of power with the human's soul. These rules include information about food prescriptions and proscriptions and other behavioral rules, along with specific vocational information. There is even information concerning the location of a special place on the person's body—a "spirit place"—where he/she can be struck if comatose. This knowledge is personal and secret and is only shared with a spouse or special friend if this is required in order to follow the rules. With spiritual knowledge acquired as a preadult, the fortunate person can have a blueprint for life to follow with assurance that this plan comes from the most credible source for that person: the tutelary spirit's experiential teaching.

In addition to these settings, there was at least one specific divinatory ritual. In order to divine the location of something (a lost person, game, or enemies), a map of the surrounding region was drawn on the earthen floor of a lodge. After covering and singing over the map, the cover was removed. The map revealed the answer through the presence of visible "tracks" in the fresh earth that ended at the location of the objects of concern (Schaeffer 1937).

It should be noted that I regard Kootenai divination as part of a shamanic system of spiritual practice, even though the total system lacks some of the elements used to define shamanism from the classic, Siberian perspective. For example, Kootenai *wamu* do not, as far as I have been able to learn, journey to the Upper and Lower Worlds.

Traveling with the Owl Spirits as a part of the Blanket ceremony is a Middle World journey, however.

All Kootenai divinatory work involves techniques for altering consciousness. These include:

1. the use of darkness for ceremonial activity.
2. sonic driving such as rattling, singing, natural sound such as the rushing water of a stream, and spirit noises.
3. liminal conditions for spirit work such as fasting, nakedness, and removal to remote special places in nature.
4. intense heat.
5. strong tobacco.

These are all recognized techniques for producing the shift in consciousness normally found in shamanic practice and documented by Harner (1980) and others.

Spirits' messages are often "obscure" and "symbolic." Informants have admitted that some messages are so obscure that they are never understood, even after the shamans have worked with them with great effort (Brunton 1987). We have seen that messages obtained in the Sweatlodge and in other settings have to be discussed in order to obtain complete understanding of content and detail (Brunton 1970). A visionary consults with a shaman before and after his/her experience in order to know proper procedure and to completely understand the spirit's message. Because accurately following spirit-granted information is necessary to prevent the disaster inherent in misuse of power, there is a strong incentive for the Kootenai to work out the details and come to a consensus that will allow them to be consistently accurate.

Conclusions

From the foregoing, it can be seen that Kootenai shamanic practice has divination as a primary focus. Specific information regarding what should be done to defeat enemies, win gambling contests, find lost people or articles, conduct one's life, and effect healing were/are typically sought. The resulting information is used to plan practical courses of action for the community and/or individuals taking part in the ceremony or other divinatory activity.

It is tempting to interpret Kootenai reliance on divination in terms of the precarious nature of their habitat, both aboriginal and contemporary. We have seen that the Kootenai live(d) in an uncertain world, both physically and socially. People in this position should be expected to use all means at their disposal to solve pressing practical problems. The anthropological literature is replete with examples of this. Because of their social and cultural isolation, the Kootenai had to rely on their own means, which they came to regard as a special form of exclusive property. Their spiritual knowledge was of paramount importance in this. The Kootenai tilt toward divinatory information gathering in their shamanic work would seem to bear this out.

From before the arrival of Jesuit missionaries in the last century, Kootenai culture has been under assault. The intensity of this assault on shamanism was particularly the result of the efforts by a line of Roman Catholic Priests following in the footsteps of Father De Smet. The most infamous point in this process was the forced burning of medicine bundles, which contained the key symbols of visionary experiences. As it turns out, some modern Kootenai claim that substitute bundles were actually committed to the flames. Nevertheless, in order to survive, shamanic practices had to be done in strict secrecy. This certainly limited their scope and the ability to pass knowledge along to succeeding generations. The assault was an ethnocentric, destructive process that reached inwardly as deeply as the individual psyche and outwardly to the fabric of the Kootenai collective consciousness (and, perhaps, unconsciousness). If the doctrine of secrecy is an adaptive result, a major theme was added to Kootenai culture by this acculturative process. Other factors, such as the pernicious boarding schools, alcohol use, wage labor, the establishment of reservations, and a tide of conflicting values have served to wreak wholesale change to the Kootenai cultural construction of reality and its manifestations, such as shamanic spiritual practice.

Based on comparisons with the Siberian situation, past and present, shamanism was a major integrating force in Kootenai social life. In the compromise of this system, the Kootenai have lost and are losing a major factor in the integrity of their cultural system. Informants corroborate this, and express their dismay at their future prospects as a people. The Kootenai have slipped toward being little more than a small, rural,

poor, ethnic group, which is marginal to the larger American society, teetering on the lip of one of America's most tragic metaphors: the "melting pot."

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Symbols and Signs, Myths and Archetypes: A Cross-cultural Survey of the Serpent

RUTH-INGE HEINZE BERKELEY

Symbols and signs, myths and archetypes are used crossculturally to express the ineffable and we know that archetypes, for example, rise from the unconscious culturally conditioned. This leads to situations where symbolic expressions may be interpreted differently in different cultures. When we, in folklore, use symbolic languages, we should be warned to ascertain how we will be understood crossculturally. I selected the archetype of the "serpent" to demonstrate that an archetype can opens new doors of perception in completely different ways.

INTRODUCTION

When we look at the concept of the serpent cross-culturally, we realize first that we are about to discuss a symbolic term. So we stop and have to ask whether it will always carry the same meaning or whether it is interpreted differently by different cultures. As an anthropologist, I remember the discovery during my early fieldwork that no two individuals look at the same situation "with the same eyes." So, throughout our search for meaning, we have to ask first "who is the interpreter?" This suggests to use the method of triangulation, i.e., considering more than one opinion—the opinion of the observer, the opinion of the individual asked for information and the opinion of somebody of the individual's culture. Looking for an answer to the question whether we have encountered universal symbolic expressions certainly requires patience and knowledge of one's own limitations.

What do we really know about signs and symbols, myths and archetypes? Some symbols look familiar and we observe their use in our culture. In fact, we are using symbolic expressions frequently ourselves. We are apparently culturally conditioned and our memory bank provides us with a convenient vocabulary. However, we do not always know

why we selected a certain symbol and not another. Sometimes, we encounter less familiar symbols and when we ask for explanations, we may get different answers from other users. Sometimes, an ineffable experience opens new doors of perception and, wanting to share the newly won insights, we create new symbols ourselves.

Are there "natural symbols"? Mary Douglas, a British anthropologist, spoke of "natural symbols," when she said,

> nature is known through symbols which are themselves a construction upon experience, a product of mind, an artifice or conventional product, therefore the reverse of natural. Nor can there be sense in speaking of natural symbols unless the mind tends in some natural way to use the same symbols for the same situation...A cross-cultural, pan-human pattern of symbols must be an impossibility. For one thing, each symbolic system develops autonomously according to its own rules. For another, cultural environments add their differences. For another, the social structures add a further range of variation. The more closely we inspect the conditions of human inter-actions, the more unrewarding if not ridiculous the quest for natural symbol appears (1973: 11)... [Indeed], one of the gravest problems of our day is the lack of commitment to common symbols (*ibid.* 19).

Terminology

What do I mean, when I use the word "sign"? A sign is

1. a token or indication;

2. a conventional or arbitrary mark or figure used as an abbreviation for a word or words it represents, i.e., the sign for a one-way street;

3. a motion or gesture used to express and convey an idea, command, or decision, e.g., American Sign Language;

A "symbol," however, is

1. something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention or accident;

2. a word, phrase, image or the like having a complex of associated meanings. It is perceived as having inherent values separable from those which it symbolizes. It performs its normal function of standing for or representing that which it symbolizes, usually deriving its meaning chiefly from the context in which it appears.

On the other hand, symbols may have some characteristics in common with signs, because they

1. point beyond themselves to something else;
2. participate in that to which they point;
3. open up levels of reality which otherwise are closed for us;
4. unlock dimensions and elements of our soul;
5. cannot be produced intentionally and cannot function without being accepted by the unconscious dimension of our being;
6. cannot be invented and, like living beings, grow and die. Symbols die because they can no longer produce responses in the group in which they originally found expression (Tillich 1965: 40–43).

Furthermore, when symbols are appropriated by other groups, they often lose their original content and may assume very different meaning. The swastika, used in India to symbolize the Wheel of Surya's (the Sun's) Chariot, is a valid example for the dangers of vulgarization and corruption. More than 3,000 years later, during the Third Reich in Germany, the swastika became the symbol for anti-Semitism.

Obviously, I am not talking about individual symbols which are created when an individual is struggling with the content of an ineffable experience, though individual symbols have the potential of becoming cultural symbols the moment others begin to resonate with them.

Arthur Young pointed to another feature.

> The translation of symbols tends to be limited by the range of the translator...Progress is often like the group velocity of waves, in which the individual waves arise at the rear of the group and push forward until, just as they are merging at the front, they fade and disappear, contributing the general motion by vanishing as they go "too far out" (1976: 224).

He said also that

> Science...has become so fragmented into separate disciplines that it has lost sight of the unifying principle that the word "universe" implies...Science, like a map, can furnish information, but it cannot provide a compass. Myth supplies this compass. With its help we can discover how to orient the map (1976: 221).

We have now to add the interpretation of the terms "legend" and "myth", not always being verifiable, legends relate historical events. Myth, on the other hand, are traditional stories that explain natural phenomena and prehistoric events.

> Myths...narrate not only the origin of the World, of animals, of plants, and of man, but also all the primordial events in consequence of which man became what he is today—mortal, sexed, organized in a society, obliged to work in order to live and working in accordance with certain rules. If the World *exists*, it is because supernatural Beings exercised creative powers in the "beginning;" But after the cosmogony and the creation of man other events occurred, and man *as he is today* is the direct result of those mythical events, *he is constituted by those events* (Eliade 1963: 11).

Myths remind us of times when god and humans interacted freely. Myths recreate these times. In Asia, for example, Brahmins (Hindu priests), shamans and mediums still facilitate the experience of "coming into the presence of the Divine" and Taoist priests perform the ritual of "Cosmic Renewal" each year. In America also, some Indian tribes still firmly believe that they raise the sun each morning with their rituals.

An actual event may be mythologized to add another dimension and the myth survives because it deals with deep, basic emotions. Myths serve as basis for unfolding world views; they express ideals and shape institutions of culture. Myths, indeed, define and unify groups. They provide values, directions, and morality, convey information and set practices, but myths have also been abused, not only by politicians.

Scientists use the word "myth" for non-verifiable concepts and mass media unscrupulously continue to create new "myths." Myths are, indeed, falsifiable. In other words, we should not accept any myth on face value. We have to observe how we resonate to myths on all five levels of experience—physically, emotionally, cognitively, socially, and spiritually—and investigate what value system they support.

Mystification occurs in our personal life as well. Developing personal myths to lend structure to our life, we may hold on to superseded concepts. We easily forget that everything is eternally in flux. So, when we realize that we are no longer staying in the moment, there is no shame in revising our personal myths.

However, there *are* universal myths that explain and make sense out of reality, mediate contradictions and alleviate anxieties. Myths may express unconscious needs and desires. Myths provide spiritual inspiration and guidance, so that we can regain the primeval state of harmony and balance. Myths also tell us when we became disconnected (e.g., being driven out of the Garden of Eden). The myths I know mostly reflect Western thinking, but there are also myths which instill awe and fear when the effects of powers greater than man are recognized. The myth of the Great Flood, for example, can be found in cultures around the world. Myths inspire gratefulness for life, offer nourishment and bring the power of the past into the present.

Not produced "intentionally," myth and symbols, however, cannot "function without being accepted by the unconscious dimension" of the respective group. We may then arrive at the question, "When certain myths are universal, are certain symbolic expression parts of an archetype?"

The term "archetype" has first been used in psychotherapy by Jung in 1919. Archetypes arise from the "collective unconscious" which

> is a part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not, like the latter, owe its existence to personal experience and consequently is not a personal acquisition. While the personal unconscious is made up essentially of contents which have at one time been conscious but which have disappeared from consciousness through having been forgotten or repressed, the contents of the collective unconscious have never been in consciousness, and therefore have never been individually acquired, but owe their existence exclusively to heredity. Whereas the personal unconscious consists for the most part of *complexes*, the content of the collective unconscious is made up essentially of *archetypes*.
>
> The concept of the archetype, which is an indispensable correlate of the idea of the collective unconscious, indicates the existence of definite forms in the psyche which seem to be present always and everywhere. Mythological research calls them "motifs"; in the psychology of primitives they correspond to Levy-Bruhl's concept of "representations collectives," and in the field of comparative religion they have been defined by Hubert and Mauss as "categories of the imagination," Adolf Bastian long ago called them "elementary:" or "primordial thoughts" (Jung 1959: 42–43).

Jung expanded on the concept of the "unconscious" in seeing it as

the totality of all psychic phenomena that lack the quality of consciousness. These psychic contents might fittingly be called "subliminal" on the assumption that every psychic content must possess a certain energy value in order to become conscious (Jung 1960: 133).

Jung called factors and motifs archetypal when they

arrange the psychic elements into certain images...They can be recognized only from the effects they produce...They may be compared to the invisible presence of the crystal lattice in a saturated solution. *As a priori* conditioning factors they represent a special, psychological instance of the biological "patterns of behavior," which give all living organisms their specific qualities (Jung 1959: 149).

Calling archetypes "original patterns" or "models," we are using the vocabulary of time and space, but archetypes exist *outside* of time and space. They are "energy potentials" which emerge culturally conditioned.

Symbolic expressions, however, occur in time and space and carry, therefore, specific, individual meaning. This explains why we can so easily get lost when we encounter symbols that emerged in a different culture and our memory bank furnishes us with ill-matching connotations.

There is another hurdle: to illustrate the use of the serpent image we will have to rely on written records. Symbolic imagery is part of oral traditions which appear to serve more immediate and pragmatic goals, but oral traditions seldom leave written records. What can we do? We can take advantage of another phenomenon which teaches us how to trace oral traditions.

Concepts seem to move in a circular fashion—local beliefs are reinterpreted and codified by the elite and then, in a more elaborate form, superimposed on the original beliefs. Thus, on the one hand, local beliefs gain legitimacy through the acceptance by the elite and, on the other hand, normative religions are kept alive by local practices. The elite bridge the gap exactly at the point where we are looking for an answer to the recurring question of why forms of syncretism have entered belief systems over time (Heinze 1982: xi-xii).

To demonstrate the pitfalls of processing and deciphering symbolic expressions in whatever context they may appear, let us look at the symbolic image of the serpent which we find already in mythological times.

Exploring the Concept of the Serpent Cross-Culturally

The concept of the "serpent" seems to be well known around the world, though it emerged at different times, under different circumstances, among different ethnic groups.

A serpent appears in an over two-thousand-year-old cosmic Hindu myth where

> he [Vishnu] sleeps in the primeval ocean, on the thousand-headed Snake Sesa. In his sleep, a lotus grows from his navel, and in the lotus is born the demiurge Brahma[1] who creates the world (Basham 1959: 300).

Eliot refers to an Indian painting (from approximately 1760 A.D.) which depicts Vishnu inside of the primal egg in the cosmic ocean,

> reclining on the back of the world serpent, the naga Ananta, symbol of cosmic energy [and infinity] offers him the shelter of his thousand heads. The god is resting on the day before the new creation, and with him is Lakshmi, the incarnation of Mother Nature (Eliot 1976: 20; see also *Vishnu Purana* 6.4. 1–11).

Similar creation myths are known outside the Indian subcontinent. The histories of great families in Tibet, for example, start with the birth of the cosmos from an egg. Tantric images show the serpent incubating the World Egg, called also the *hiraṇyagarbha*. The "Golden Germ" then became the symbol for immortality in India (Campbell 1983: 212).

Another famous Hindu myth speaks about the event when gods and demons used the Serpent King Vasuki as a rope and Mt. Meru as a

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[1] A demiurge is (a) an autonomous creative force or decisive power, (b) in Platonic belief: a subordinate deity who fashions the sensible world in the light of eternal ideas; and (c) in Gnosticism: a subordinate deity who is the creator of the material world.

churning stick.[2] Gods at one end of the rope and demons at the other churned the Milk Ocean which then produced, for example, *amṛta* (the drink of immortality), a heavenly tree, and Lakshmi, the Goddess of Beauty.

However, we learn later (in the *purāṇas*) that Vishnu's eighth *avatāra*, Krishna, subdued the serpent king Kaliya of the Yamuna River. This myth seems to reflect the mentality of Aryan conquerors dealing with indigenous beliefs.

The image of the serpent appeared already much earlier in some of the 1,028 hymns of the *Ṛg Veda*.[3] The hymn on Indra, for example, talks about the God as rain-maker. The symbolic image is probably a variant of a Mesopotamian creation myth in which the god Marduk confronts the demon of chaos, Tiamar, and creates the universe. In the later hymn to Indra, "[T]he wielder of the thunder" slew "the dragon and lets loose the waters" (Basham 1959: 400). Renz mentioned that, in the Indian epic *Mahābhārata*, the serpent Vṛta symbolizes the thunder cloud which, hit by Indra's lightning, pours out rain so that the land can become fertile (1930: 53).

Serpent symbolism is widespread in Asia. We find depictions of giant serpents protecting temples and monasteries in Southeast Asia. One of the most impressive examples are the two seven-hooded serpents guarding the staircase to the Monastery of Doi Suthep, a steep hill outside of Chiang May in northern Thailand (Heinze 1977: 15). When we ask local visitors, they will readily tell us that these serpents are *nāgas* (mystical serpents), protecting the monastery.

The same *nāgas* protect the temples of Angkor Thom and Angkor Wat. The kings of early Cambodia claimed to have descended from a high-caste Indian prince, Kaundiya, who allegedly came from Kapilavatthu, the northern Indian town where the Buddha grew up. Kaundiya

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[2] This scene has been recreated in life-size stone sculpture at the entrance of Angkor Thom (Cambodia).

[3] The *Ṛg Veda* is *śruti*, i.e., it was believed that the hymns were divinely "heard" (i.e., inspired). Collected in ten books by different Brahmin families over a period of five hundred years, books 2 to 7 are ascribed to Brahmin families before the Aryans moved into the Indian subcontinent in approximately 1,500 B.C., books 1, 8, 9, and 10 were collected later.

married a daughter of the Cambodian serpent king and allegedly cohabited with the serpent goddess each night to renew the connection with the soil of his kingdom. This legend is still told in Cambodia.

Since time immemorial, *nāgas* have, in South and Southeast Asia, not only been considered to be the original lords of the soil but also the protectors of ancient wisdom. Some statues show the Buddha absorbed in meditation, shielded by the seven-headed hood of the nāga king Mucilinda on whose coils Buddha is sitting. The nāga king protected the process of enlightenment, so that the Buddha could become the future teacher of ancient wisdom. Independently, in a different culture (Egypt), a giant serpent is rising in front of Osiris' throne to protect him and the sanctuary (Renz 1930: 15).

Later schools of Buddhism maintained that *nāgas* continued to guard the esoteric teachings of the Buddha until mankind had become advanced enough to understand their subtleties. The *Mādhyamika* (Intermediate School) of Nāgārjuna (literally, the Arjuna [hero] of the Nāgas) chose, for example, the "middle way" between the uncompromising realism of the Sarvāstivādin and the idealism of the Yogācāra (Basham 1959: 258).

I had no difficulty in locating folklore on serpents in other cultures and on other continents.

In Siberia, the body of the first Yakut shaman was allegedly "made of a mass of snakes." When he refused to recognize the Supreme God of the Yakut, God sent fire to burn him. A toad emerged from the flames and gave birth to the "demons" who, in turn, supplied the Yakut with their outstanding shamans. A wealthy Altaic shaman should have 1,070 snakes on his costume (Eliade 1974: 68, 152) and Tungus shamans have snakes as healing spirits (Eliade 1974: 92). In Russia, the bird language is allegedly learned by eating a snake (Eliade 1974: 98).

On the African continent, the Akikuyu of former British East Africa worshipped, at intervals of several years, snakes of a certain river. They married the snake god to women, even young girls. Medicine men would built huts to consummate the sacred marriage with female devotees. If girls didn't come to the huts of

> their own accord in sufficient numbers, they are seized and dragged thither to the embrace of the deity. The offspring of these mystic unions appears to be fathered by God (Frazer 1951: 168).

In West Africa, the Issapoo (negroes of Fernando Po Island) regard the cobra-capella as their guardian deity who can do them good or ill, bestow riches or inflict diseases and death. During an annual ceremony, the skin of the reptile is hung tail downward from a branch of the highest tree in public. After the ceremony, all children born within the past year are carried out and their hands made to touch the tail of the serpent's skin. The latter custom has cleared a way of placing the infant under the protection of the tribal god. Similarly, in Senegambi, a python is expected to visit every child of the Python Clan within eight days after birth; and the Psylli, a Snake Clan of ancient Africa, used to expose their infants to snakes in the belief that the snakes would not harm the true-born children of the clan (Frazer 1951: 581).

The Warramunga in Australia put a snake on the body or head of shaman candidates to endow them with the power of medicine (Eliade 1974: 48). When neophytes encounter a snake, it will become their totem and guide them to the bowels of the earth, where other snakes will infuse the neophytes with magical power by rubbing themselves against them (Eliade 1974: 135). Aborigines believe that the world serpent—the rainbow serpent Julungul—produced the cosmos out of its own body (Eliot 1976: 63, 103; or do the people of Benin, West Africa; *ibid.* 1976: 81).) Rainmakers in Australia continue to propitiate the rainbow serpent and still express their belief in aboriginal art.

Andreas Lommel published a sample of the Great Serpent lore from the Unumbal of northern Kimberley,

> In the Beginning there were only Sky and Earth: dwelling in the earth was Ungud, in the form of a great snake; and in the sky, Wallanganda, the Milky Way. Wallanganda threw water on the earth; Ungud made it deep. And in the night, as Ungud and Wallanganda dreamed, life arose from the watered earth in the forms of their dreams.
>
> From Wallanganda's dreaming a spiritual force went forth as images that he projected onto rocks and into caves, where they can still be seen, painted red and white and black. [Or, according to another version, it was the bird Kujon who did the painting, as he grasped the images of Wallanganda's dream in his own dreaming.] And when these had been painted, Wallanganda multiplied their forms in the shape of living beings, which he sent forth over the land.

> The paintings are the spiritual centers of those beings. They are the Fathers, and the living beings of each kind are Brothers. The Fathers were painted without mouths or eyes, these were given by the great serpent Ungud, who is both female and male, dwelling and dreaming in the earth. Wallanganda, too, is dreaming, sending spiritual germs to the earth, and he will not let his creatures die (1962: 1012).

Let us now look more closely at serpent imagery in the Americas. In Peruvian myth, the rainbow is depicted in the form of a serpent, held up by the jaguar god (Eliot 1976: 103). The Maya also worshipped the rainbow serpent (Campbell 1983: 17).

At the southern end of Teotihuacan ("City of Gods"), 33 miles north of Mexico City, we find the Temple of the Feathered Serpent, Quetzalcoatl (Kukulkan). The "plumed serpent" was the mythic priest-king of the Toltec, creator of the world and founder of agriculture. Winged rattlesnakes appeared also on Mississippi designs. (Contacts to Central American symbolism were possible.) There are, however, no contacts reported to the winged serpent of ancient Elam, the Water Serpent Tibamat, and the present-day Hopi in Arizona who catch snakes and, after having propitiated them, send them away to bring rain (Renz 1930: 39, 51).

A pillar at the palace of Tula depicts the priest-king Quetzalcoatl as the God of the Morning Star (Eliot 1976: 98, 102). In his aspect as earth serpent, Quetzalcoatl appears as the herald of the day, swallowing the morning star. In the Borgia Codex, Quetzalcoatl is shown with his two chief attributes, the serpent around his head and the sun bird at his belt. Kukulkan was for the Toltec what Quetzalcoatl was for the Maya—the foremost symbol for infinity and fertility. He blessed, for example, the maize fields (Eliot 1976: 162).

Thus, we find Quetzalcoatl worshipped by three Meso-American cultures—the Maya, the Toltec, and the Aztec. All three had two symbols in common—the bird of heaven and the serpent, combining sun and earth, while people live in the world in between, which makes Quetzalcoatl the Lord over Life and Death (Eliot 1976: 273). Quetzalcoatl was also a culture hero, a bringer of the arts, smithery, agriculture, and weaving. A frieze on the Aztec temple at Xochicalco shows Quetzalcoatl as serpent with a coat of feathers, a common symbol for a god of heaven and earth (Eliot 1976: 263). (I want to remind you of Cambodia

kings marrying the Earth in the shape of a serpent queen and African girls having their first sexual encounter with the snake god. That means that Southeast Asia, Africa and Middle America, three unrelated cultures, use similar symbolism which suggest that the serpent may be a universal symbol, if not an archetype.)

When, at the end of the fourth Aztec era, the sky caved in, Quetzalcoatl appeared as wind god and upheld the vault of heaven to support the realm of the stars (Eliot 1976: 102). This

> god-king of the fabled city of Tollan, who, when old and hideous...committed incest with his sister after both had partaken unwittingly of an intoxicating potion. Ashamed, the god-king departed from his city, set to sea on a serpent raft, and after a period of fourteen days reappeared in the eastern sky as the Morning Star (Campbell 1983: 215).

The Feathered Serpent, however, appears on monuments much older than on those at the Toltec cities of Tollan or Teotihuacan, e.g., on a carved stone from circa 800 B.C. at an Olmec ceremonial site of La Venta, Tabasco, on the Caribbean coast. (The classic Maya knew the Feathered Serpent approximately during the period of 300 to 900 A.D.; see also, Campbell 1983: 215).

In the United States, the Serpent Mound of the Adena culture was built approximately in the first century B.C.[4], near Locust Grove, Ohio. The mound is over 1,300 feet long and 21/2 to 3 feet high. It has the form of an uncoiling serpent who is holding an egg-shaped object in its jaws (Campbell 1983: 212). No written records explain the meaning of this mound but similarities to early mythology from India—the snake and the egg—suggest again universal concepts.

Here is not the place to discuss the many customs and rituals associated with snakes, e.g., in the United States, Indians in Carolina do not seem to have close relationships with snakes or know only their malefic aspects because they go to the other side of the path when they meet a

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[4] Work, conducted at the University of Pittsburg, led to questioning this date; the proposed new date is now 1070 A.D. (see, *Archaeology*, November/December 1996: 16–17).

snake. Seminole spare rattlesnakes and Cherokee make the snake the chief of a clan so that the snake won't take revenge (Frazer 1951: 602).

The serpent, however, keeps reappearing in history.

Early pharaohs in Egypt wore the Uraeus (*naja haje*, "sacred asp") on their headdress as a sign of their invincibility and sovereignty. The shrine of Tutankhamen (now in the Museum of Cairo) is crowned on all four sides by rows of this sacred asp. Legends say that, after a reign of twenty-eight years, pharaohs were killed by a ritual bite of Uraeus. (Cleopatra used Uraeus to kill herself when she learned she was to be brought to Rome and shown in a victory procession.)

A text from Edfu speaks of another serpent, Sata (son of Hathor), who channeled the waters of the Nile toward Dendera. The sacred serpent Arof was the Spirit of the Waters (Renz 1930: 4) and the first divine being in Egypt was the Creator Serpent Kneph. Plutarch mentioned that the World Egg came out of Kneph's mouth. Egyptians depicted the world as a burning circle with a falcon-shaped serpent in the middle. (The Greek character "theta" also symbolizes the world and the snake in its middle holds both sides together, Renz 1930: 2, 8). The Topkapı Museum in Istanbul, furthermore, possesses a bronze statue which depicts Osiris and Isis as two human-headed serpents, united in the so-called "knot of love."

The two serpents around the Egyptian/Greek staff, symbolizing the union of the sun god with the moon goddess, are very similar to earlier depictions in archaic Elam and Babylon (Renz 1930: 22). Of all animals, only the serpent was deified in Babylon and had connections to the Tree of Life and the rivers and springs which made the land fertile. The stone relief of Nabuaplamiddina (now in the British Museum in London) shows the sanctuary of the sun god Shamasch as a serpent that stretches behind and over the God. Renz also cited the orientalist Morris Jastrow Jr. who found that, in Semitic languages, the stem for the word "serpent" is identical to the stem of the word for "life" (1930: 34–35).

Single myths and symbols obviously keep branching off an archetype, often simultaneously at different places or, over time, even at the same place. It is no wonder that an archetype is so hard to comprehend because it encompasses *multifold facets* and *opposites*.

To continue our cross-cultural search in East Asia, Chinese myths tell us that the mother of the Emperor Hiao-wen, like Alexander the Great's mother, was impregnated by a serpent. The first human couple in China, Fu-hi and Nu-hua, are depicted as two serpents. Serpents bestowed life and, to this day, snake meat is openly sold on the market because it is believed to heal (Renz 1930: 92, 93). Snake medicine also increases sexual potency (which was also believed by Greek and Tirolian peasants; Egli 1982: 22, 274). A 19th century flag of the Chinese Empire shows the cosmic dragon bearing the sun in his jaws. (In India, it was Ananta, the serpent of the cosmic sea, who bore the universe on his head). Christian mystics, however, depicted "Lucifer and the fallen angels with stones in their foreheads...diamonds in the heads or jaws of serpents" (Eliade 1974: 139).

In the West, we are familiar with the *uroborus* (snake that holds its tail in its mouth) as the symbol of infinity. We have, therefore, no problem recognizing the symbolism of eternal renewal in the image of snakes annually shedding their skin. Jung mentioned, in this context, the similarities to the Benzene molecule ring, discovered by the 19th century German chemist Kekule (Jung 1964: 38).

But how do we interpret Apollo slaying the Python (mythical serpent) at Delphi? Hellenic forces had met earlier indigenous fertility cults (see, e.g., the Cretan terra-cotta figures of the Snake Goddess and Priestess in the Museum of Knossos). When Apollo could not eradicate the *spiritus vegativus* ("spirit of life"), the Pythia was made the Oracle of Delphi who was then interpreted and, very likely censored, by Greek priests.

Christians are familiar with the serpent in Paradise who persuaded Eve to eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Eve gave the apple to Adam and both became aware of their nakedness and discovered sexuality. There must be a gap in the story, because we are not told why they did not use the newly acquired knowledge of good and evil more wisely.

In *Matthew* 10: 16, Jesus reminds us that we "should be wise as serpents" and the Gnostics saw the serpent to be "no other than the Savior himself who initiated the world of salvation through urging men to consciousness" (Whitmont 1969: 255).

There are other serpents mentioned in the Bible. Aaron's staff turned into a snake which swallowed the snakes produced by Pharaoh's magicians (*Exodus* 7: 8–12). The brazen serpent that Moses put up in the temple did not only heal those who had been bitten by a snake (*Numbers* 21: 4–9), the serpent was a symbol of the healing forces of nature. It was the healer itself (Egli 1982: 26, 51). In many parts of the world dragon heads are still put at the prow of ships for apotropaic reasons.

Serpent worship among the Israelites is mentioned in the Old Testament (2 *Kings* 18: 3) and the horned serpent as well as the crucified serpent appear in *John* 3: 14. Only in the *Apocalypse*, the seven-headed dragon appears as the manifestation of evil which has to be conquered. Sixteen centuries later, alchemists speak of the *quadri-cornatus* serpent, the symbol of Mercury who became the antagonist of the Christian trinity.

Snakes, touching the patients who slept in Asclepios' healing hall, the *abaton*, remind us of customs in West Africa and among the Warramunga in Australia.

The snakes of Epidauros had a yellow-brown color and were called *pareiai*. They were allowed to circulate freely in the sanctuary. Though sometimes enormous, they were considered to be harmless. They were, in effect, believed to be the manifestation of the God. Whoever wanted to establish a new Asclepieion had to ask for a snake from Epidauros. Arriving at its new destination, the snake was then received as the god himself (Papadakis 1988: 9).

The Asclepieion of Epidauros was a

> religious institution of higher spirituality and artistic beauty, with its remarkable achievements for the physical and spiritual reformation of man... [it attracted] many thinkers and scientists and justifies its world renown (for over a millennium, from the end of the 6th century B.C. to the end of the 5th century A.D.; Papadakis 1988: 5).

The statue of Asclepios at Epidauros shows the god sitting on a throne, a dog (reminiscent of Cerberus guarding the entrance to the Underworld) lying at his feet. Asclepios holds, in one hand (like the Egyptian god Thot), a staff around which a single snake is curled. He rests his other hand on the head of a snake (Pausanias 1967. II. 27: 2).

On the seal of present-day physicians, however, appears the Caduceus (Hermes' staff) with double snakes. (The oldest depiction of two snakes curled around a staff can be found on a vase of the Sumerian ruler Gudea of Lagasch, 2,300 B.C. the snakes were the holy animals of the snake god Ningishzida; Egli 1982: 281). Did present-day physicians select the double snake because science has begun to recognize the interconnection of opposites?

In Epidauros, nobody was allowed to die or give birth inside the temple compound. A myth tells of Asclepios reviving Hippolytos who had been killed by the curse of Theseus (Pausanias 1967. II. 27: 1–4). Antoninus (a senator who lived at the time of Pausanias) built a bath for ritual purification and temples (among others, for Hygenia, Asclepios daughter), but he also had a house erected where people could die and women give birth (Pausanias 1967. II. 27: 6). Facilities for all transitions between life and death were, indeed, available at Epidauros.

Another myth tells of Koronis, Asclepios' mother, who was impregnated by Apollo. While carrying Asclepios, she decided to marry the mortal Ischys. Artemis killed her for the insult to her brother, but Hermes saved the embryo when the mother was burning on the stake (Pausanias 1967. II. 27: 6). Hermes had saved before the embryo of Dionysis, sired by Zeus. He took it from the dying Semele.

Hermes was also venerated as the God of Healing, like the Babylonian Nabu Nigishzida. His second name was Akaketa (from *akos*, "means of healing"). Hermes acted as midwife and assisted the rebirth of the dead, as did Asclepios and the Sumerian God because death was the main illness mythic physicians were supposed to heal.

The first God of Healing in Greece was Apollo. He was also the God of Sin and Expiation. He granted life and physical health but also healed the soul. In rescuing murderers, like Orestes from the Erinnyes, Apollo was considered to be the savior; however, he could also send terrible sickness and epidemics, like he did when Agamemnon violated the daughter of his priest Chryses. Apollo's weapons and means of healing were the rays of the sun (Schwabe 1951: 102). Apollo represented the power of the serpent who heals and teaches ancient wisdom but who also will kill to punish digression.

Serpents, indeed, restore harmony. It may be added that Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom, is also depicted with a staff around which a snake

is curled. Furthermore, the rays of the sun are often shown in the form of snakes.

Asclepios gradually overshadowed Apollo as the god of health and medicine, and became the god of "*Nootherapia*" (Mind-Healing) who purifies and reforms the entire human being, both body and mind, using exclusively mental means and the spiritual power of the divine, like Jesus Christ. Asclepios is thus recognized as the god protector not only of medical science, which, starting from his own sons, Machaon and Podalairios, and the long row of famous "Asclepiades" (physicians) among whom Hippocrates, the father of medicine, comes down to our times, but also of the Asclepieia, where his priests effected "miraculous" cures, with the sole use of the "admirable divine power," as it is officially stressed in the first of the two stelae of healing which were found in Epidauros (Papadakis 1988: 6).

On two stelae at Epidauros, forty-three cases of healing are described from the time before the 2nd half of the 4th century B.C. The sanctuary, in fact, abounds in stelae on which men and women report on their illness and tell how they were healed by Asclepios. The remarkable cures

raise a scientific problem, because they surpass by far the achievements of the medical science today. They concern diseases for us incurable (even of people blind from birth, the lame and paralytic) which are healed instantly, without remedies or other material means, even from a distance, with the sole use of the "admirable power" (Papadakis 1988: 6).

The true nature of man was considered to be mainly spiritual. His natural state is a condition of perfect harmony and health, which remains undisturbed as long as it is kept in tune...A radical healing is...obtained only when the mind itself is cured; when there is a change of Mind (*metanoiai*) (*ibid.* 1988: 2).

Plato

relates the following most enlightening views on Asclepios' method, in his dialogue *Symposium* (186 d, e). Speaking through the mouth of the physician Eryximachos...he says, "Medicine must, indeed, be able to make the most hostile elements in the body friendly and loving towards each other..." And he continues by mentioning music, gymnastics, harmony, agriculture, etc., as the "means" (*ibid.* 1988: 6).

Wasn't Quetzalcoatl in Mexico also the God of Agriculture? And isn't the importance of ecological considerations, over three thousand years later, finally recognized in our times.

Asclepios probably lived during the 13th century B.C. Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar mention him as an excellent hero physician whose sons, Machaon and Podalairios, were Thessalonian kings who took part in the Trojan War. More than 300 Asclepieia were built, e.g., in Athens (420 B.C.), Cos, Pergamum (3rd century B.C.), and Rome (293 B.C.). The main temple at Epidauros also had strong ties to the Asclepieion and Oracle at Delphi and the Eleusian Mysteries (Papadakis 1988: 16).

The survival of the serpent symbol proves its vitality, but it alerts us also to shifts in understanding. What does the serpent stand for in our century? Jung told us that

> The...serpent represents the initial state of unconsciousness, for this animal loves, as the alchemists say, to dwell "in caverns and dark places." Unconsciousness has to be sacrificed, only then can one find the entrance into the head and the way to conscious knowledge and understanding. Once again the universal struggle of the hero with the dragon is enacted, and each time at its victorious conclusion the sun rises: consciousness dawns (Jung 1967: 89).
>
> ...Jesus identifies himself with the healing snake of Moses...The serpent is also a synonym for the divine water (*ibid.* 104).

In *Psychology and Alchemy,* Jung saw the serpent as

> Mercurius, who as the fundamental substance (*hypostatica*) forms himself in the water and swallows the nature to which he is joined...Matter is thus formed through illusion, which is necessarily that of the alchemist. This illusion might well be the *vera imaginatio* possessed of "informing" power (1953: 252).

Jung used Barhusen's illustration (1718) to show the serpent devouring itself in water or fire (Jung 1953: 253). He mentioned a gnostic gem and amulet on which the Chnuphis serpent wears a seven-rayed crown. From the lion head of another serpent emanate twelve rays (*ibid.* 380). Discussing the doctrine of the Nassenes, Jung found that

> the serpent dwells in all things and creatures...all temples are named after her [play on words: *vaas*/serpent, *vaos*/temple]. Every shrine...every initiation...and every mystery is dedicated to the serpent.

...the serpent is the moist element, as Thales of Miletus...said...nothing, whether immortal or mortal, animate or inanimate, could exist without it.

This definition of the serpent agrees with the alchemical Mercurius, who is likewise a kind of water; the "divine water"...the wet, the *humidum radicale* (radical moisture), and the spirit of life, not only in dwelling in all living things, but immanent in everything that exists, as the world soul (1953: 449).

In Jung's book on archetypes, according to

the old view, Mercurius (Hermes) is duplex, i.e., he is himself an antithesis. Mercurius is a magician and god of magicians. As Hermes Trismegistus, he is patriarch of alchemy" (1959: 311)

and Jung rediscovered that Hermes, the messenger of the gods, is a protector and healer himself.

On the same page, Jung refers to "the great dragon with the spangled crown" (carrying the twelve signs of the zodiac on its back). So we are led back to the serpent who circles the earth, like the Midgard Serpent in Teutonic lore.

Jung saw the symbol of the bird and serpent merging in the "winged dragon" (1964: 156). Eliade had already discovered the recurrent combination of a tree (e.g., Yggdrasil) with a bird in its branches and a snake at its roots, especially in Central Asia and ancient Germany (1974: 273).

This does not seem to agree with Vishnu's vehicle, the *garuda* (vulture) who is often depicted with a snake in his beak. *Garudas* and *nāgas* are archenemies, they remind us of serpent worshippers being conquered by invading Aryans over 3,500 years ago.

A Mesopotamian myth, dating back to the old Akkadian period, 5,000 years ago, speaks of a pact between snake and eagle, dividing the world above and below ground among themselves. This pact, however, was soon broken (Eliot 1976: 158).

The serpent is, however, the oldest symbol for eternal life and wisdom. It remained to be also the symbol for fertility and procreation all over the world (Jung 1967: 213). When women in South India want children, they still leave offerings in front of snake stones on which two snakes are sculpted rising around a staff in repeated embrace. Women still apply red powder to these snakes to activate their creative power (personal

observations, July 1979). In Punjab, snakes are worshipped for nine days and it is believed when they are given a piece of cloth, they will send a lively bride (Frazer 1951: 620).

Although they don't share the indigenous belief in serpents, thousands of Brahmins (Hindu priests) are still invited to attend the Nāgapanchami in South India. Lepers and those possessed by evil spirits will be healed at these occasions by the spirit of the divine serpent. It is reported that rich people offer expensive meals to the Nāgamaṇḍalas (assembly of serpents; Renz 1930: 72).

Comparison to Other Symbolic Expressions

For the purpose of juxtaposition, I want to briefly discuss other symbolic expressions:

1. *The Lotus* and *the Cross* – The lotus has become the symbol of a world religion—Buddhism. Its Christian equivalent is the cross. While the growth of the lotus symbolizes the different stages of spiritual development through which humanity can liberate itself from suffering, the cross symbolizes liberation through the suffering of Christ on the cross. Although Islam and Christianity share many concepts, even prophets, the symbol of the cross has lost its potency, it even became the symbol of the Crusades and other religious wars. It does not seem to be a coincidence that the cross is now also used by the Ku Klux Klan to express racial prejudice and crosses are burned in front of victims' houses. The symbol of the lotus, however, has not deteriorated yet. Though not known universally, it is a culturally recognized symbol of spiritual development, enlightenment, and wholeness.

2. What are the symbolic expressions of the 21th Century? We know a multitude of *mathematical symbols* that have been universally recognized although not all of us may know how they were created. Some were derived from Greek letters and some were developed from sacred alphabets. Mathematical formulae convey the beauty of well-proportioned mental constructs and, with that, a sense of balance and harmony. They even allow us to express infinity.

3. Furthermore, the *Tree of Life* of the *Qabalah* and earlier shamanic traditions has entered again our vocabulary. The Tree, with its branches, symbolizes our search for relationships and offers the opportunity to

travel between heaven and earth. Most Trees of Life have a bird on top of the branches and a dragon or serpent at their roots.

4. The *Wheel* of Native American Indians (not directly related to the Hindu sun wheel) has brought us closer to nature. The Wheel and the *uroborus* convey the wisdom of movement, they are contained in themselves.

5. The symbol of the *serpent,* originating in proto-religious times, has been absorbed into world religions and survived conquest and changes in the religious structure of dominant belief systems. The resiliency of the serpent points to an archetype, an energy potential located deeply in the human unconscious, ready to raise its head when needs for expression arise (Jung 1959). The "rising of Kuṇḍalinī" (the double serpents *ida* and *pingala)* from the base of the spine is reported, for example, by quite a number of Americans who are on a spiritual path.

In his book on "serpent symbolism" (1982, Egli approached the symbol of the serpent on three levels—experience, symbol, and hypostasis (attributing real identity to a concept). Referring to the use in recent, ancient and prehistoric time, he stressed that the three aspects of the serpent symbol cannot be separated. On the first level, Egli saw the worship of the serpent as the most terrific and mysterious animal. On the second level, he placed the worship of Gods of the Waters, Springs, and Rivers who are represented by the wave-like motion of snakes. On the third level, he connected the Vedic Ahi (Vṛta) with the great mythical battle between light and dark. When Egli accumulated a large amount of references on serpent symbolism, he admitted that he understood the topic only after he had conducted years of field work at the east coast of Taiwan. The complexity of the serpent concept is underlined by his sequences of "poison > social power," "shedding the skin > life," "underworld > underground treasures" and "highest creator > cosmic battle."

At this point, readers are invited to test themselves. What feelings and thoughts have been triggered by the above discussion of serpent symbolism? How do your reactions compare with the information provided?

Culturally conditioned symbols have arisen when people looked for expression of deeply felt spiritual contents. Needs shifted and when they have to be nourished by symbolic expressions, symbols change

and sometimes fade away. Invading cultures attempt to eradicate or, at least, reinterpret indigenous symbols. Or people become overwhelmed by the flood of symbols presented to them. The "information highway," for example, has this effect. Not taking the time to verify context and content, there does not appear to be any protection against unreliable or false information other than our "gut feeling." When changing needs, conquest and brutal eradication, as well as information overload interfere with age-old symbolism, intuition, activated by the power of a symbol, may "grasp...otherwise elusive concepts" (Eliot 1996: 111).

Conclusion

We have learned so far that

1. the serpent, one of the oldest symbolic concepts of the world, continues to be a symbol of "fertility" and healing" in time and space. Beyond time and space, the serpent is an archetype that carries the meaning of "infinite wisdom" and "immortality."

2. Serpents, shedding annually their skin, manifest the continuation of life. The following two myths support this belief:

(a) Gilgamesh found the herb of immortality but, when he stopped on the way back to Ur, it was snatched away and eaten by a snake. Since that time, snakes have been considered to be immortal (Egli 1982: 60).

(b) Chinese folk tales speak of people shedding their skin in primeval times. But when a woman and a man no longer wanted to go through this agony, they decided they would rather die. Since that time, people die (Eberhard 1937: 115).

(c) The second myth raises the question whether we should end a painful situation because it is too cumbersome to transform. The serpent presents the challenge we have to accept when we want to escape human inertia. We have to "shed our skin."

3. Though they don't have ears, serpents have highly developed senses of perception (Egli 1982: 16). Like Zen teachers, serpents show how to be eternally in the "Here and Now."

4. Serpents still guard ancient knowledge, but they can become dangerous when they are not handled wisely. (We are reminded of religious

groups in the eastern United States who handle snakes to prove their faith.) Also, do we know the real story of the Garden of Eden? In Asia, it was the *nāgas* who protected esoteric knowledge until humankind was considered ready to receive it. Are we ready now?

5. Snakes don't tear their prey apart, they swallow it whole. They are not only the bridge to inexhaustible creative power and wisdom, they are also able to encompass the whole.

6. Snakes have neither hands not feet but move with great velocity. The undulating pattern of their movement reminds us of light/sound/energy waves, and, among others, the rays of the sun.

7. The aspects of "healing" and "wholing" are intimately connected with symbolic expressions of the serpent.

The purpose of this essay has been to alert to the emergence, resiliency and deterioration of symbolic expressions. We also looked at symbolism for the new millennium. We recognized that archetypes exist in the realm outside of time and space. When they manifest, they become culturally conditioned.

More research on signs and symbols, myth and archetypes will increase our understanding of symbolic expressions, so that we become more proficient in verbalizing ineffable messages. We need, indeed , to enrich our vocabulary to express ourselves more clearly. Most of all, we have to understand more fully the manifold appearances of the serpent archetype.

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For over sixty years, Ruth-Inge Heinze, with a Ph.D. in Comparative Religion and Psychological Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley, is conducting consciousness research in Asia, Europe, and the United States. Her work is reflected in six books, *The Role of Buddhism in Thailand* (Asian Folklore & Social Life Monographs, 1974); *Tham Khwan: How to Contain the Essence of Life* (Singapore University Press, 1982); *Shamans of the 20th Century* (Irvington Publishers, 1991); *Trance and Healing in Southeast Asia Today* (White Lotus, 1.ed. 1988, 2d ed. 1997); *The Nature and Function of Rituals* (Bergin & Garvey, 2000); *The Search for Visions* (Independent Scholars of Asia, 2001) and hundreds of essays in professional journals. She is a long-term meditator and also holds licenses in Chinese herbal medicine, acupuncture, Reiki I and II. Aside from numerous presentations at international conferences, she is, since 1984, also organizing the Annual International Conference on the Study of Shamanism and Alternative Modes of Healing; a monthly Dream Group, and the lectures for the Universal Dialog series and two other organizations. She is, furthermore, the founder and national director of Independent Scholars of Asia, Inc.

VOL.10. NOS. 1-2. SHAMAN SPRING/AUTUMN 2002

Shaman Music, Drumming, and Into the 'New Age'

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Music, the most plastic of arts, offers itself to various interpretations. Practitioners and scholars agree that music has affective impact. Some would claim affect stems from the inherent power of sound; others that it relies on cultural understanding and association. Our contemporary post-modern condition allows myriad contrasting interpretations to stand, sometimes juxtaposed, sometimes in conflict. We seek to understand otherness in music, yet we strive to make otherness familiar by adding harmonic, melodic or rhythmic sameness rooted in Western culture. We explore the unusual to find elements that can provide novel intensity to what our culture has regularised within a normative musical canon.

ORIENTATIONS

This paper discusses, in reference to published recordings, the ways in which shamanic soundworlds have been explored and appropriated in our quest to understand ourselves. There are multiple interpretations, and 'shamanisms'—after Atkinson 1992—would seem to be appropriate (see Howard 1993). I cannot in these few pages do justice to the multifarious musics and practices invoked within categories binned in record shops as 'new age', 'ambient', 'Celtic', 'natural', 'traditional', 'roots' and so on. Recurring themes include personal experience imaged as healing, stasis, and development, ecological concerns in which the stewardship, maintenance and recovery of the environment is paramount, the preservation of traditions, and an idealisation of pre-modern society as a communal social idyll, simple and noble. In contrast, contemporary

life is seen as individualistic, as alienating and competitive, with associated modern technology cold, uninviting, and intimidating. Positive determinism in an age of globalisation means:

> I hear the soundscape as a language with which places and societies express themselves. I want to be understanding and caring of this 'language' and how it is 'spoken' (Hildegard Westerkamp).

This quote heads the website of Earth Ear[1], where "acoustic activism" is used to "protect the soundscape":

> An ever-growing number of organizations and individuals are turning their activist energy toward protecting the world's diminishing 'natural quiet', standing up to mindless noisemaking, and considering the effects of our (mostly mechanical) noise on other beings.

Surfing the web, a further site, *Thee Shaman Shoppe*, caught my eye. In its catalogue of musical instruments, the aims listed include "providing the tools and training necessary for people to move towards a more Earth-based holistic spirituality through experiential self-empowerment, especially through a personal exploration of a connection with rhythm". And, noting that drums are central to much that is shaman, it offers, perhaps slightly tongue-in-cheek, "Post-Industrial, Cyber-Trash Pseudo-Taiko-Style BIG DRUMS".[2]

Shaman Music

Musicologists have described shaman music within three broad categories. The first extends from Siberian evidence, and considers shamanism characteristic of non-descent oriented and non-hierarchical societies, specifically hunter-gatherer groups. Their supposedly egalitarian nature lends itself to rituals characterised by reciprocity. Thus, Roberte Hamayon argues that the act of killing animals for food must be balanced by a ritual dying and rebirth performed by shamans (Hamayon 1990). This leads to an identification of spirits with animals. Illustrations can be

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[1] www.earthear.com/sscape/activism (accessed in August 2001).

[2] www.shamanshop.com (accessed in September 1999 and August 2001).

given from published audio recordings. The Chukch musician Slava Egorovič Kemlil (b. 1963), in a recording made in Čerskij above the Arctic circle near the mouth of the Kolyma river in 1992, juxtaposes the imitation of dogs, raven, and reindeer—the latter his personal spirit animal—with a suggestion of entering trance through a rasped and rapid in-out breathing (Tks. 11–12, *Kolyma: Chants de Nature et d'Animaux*, Musique du Monde 92566–2):

My beloved reindeer has great antlers
and when he arrives behind the hill
one sees his antlers before seeing him
When he comes down the hill, full of strength and beauty,
I admire him, I love him very much, I yoke him to the sledge...and praise my reindeer.

In a similar way, the Tuvan shaman Alexander Tavakay calls his animal helpers, imitating a cuckoo to calm the child he hopes to heal, a raven to scare evil away, and an owl to calm cattle (Tk. 9, *Shaman, Jhankri and Néle*, Ellipsis Arts CD3550, 1997). Elsewhere, Marina Roseman recalls a Temiar tiger song from her ethnomusicological fieldwork in Malaysia, a song preceded by the call of the bird considered the tiger's companion, the checker-throated woodpecker (Tk. 17, *Dream Songs and Healing Sounds. In the Rainforests of Malaysia*, Smithsonian Folkways CD 40417):

Late at night, in the darkness of a tiger ceremony, I've often looked over my shoulder with a shudder, sensing the tiger's presence in the singer's gravelly vocal timbre and low-pitched song. In dreams, the tiger appears as an old man.

Finally, in 1992, above the Arctic circle at Ust'-Avam on the Ienisseï river in Siberia, Delsjumjaku Demnimeevič Kosterkin sang and played excerpts from a ritual that originally protected from disease but which, today, aims to prevent the young committing suicide. Hénri Lecomte tells us in the sleevenotes he wore a cloak with bronze and iron pendants representing the bear's skeleton, and accompanied himself on a frame drum with metal rings attached to cross-members at the back. A bearskin was placed on the ground, which the shaman caressed with his drumstick before throwing it in the air and divining from the way it fell. The bear (a common 'helping spirit' within contemporary 'core shamanism')

was invoked as the helping spirit, protecting the vulnerable, and he sang about hearing the bear's footsteps (Tk. 12, *Chants chamaniques et narratifs de l'Arctique Sibérien*, Musique du Monde 92564–2).

Shaman music within this category has become part of the movement towards ecological respect and protection. Marina Roseman's *Dream Songs and Healing Sounds* includes ambient sounds—the rainforest, birds, and so forth—to help conjure a picture of the unspoilt scene, and the world of its inhabitants, the aboriginal Temiar. Indeed, her related book opens with a section strengthening the connection, titled 'Jungle paths and Spirit Songs' (Roseman 1991: 1). Later, the alternating pulsating of a characteristic instrument, a bamboo double-tube, is tied to the call of the cicada and the song of the golden-throated barbet, the shorter higher-pitched tube representing a mother and the longer lower-pitched tube a father. This differentiates yet conjoins male and female domains (1991: 168–72).

Pat Moffitt Cook, in her introduction to *Shaman, Jhankri and Néle*, writes:

> These sound and music repertories are fast disappearing...The opportunity to document, study, and gain insight first hand, from living traditions, is momentous. Proof of this can be seen and felt by botanists, herbalists, ethnopharmacologists, practitioners in traditional and alternative medicine, nutritionists, and by different ailing populations who benefit from complimentary and organic-related treatment...Indigenous sound healers reserve their healing-music repertoires for sickness, pain, spiritual and physical death and to mediate between god and nature (1997: 6–7).

In Cook's booklet, the Peruvian shaman, Don Agustin, states: "We learn from Mother Ayahuasca that we must respect the earth so that we can continue to live on it" (1997: 25). The American Anishnabe Indian, Kanucas Littlefish, says: "When I sing I use vocables and words in my native language. Lines of power exist all around us. What I try to do is tap into that power through sound and vibration using my voice and a drum...When the lines of power are met, it is said a healing can occur" (1997: 32). The Dalai Lama is also cited, in a passage about Tibetan oracles: "The shamanic forces of the mind and planet can be harnessed for the service of wisdom and compassion" (1997: 88).

Beyond shaman music, the ecological comes in many forms. Links on the Earth Ear website include 'Noise intrusion in wildlands', 'Effects of underwater sound on ocean life' and 'Urban soundscape awareness'. *Waldesrauschen/Whispering Forest* (Wergo SM 9006–2, 1994), according to its sleevenotes, brings into the living room the changing moods of a wood to allow listeners "to attempt to 'make contact' with this magical silvan world, to penetrate its secrets, and thus to achieve a true experience of nature".

The anthropologist David Riches sums up the second category in a consideration of shamanism as characteristic of a certain moment in the development of religion (Riches 1994). Within a pre-Socretean frame, shamanism becomes the key to unlock religion itself, defined in terms of three aspects: trance, a capricious and all-encompassing pantheon, and ritual specialists—shamans—who have the knowledge and ability to access the spirit world. Shamanism is seen as part, or a leftover, of pre-modern systems, found in early Judaism, Buddhism or, through the absorption of Celtic and other fertility cults, Christianity. Within musicology, Gilbert Rouget's broad-ranging account of relations between music and trance includes a consideration of the ancient Greeks and the Arabs (1985: 187–226 and 255–314). Curt Sachs, writing in 1937, couples sacred Dervish dancing at the central compound of the founding poet in Konya, Turkey, to a primitive past:

> These old men with outspread arms spun like tops for a full half-hour—an astonishing, inconceivable performance. Here the dance severs the natural bonds of human posture and motion. In dizziness the dancer loses the feeling of body and of self; released from his body he conquers dizziness... There is no doubt that it is something primitive, preserved from a period thousands of years before Islam, inherited from the shamanism of Central Asia (1937/1963: 41–2).

A further example would be the Balinese *ketjak* [*kecak*] which, according to David Lewiston, in his sleevenotes to *Music from the Morning of the World* (Elektra Nonesuch 9–79196–2, 1988 [originally issued in 1967]):

> ...is a creation of this century, but descended from something much more ancient—the trance dance, dance of exorcism called *sanghyang*... Most of the

movements are exorcistic in origin and contribute together to produce a tremendous unity of mood...to drive out evil by an incantation.

Sanghyang continues to be performed in the south-central districts of Gianyar and Badung, with young female initiates displaying trance behaviour as the consorts of Shiva, or with participants dancing on embers in temples. The *kecak*, though, has much to do with a film from 1931, for which the German painter Walter Spies recommended using vocalists to replace the *gamelan* orchestra. *Kecak* is drama—indeed, the presentation for tourists was last formally modified in 1969—in which a large group of men seated in tightly packed circles rock in movement, incessantly hocketing ('*cak*'). The movement gradually accelerates and slows down in waves, much as a *gamelan* orchestra would in performance, the climaxes giving an impression of other worldliness.

These last two examples illustrate how control coexists with ecstasy. In both, chanters are involved who continue to exhibit normal everyday behaviour; as others go into 'trance' or 'ecstasy', none of these enters an 'altered state of consciousness'. Senior leaders guide Dervishes from the periphery of the circle. Two chanters sit within the group of *kecak* participants, the *juru tarek* chorus leader who signals starts, stops and transitions, and the *juru gending* melodic leader, singing repetitive melodies. These are joined by the *juru klempung*, shouting out regular punctuation, and in effect acting as a drumless percussionist (I Wayan Dibia 1996). Sufism has in recent years taken its place as a world religion (Bohlman 1997: 61–68). It has become part of the construct confined not just to the 'Whirling Dervishes', but also including South Asian *qawwali* from the Sabri Brothers to Nasrat Fateh Ali Khan, Javanese *gamelan*, and Persian classical music (Qureshi 1995; Becker 1997). In 1997, the Sufi World Music Village in London, organised by Cultural Co-operation, ranged even more widely, taking in Egypt, Morocco, Indonesia, India and the Middle East. Similarly, the 1993 Musik der Sufis organized by the Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin included musicians from Syria, Egypt, Morocco and France.

In contrast, the message of *Shaman, Jhankri and Néle* is that much effort must be expended to ensure that the ritual music of disappearing cultures is preserved. This, expressed as the need to document and preserve traditional musics, has been a constant theme of ethnomusicology (see Nettl 1983: 270–77 and Baumann 1991; listen to *Voices of*

Forgotten Worlds, Ellipsis 3253, 1996). It may, though, be too late. To give one illustration, the Soviet anti-superstition drives of the 1920s and 1930s destroyed much that was shamanic. One account remembers how a frying pan was used as a drum after all musical instruments had been publicly burnt, becoming a horse with which a genuine ritualist could ride to the other world (Balzer 1996: 5–6). How much can be recovered today? One song recorded recently by the old Nanai shaman Niura Sergeyevna Kile (born between 1906 and 1910) simply hopes that the right text is remembered. "I address you, my spirits... Do not feel hurt, even if I don't always talk like I should" (Tk. 7, *Chants chamaniques et quotidiens du bassin de l'Amour*, Musique du Monde 92671–2). In post-Soviet times, preservation has been aided in Siberia by nationalist and ecological concerns (Vitebsky 1995). In the Sakha Republic, Vitebsky and Balzer state that only seven or eight shamans survive (Vitebsky 1995; Balzer 1996); by 2001, this had declined to three "through whom the spirits have shown their power" (interview, A.A. Burnashev, June 2001). In neighbouring Buryatia, the revival of national identity appears little concerned with the spiritual content of shamanism.[3] In South Korea, the three component forces for folkloric revival—scholars and their agents (journalists and writers), performers, and the government—have coalesced to create a single system. In this, the Intangible Cultural Asset (*Muhyŏng munhwajae*) system, government, having taken advice from scholars, pays ritualists from nine representative shaman rituals to preserve, perform and teach. The rituals present a geographical spread, and many have been recorded on commercial and state-subsidised labels.[4]

Within the third category, musicologists and others identify shamanism as a distinct religion. Michael Harner (1980) argues that shamanism

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[3] Interviews, Darima Anatalievna Nikolayeva, 19 June 2001, and Yevgeni Pavlov, 20 June 2001, at the East Siberian State Academy of Arts, Ulan Ude. Also, personal observation of shaman rituals and the appropriation of ritual into a secular performance at the Buryat National Theatre, June 2001.

[4] See Howard 1999: 126–32 for an annotated list of recordings. The nine preserved rituals are: *Kangnŭng tanoje* and *Tonghaean pyŏlshin kut* from the East, *Sŏhaean pae yŏnshin kut* from the Northwest, *Chindo Ssikkim kut*, *Wido ttipaennori* from the Southwest, *Cheju ch'ilmŏri tang kut* and *Namhaean pyŏlshin kut* from the South, and *Kyŏnggido todang kut* and *Sŏul saenam kut* from the central area around Seoul.

has existed alongside and contemporaneously with other religions. The implication is that his 'core shamanism' can today fit seamlessly with other, familiar religious traditions. It is here that we encounter the notion that specific aural signals will have universal affect.

Banging Drums, or the Harmony of the Spheres

The idea of music's affect, its inherent power, has been absorbed not from anything shamanic, but from a Western discourse with a long history. To Aristotle, flute music aroused the emotions and offered cathartic release. To Cassiodorus, music in the aeolian mode could treat mental ailments, while the lydian mode was suitable for soothing children.[5] Al-Kindi, the 9th century Islamic philosopher, described "celestial harmonies" created by a universal chorus built from the vibrating rays emitted by all entities. Boethius, in the 6th century, described the healing properties of music; this evolved as the four humours of Renaissance musicology and the harmony of the spheres in the French Age of Enlightenment.[6] Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499) took from Plotonius to describe the "magic of music". Plato, in *The Republic,* discussed the use of modes to create a reign of moderation, and in *Elements of Harmony* organised his zodiacal calendar according to musical scales. To Baroque composers, keys described moods and emotions. Isaac Newton, taking from Descartes, saw musical pitch as an organising force in the universe.[7] To Alexander Skryabin (1872–1915) and to the quintessentially English Granville Bantock (1868–1946) keys also represented colours; Skryabin's last orchestral work, *Promethée*, "embraced the play of coloured light in the score as a preliminary step towards the fusion of the arts and senses" (Macdonald 1980: 371). With the 20th century rise in theosophy, in texts such as Cyril Scott's *Music: Its Secret Influence Throughout the Ages* (1933/1976), the Western art

[5] Juliette Alvin (1975: 84) and Andrew Watson and Nevill Drury (1987: 16).

[6] For the latter, see Joscelyn Godwin 1995: 3–27.

[7] An idea taken to its logical extreme in Johannes Kepler's *Harmony of the Universe* (1595), in which planetary velocities are described in terms of musical intervals, Mars as a perfect 5th, Saturn a major 3rd, each planet creating a song as it travels through space. For an extensive discussion of how music has been discussed by scientists in Britain, see Gouk 1999.

music canon was made representative witness to the impact music could have on nature and the body. Carl Seashore (1967: 6) talked of a "representational tonal world" in which if you "take out the image from the musical mind you take out its very essence". Alfred Nieman (cited in Watson and Drury 1987: 15–16) argued that composed music provides the stimulus on which "the unconscious mind receiving [it] acts as a catalyst and returns the music back to its original symbolic nature". To Manfred Clynes (1982) emotions can be triggered by music that observes specific shapes. These, as sentic cycles, require spacing in the three components that together comprise music—time, pitch, and amplitude. The resulting sound envelopes vary from a sharp response to indicate anger measured at under 5 seconds in length, to a much calmer and gently undulating shape for reverence lasting almost 10 seconds. In much of this multi-faceted discourse, the identity of Western art music is taken for granted as managing the universal sonic organisational principles found in the harmonic series.[8]

It is of note that Western discourse, at least since the rhythmic modes of the 11th century Notre Dame school, has consistently held up harmony and melody as primary concerns. The language of music, if there be one, is as a consequence commonly perceived to be rooted in a European construct where rhythm is of secondary interest.[9] This is not the situation with music stemming from shamanism, where drumming is accorded a primary role. One reason for this is the importance of the frame drum in Asian and Arctic shamanism (see Hamayon 1990: 459–73). Among the Transbaikalian Tungus, the frame drum is a canoe for crossing the sea. Among Mongols it represents a horse. Among the Siberian Evenki and Oroquen, it is the receptacle through which different spirits come to the shaman. By singing directly into the skin, the shaman pleads with the spirit world, in effect marking the skin as the entrance to the other realm. In Siberia, the drum is often shaped like an egg, symbolising birth; in Scandinavia, the shape takes on a more feminine, motherly, figure-of-eight. Amongst North American Indians, it may have a frame with eight sides, and, wherever encountered, the frame

[8] For which, see Helmholtz 1863/1872. See also Alexander Ellis' famous riposte: "The musical scale is not one, is not universal..." (Ellis 1885). Ellis translated Helmholtz' seminal work into English.

[9] Perhaps the most famous example of this is Derryck Cooke (1959).

may have a cross-stave that symbolises fertility; this, or animals spirits, may be echoed in paintings on the drum skin. It may be round, like the sun. It may have feathers or bones attached to the frame, metal ringlets attached to symbolise bones, or the drumskin itself may be considered to harness the spirit of the donor animal. The drum, energised, becomes the shaman's spirit helper.

The drum has had immense impact on 'urban shamanism'. In its 1999 catalogue, the British supplier The Sacred Trust listed ten New Mexican Taos Indian drums, five octagonal and five round, with eagle, bear, lizard, turtle and horse motives. It stocked cheaper Remo drums with coyote and sun lizard motives, and four British Red Deer drums hand painted by the "shamanka" Michelle Brown, including one depicting the Green Man. All these drums are said to be for "the alignment of the self with nature and elemental currents... to produce balance, healing, personal power and greater knowledge". Thee Shaman Shoppe's co-proprieter, Greywolf O'Murchadha, includes an eight-drum rhythmic sequence on the company's website dedicated to his partner ("A rhythm for Brighid") and sells *Jammin!* a workbook of rhythm sets based around the West African *djembe*.[10] Sule Greg Wilson's *The Drummer's Path* (1992) explores the affective nature of drumming, in a poem at the beginning making the transcendental connection:

> When the drums are right/and the dancing's tight/and the clave is pumping and clear and bright
> There's a sudden interior wind, and the air and my guts start to tingle/contract,
> A vibrant, sense-heightened awareness becomes and: ZOOM!!! The Gods they fly, fly through and by (Wilson 1992: vii).

Michael Harner has prepared his own drumming tape for use with *The Way of the Shaman* (1980). This is *Shamanic Journey Solo and Double Drumming* (ISBN 9991143874). Playing a round hand-held frame drum, and assisted by David Corbin, who sits about four feet apart and at a slight angle to cut unwanted reverberation, 15' and 30' solo and double drum tracks are presented. Each consists of a constantly repeating drum strike, with no intentional dynamic or tempo shift except

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[10] www.shamanshop.com/publish/ENTRAIN/Brid Beat and www.shamanshop.com /publish/Sspubs (accessed August 2001).

for a discreet division into three segments. The segments are designed, in sequence, to assist the user to stabilise his or her breathing, concentrate on introspection, and then be led back to the everyday world—each track ends with what is described as a "callback". The purpose is to lead the journeyer within, to discover power animals, and to heal in a Jungian sense. Double and multiple versions of the same repetitive tracks, played by four disciplined drummers, appear on two later releases in the same *Shamanic Journey* series. In interview with Nevill Drury,[11] Harner remarks:

> Simply by using the technique of drumming (sonic driving, a monotonous percussion sound), people from time immemorial have been able to pass into these realms which are normally reserved for those approaching death, or for saints.

Drury has his own tape, *Shaman Journey*, featuring a 15 minute solo drum followed by an "enhanced" drum adding reverb and a synthesiser (Japetus, no number). I first came across his interview with Harner in 1999 on a now-defunct web page advertising shamanic workshops in New South Wales by Michael Ney. Ney talks of his own experience, recorded in a 1986 personal journal entry:

> The drum's incessant beat became lost amidst a seemingly resonant symphony of voices...an enchantingly mysterious tone led me through into another reality, a dreamtime landscape of the shamanic underworld... I turned and confronted the eyes and beak of an eagle... As we both alighted with graceful swiftness from the cliff I realised a magical transformation had occurred... [I felt] my journey had begun aeons before this present reality.

Harner's Foundation for Shamanic Studies has supported research by Sandra Harner and Warren Tryon into the psychological and immunological responses to drumming. One report of this, published in an earlier volume of *Shaman*, records that tests were conducted with 40 subjects for anxiety, well-being, stress, and mood disturbance in three situations: resting, listening to birdsong, and journeying to the 30' solo drumming track on Harner's *Shamanic Journey*. The subjects

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[11] In the magazine *Nature and Health* 9/2.

were between 30 and 60 years old, solicited from participants in the foundation's advanced training courses. The report concludes:

> Shamanic journeying with drumming...was associated with increased affective, cognitive, physical and total well-being. State anxiety, anger, confusion, depression, fatigue, tension–anxiety, and stress were significantly lower after journeying with drumming... [Drumming] appears to have a positive psychological effect on well-being, anxiety, stress, and mood disturbance for these participants (1996: 95).

The three drumming segments of Harner's *Shamanic Journey* become "five sacred rhythms" to Gabrielle Roth: flowing, staccato, chaos, lyrical, and stillness (1990: 26–35). The five are phases, in lovemaking, in pregnancy and the birth of a child, each building from something gentle, slow and lingering, to the wild body-engulfing, and back to calmness and tranquillity. To Roth, they support five phases for individual dance, accompanied by appropriate music. Roth's music is recorded on many albums with The Mirrors. Titles are indicative of content: *Refuge, Zone Unknown, Stillpoint, Tongues, Luna, Trance, Waves, Ritual, Bones, Initiation, Totem.* The 1999 Sacred Trust catalogue states:

> All of Gabrielle's music is built on percussion from around the world, layers of rhythm to make you feet dance and your heart sing...The creative process is tribal. Each artist is given the freedom to make a unique contribution to the song developing from the basic rhythm tracks.

To Roth, the rhythms constitute the fluid structure, "the DNA" of physical life, and dancing them allows the initiate to get back in tune with themselves and with others. They are:

> ...not only healing but also energizing and relaxing. In exploring the full range of our body's natural movement, we reconnect with our native animal energy and start to be present in our bodies (Roth 1990: 30).

One typical image is of rhythm as primordial. People are said to have stamped their feet, banged logs, stamped the ground, and so on, before melodic instruments evolved. This, of course, ties to a 19th

century evolutionist construct. A transparent image of this, tying in contemporary ecological dimensions, is provided by Andrew Watson and Nevill Drury:

> The most powerful native forms always contained musical rhythm, vigorous dance and group chanting. The instruments used in the ancient tribal rituals were usually symbolic of the earth itself, and throughout the world today you still find instruments like the drums from Africa... These instruments are timeless and were evolved to evoke the Nature spirits (1987: 61).

Amongst shaman societies there is considerable and contrasting variety in the use of rhythm and drumming. For example, Frances Densmore (1948: 25–46), in an early study of North American Indians, noted that healing songs were characterized by rhythm, specifically by changes of stress and rhythmic regularity. Liu Gui Teng (1993), describing Manchurian rituals in the Heilongjiang river delta, distinguishes two drums, the *zhuagu* and *dangu*, the former struck in sequences of odd-numbered patterns and the latter struck in sets of irregular patterns (much Chinese percussion music, in contrast, is based on regular mathematical formulae). On a broader stage, Alain Daniélou (1967: 72) talks of the importance of irregular five-, seven-, or 11-beat patterns and violent and complex, accelerating, rhythmic sequences. In Korea, pounding rhythmic regularity characterises much shaman activity: a neophyte in her initiation ritual is told to dance "like a metronome", and wanting to tap and dance to the drum is considered to make children vulnerable to attention from the spirits (Kendall 1985, particularly page 63; 1991–92).

It can, however, be questioned whether rhythm is always essential in producing an 'altered state of consciousness'. African case studies of possession present a complex picture. Nketia tells us that in Ghana individuals are known to get possessed outside the contexts of drumming and dancing (1957), while commentators note that elsewhere adepts and priests may enter trance when music is heard, but also when no music is played (e.g., Erlmann 1982). Amongst the Yoruba, the drums fall silent at a certain point on the first day of the annual feast for Shango, the god of lightning, at which time, and as an officiant chants to the god, an adept goes into trance and rushes forwards. In Shona Bira ceremonies, it is melodies played by the *mbira* (a lithophone often glossed as the 'thumb piano') that the spirits respond to (Berliner

1978/1993). The accordion helps induce trance amongst the Vezo of Madagascar. Some would, nonetheless, see drums as the core instrument in African music for the spirits, notably Stephen Friedson (1996, 1998).[12] Victor Turner makes the relationship explicit in the title to his 1968 book, *The Drums of Affliction*. Others, such as John Janzen in his reassessment of the *ngoma* drums behind Turner's account (Janzen 2000: 46–66), argues that music cannot be separated from other aspects of the ritual complex. Peter Cooke sees the creation of white noise by assorted percussion sounds as more influential in inducing altered states of consciousness than drums alone:

> The spiritual health of innumerable African communities lies in their ability to maintain fruitful relationships with their gods and with the spirits of their ancestors... [through] combinations of singing, percussion playing, dialogue, costume, dance and mime, all of which feature in the ritual and play a part in effective communication with spirits (2000: 102).

Two distinct voices. Harner and Drury seem to support Andrew Neher, who once argued that soundwaves have a neurological impact. Neher identified rhythm as the trigger of what he called "auditory driving"; pulses which when matched to alpha brainwaves, at between 8Hz and 13Hz per second, would lead to "sensory bombardment and convulsions". From here, the anthropologist Rodney Needham returned to African ethnographic accounts and suggested that percussion instruments have the greatest sensory affect. "No!" famously says Gilbert Rouget, for Neher's experiments indicate that much of sub-Saharan Africa must be in a constant state of trance (Neher 1961: 449–51, 1962: 151–60; Needham 1967: 606–14; Rouget 1985: 172–6). Rouget presents the second voice, one shared by much ethnomusicological discourse, where localised ethnographies remain common.[13] Rouget cites Jean-Jacques Rousseau's discussion of Tarantism, which states

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[12] In many cases, drums do predominate in African ritual practice. See, for example, Rouget's (1980/1985) review of accounts by Herskovits (1938), Rouch (1960), Pairault (1966), Brandilly (1967), Arom and Taurelle (1968), Monfouga-Nicolas (1972), Nketia (1974), and Koechlin (1975).

[13] In the context of religious music, see, for example, the essays in Sullivan (ed.), 1997.

that melodies known to the afflicted are needed if any cure is to be achieved. John Blacking, likewise, has challenged the concept of universality; to him, musical meaning and the affective impact of music is determined by a complex of symbolically ordered sounds, social institutions, and cognitive or sensory motor capabilities of the body (Blacking 1995: 304–5).

Into the 'New Age'

Many seem unconcerned by the warnings of Rousseau, Rouget, or Blacking, and hide eurocentricism behind appeals to the Other. An example of this is Arden Wilken's *Inner Sound*. This is a system of sound and therapeutic music for the integration and expression of the emotions based around a set of 50 musical motifs that are considered to work through sympathetic resonance to activate and create change in the body. The motifs have, since 1993, been organised within what she refers to as "Sound Touch":

> Through the use of Sound Touch, people have changed their lives, created better communication with others, resolved fears and anxieties, and developed more of their creative potential.[14]

In 1998, Wilken issued a recording of 21 motifs, together with a manual. The first three motifs are "centering", "contact" and "opening". Each is played solo on the piano, although the recording is enhanced by what is described as "Spectrum Sound Resonance System, a range of psycho-acoustic effects". The first is a set of notes separated by an octave transposed by a tone part-way through to refocus attention on personal reality and to remove outside distractions. The colour is blue, and it activates the centre of the body, with energy moving up the inside of the legs. The second is an outlined cadence, using pitches I, II and V of the major scale; it is said to deepen contact with the self, and to appear green. The third is said to have to do with the acceptance of self, working on opening "blockages"; again it is the bare bones of a cadential phrase around a key tone, A (440Hz). The claimed sensory

[14] Cited from the manual to *Sound Touch* 1: 1. All quotations here are taken from the manual, Wilken's biography, and her recordings.

impact of motifs is various, from tingling and warmth, through the visualization of images, heightened emotions, sensations of falling, dizziness, floating, a heightened awareness of the body and the surrounding environment, and so on. These would be impacts familiar to followers of Harner's 'core shamanism'. Wilken takes European instruments as her basic forces, and adds harmonic constructs that are part a result of centuries of tempering music to fit on these same instruments. 440 Hz, the pitch used in the tuning of most orchestras since the early 20th century, is a Western norm; the major scale and its cadential formulae are part of the European classical canon. The concept of "touch" comes from piano technique, and relates to how the fingers contact the keys.

The potential for manipulating sounds has increased in our post-modern world. We are able, as few of our ancestors were, to readily mix instruments and soundscapes from around the world. Michael Harner added to his *Shamanic Journey* series an Australian aboriginal didjeridu played by Stephen McDonnell, a Tibetan bowl (a metal alloy instrument played by running a stick around the rim to produce sustained and harmonically complex vibrations), a rattle and a choral recording.[15] This last is advertised as "inspired by the singing journey methods of the last of the traditional European shamans among the Sami of northern Scandinavia", and features both drumming and a women's chorus. The didjeridu has become a favoured supra-national instrument. It is the core instrument in a 1997 album by Kailash and Hermann Haindl that explores the *chakras*, Indian meditation energy levels (*In einer Atemzug—in the same breath,* (Gingko SM 1815–2); Drury, in his 1987 discussion cited above, also refers to the didjeridu's power. And a chapter in the didjeridu handbook, *The Didjeridu: From Arnhem Land to Internet*, by Patricia Sherwood, sums up the New Age use: "The didjeridu and alternative lifestylers' reconstruction of social reality" (1997). Indian *tambura* drones become the material for Peter Pannke's *Music for Unborn Children: A Harmonic Experience* (Wergo SM 1074, 1988), and Indian percussion and melodic instruments are mixed with

[15] www.shamanism.org/products/audio.html, the official website of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies, lists all seven titles in the series (accessed August 2001).

clarinet and bass on his *Morungen: Songs from a Visionary Musical* (Wergo SM 1087, 1994).

Many more 'world music' appropriations could be cited. The iconoclast Steven Halpern released 58 albums and 32 'subliminal series' recordings between 1975 and 1997.[16] He includes world music elements on, amongst other albums, *Rain Meditation* (1977; Halpern Sounds HS 772), *Hear to Eternity* (1979; Inner Peace Music SRXD 7793), *Islands in Time* (1990; Inner Peace Music SRXD 9002), *Trance-Zendance* (1995; Inner Peace Music SRXD 9005) and *Afro-Desia* (1995; Inner Peace Music SRXD 9004). He, too, adapts the Hindi *chakra*, correlating them to a sense of colour and the Western diatonic scale in an attempt to provide music for holistic therapy: C/red/*muladhara*; D/orange/*svadisthana*; E/yellow/*manipura*; F/green/*anahata*; G/blue/*visuddha*; A/indigo/*ajna*; B/violet/ *sahasrara*. In place of the *chakra*, Drury (1985) prefers a classification based on the five elements common in many metaphysical systems—earth, water, fire, air, spirit—the five in ascending order from everyday experience to transcendental awareness, with music chosen to image each. The medicine wheel, or similar symbol systems, is regularly invoked.

Drury allows the musical instruments and sounds of other cultures to be absorbed into an electronic soundscape of synthesisers, organs, and guitars; Arden, in her compositions, also uses synthesisers. Today, and despite Earth Ear's rejection of "mostly mechanical noise", we are able to dream into existence new soundworlds with the aid of technologically advanced electronic wizadry. There is, simply, an infinite choice of sound available to us. Music recorded, as opposed to music experienced live, leads to the manipulation of sound, and the exploration of additive textures. This, in essence, once gave rise to ambient music, an outgrowth of European mainstream pop of the 1960s and early 1970s. Many distinct and different pathways were followed. King Crimson, Pink Floyd, Yes, and The Moody Blues produced albums based on the creation of mythic stories, often with lyrics written during Learyesque drug-induced hazes, or with words replaced by expansive melodic improvisations. As the focus moved to representations of cosmic sound-

[16] Listed in Werkhoven 1998: 78-80. See also Halpern's three books (1978, 1985, 1997).

worlds, the Berlin-based Tangerine Dream became leaders, producing *Alpha Centauri* (1971), *Zeit* (1972) and *Atem* (1973). Robert Fripp, the lead guitarist with King Crimson, joined with Brian Eno (a former member of Roxy Music), for *Evening Star* (1975). Eno developed what he termed "environmental music", notably with *Ambient One: Music for Airports* (1978) and *Ambient Two: The Plateaux of Mirrors* (1980). Jon Anderson, from Yes, would later turn back to nature, with the album Earthmotherearth (1997; Ellipsis CD4160). The album was done

> ...in a completely natural environment. By putting microphones outside in the garden as I recorded songs inside, I was able to capture many elements at the same time. As I re-listen to the birds singing, they seem to be in time with the songs naturally, and it is quite breathtaking...

The series 'Natural Sound' published by Wergo (SM 9001 – SM 9007) takes this approach to its logical conclusion, with seasonal and forest recordings and recordings of birds made by Walter Tilgner. The 'natural' can be manipulated and imitated, in parallels to Gregory Bateson's cybernetic model of nature as "emergent mind".[17] In respect to manipulation, consider David Dunn, who in albums such as *Angels and Insects* (NONF-CD-9) and *Chaos and the Emergent Mind of the Pond on the Aerial* (NONF-CD-2) runs a gamut from unadulterated field recordings to sound creation. The gamut has four phases—documentation, reconstruction, transformation, and composition—that together, and according to publicity, fuse the disciplines of bioacoustics, linguistics, chaos theory, deep ecology, computer technology and musical composition.[18] In respect to imitation, consider 20th century Western composition, from Edgar Varese's (1883–1965) industrial sounds, through Pierre Schaeffer's (b. 1910) *musique concrète,* to Murray Schafer's (b. 1933) "ear cleaning".[19]

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[17] I am indebted to David Ingram for this information. Ingram cited Bateson in a paper on David Dunn's *Why do Whales and Children Sing?* given at the April 2001 conference of the British Forum of Ethnomusicology in Twickenham.

[18] www.deeplistening.org/dlc/23dunn; accessed August 2001.

[19] In a meticulous depiction, Schafer's String Quartet No. 2, 'Waves', imitates the assymetrical rhythm of the breaking and backwash of waves on Canada's Atlantic and Pacific coasts (Atma Classique ACD2 2188, 2000).

Add all this together. Halpern defends his view of the resulting 'New Age music'—note that many of the musicians/creators involved reject this term—in an introduction written for Werkhoven's *The International Guide to New Age Music* (1998: viii–ix):

> Much of the coverage in the popular press has ignored the most important breakthroughs and contributions that authentic New Age music has introduced into the contemporary soundscape.

OK, but note the use of "authentic" here; this is relativist, but does not detract from

> ...the overall vision of true New Age music. It meant developing new forms of composition that did not follow the traditional verse and chorus structure of pop music. It meant creating or utilizing newly developed electronic textures and ambiances, as well as bringing in exotic sounds from other cultures.

New Age music ties to "truth-in packaging", a concept shared with health foods and herbal supplements. Ecology becomes experiential:

> 'Consciousness' and 'intention' are vital components of 'authentic' New Age music... When you learn how to listen, when you listen with your heart rather than just your intellect or emotions, you can feel the difference.

This is a very different notion of how music can be affective to that of drumming in 'core shamanism' or 'urban shamanism'. The disjuncture that this suggests has seemingly not caused anybody much concern. Our own cultural plurality makes it acceptable. New Age music involves the same appropriation of local traditions from Asia, Africa or the Americas that 'core shamanism' and 'urban shamanism' does, but now of music rather than ritual. Curiously, though, and viewed from within a Western concept of property and control, it claims ownership of that which is appropriated. Whose music is this? If music is, indeed, the most plastic of arts, who gets to interpret what is going on?

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VOL.10. NOS. 1-2. SHAMAN SPRING/AUTUMN 2002

Shamanic Beliefs, Practices, and Messianic Movements Among the Hmong People of Southeast Asia

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This article is based on original data collected by the authors among Laotian Hmong hilltribes people in refugee camps in Thailand 1988–89 and among Hmong villagers in Laos. An introduction summarizes historical sources on the Hmong who after centuries of rebellion against oppression by Imperial Chinese authorities migrated to Southeast Asia in the 19th century, and their involvement in the civil wars of Indochina after World War II which eventually led to a mass exodus of Laotian Hmong to Thailand where the authors encountered them in refugee camps. Described are the therapeutic and spriritual practices of shamans among the Hmong people who tenaciously adhered to their ancient culture also in the refugee camps; their origin myth of shamanic healing and their traditions of supernatural powers determining health, illness and death; traditional indications for, and types of, shamanic intervention; the calling and qualification of shamanic practitioners and the paraphernalia they use. Further reported are the personal stories of a shaman and a shamaness, and a pioneering venture of integrating shamanic ritual in modern drug addiction treatment. Summarized are reports of historical messianic movements among the Hmong that motivated their resistance to oppression in the past, showing the inspiring role played by shamanic prophet leaders with visionary revelations of the imminent coming of a mythic Hmong Redeemer. The most recent messianic movement among the Laotian Hmong is presented: a clandestine cult movement under charismatic shamanic leaders with prophesies of ethnic redemption; its militant units welded together by sacred vows and secret magic rituals, communicating through an "ancient" script taught by Hmong priest-teachers at syncretistic Hmong temples in the refugee camps. This shamanic-inspired Hmong movement is paradigmatic of the universal phenomenon of messianic-millenarian movements of oppressed indigenous peoples. The article is illustrated with photographs by the authors.

We worked with Indochinese refugees in UN protected refugee camps in Thailand 1987–98;W.G. Jilek serving as Refugee Mental Health Coordinator for the United Nations and L. Jilek-Aall as volunteer psychiatric consultant. In the Laotian hilltribes refugee camps of Northern Thailand we noticed that Hmong refugees were quite reluctant to use the medical facilities available in the camps. They seemed to have much more faith in their own traditional healers whom they always consulted first and to whose care they returned after treatment in the camp hospital. Trying to find out why these hilltribes people stuck to their traditional healing system with such tenacity, we observed Hmong healers and their methods and soon recognized that they practiced classical shamanism as defined by Hoppál (1992: 130). The social roles of the Hmong shamans correspond indeed to those Hoppál (2000) has described for the Eurasian shaman in general: in addition to being healers, they are spiritual leaders, sacrificers, guides of the souls, reciters of songs, and dramatic actors. During our service in the refugee camps we had many opportunities to observe shamans at work. Most shamans were very friendly and willing to share their knowledge with us. They looked upon us as healer-colleagues from abroad and appeared happy about our interest, generously inviting us to witness ceremonies and participate in feasts in which they had a function. We were also able to establish friendly contacts with the priest-teachers officiating at the Hmong temples in the refugee camps and with adherents of the *Chao Fa* movement.

The original information contained in this article derives from our informants, the Lao Hmong shamans, elders, temple priests, and Hmong volunteers in the health services of the refugee camps Ban Vinai and Chiangkham, Northern Thailand; also from shamanic practitioners in Sipsong, Laos, and from our knowledgable Hmong interpreter Mr T.T. Chong whose valuable assistance we acknowledge.

For background information on history and culture of the Hmong people we studied the following ethnographic and historical works: Bernatzik 1947; Chindarsi 1976; Geddes 1976; Lebar et al. 1964; Lemoine 1987; Lewis and Lewis 1984; McKinnon and Bhruksasri 1983: Morechand 1968; Mottin 1980; 1982; Radley 1986; Yang Dao 1975. Data derived from literature sources are clearly referenced in this article

which is mainly based on information provided by our above contacts and on our own observations.

Historical Background

It is an astonishing fact that the Hmong people, formerly known as Meau or Miao, have been able to preserve a distinct cultural identity throughout the centuries inspite of their turbulent history in host countries as diverse as China, Laos, Thailand, Burma, and Vietnam. A Hmong elder told us the following origin myth of his people: First Hmong was the son of the powerful boar pig *twm npua* and of First Woman. Not fathered by a human, First Hmong had magical powers already as a child and was able to free the land from a giant dragon by killing the monster with a power-charged bone of his deceased boar-father. For this feat he was rewarded with the hand of the king's daughter and became a most powerful ruler. First Hmong conquered vast areas of China with an army of bamboo sticks which he magically turned into soldiers. He took many wives and their offspring became the Hmong people.

According to Chinese chronicles, the Hmong have existed as a distinct ethnicity for thousands of years. Their original homeland is unknown, but their myth of origin describes a land of snow and ice where people dressed in fur and where day and night lasted six months each. Even today the corpses of deceased Hmong are traditionally dressed in warm clothes with Chinese boots to enable them to walk back to the Northern land of their ancestors. There is speculation that this land might have been Mongolia. Chinese annals refer to the Hmong, or Miao, people already in the 3rd millenium B.C.E. There are numerous historical and legendary accounts throughout history, of wars and feuds between the Han Chinese and the Hmong. The Hmong who in most chronicles are described as fiercely independent, were in the course of their history displaced by the Han from the fertile lowlands of China, and initially migrated to the remote highlands of southwestern China where significant Hmong populations are still living. Oppression by Imperial Chinese authorities led to a series of Hmong uprisings, which were subdued rather harshly. This was probably the main reason why Hmong clans since the mid-19th century migrated southward into the mountain ranges

of Laos, North Vietnam, northern Thailand and Burma. Because of their inaccessible mountainous habitat the Hmong have lived in isolation and developed a sociocultural system excellently suited to this environment. After World War II, during which French Indochina was occupied by the Imperial Japanese army, the French attempt to re-establish colonial rule triggered the Indochinese civil wars in which the Hmong in Laos became deeply involved, leading to heavy losses and eventually mass emigration of the Hmong people. Motivated by rival clan loyalties rather than by ideological persuasion, the Lo family clan under Fay Dang aligned themselves with the pro-Soviet Pathet Lao against the French and later the Americans; while the Ly family clan under Touby Ly Foung supported the French, and later the Laotian faction fighting with the Americans against the Pathet Lao and North Vietnamese (Yang Dao 1975). With assistance from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency—later also from Thai and Chinese military sources—special forces and guerilla units were recruited mainly among the Hmong under the command of General Vang Pao, himself a Laotian Hmong (Mottin 1980). The Laotian civil war dragged on until Pathet Lao rule was established by the mid-1970s. However, the activities of Hmong rebels in Laos are continuing and occasionally reported in the media (cf. *The Economist*, April 22, 2000; 36–37). During the civil war, thousands of Hmong fled Laos southward, crossed the Mekong River and became refugees in large camps in Northern Thailand. By the end of 1988 about half the Hmong population of Laos had left the country. In the southwestern provinces of China remain about three million Hmong, in Burma and Vietnam about 200,000. Thailand has about 60,000 resident and still many refugee Hmong. Hmong refugees from Laos emigrated to many countries. By 1999, more than 250,000 Hmong had resettled in the USA (*The Economist,* April 22, 2000), many thousands in Australia, Canada, France, and French Guyana. In the refugee camps of northern Thailand the Hmong had to live among people from different cultures and were striving to preserve their cultural identity. Whenever it was possible, whole families, clans or even entire villages fled Laos together. When separated during their flight, they made every effort to reunite in refugee camps in Thailand, even if this took months or years of pleading with Thai authorities. Once together, they regrouped around their elders and isolated themselves as much as possible from refugees of other

ethnic groups. Their elders continued to conduct traditional feasts and ceremonies, such as child naming, marriage, burials and New Year celebrations; women embroidered the traditional clothes worn during festivities. By the colour patterns of women's skirts and men's sleeves the person's tribal background is recognized as "White" Hmong (*Hmong dawb*), "Black" Hmong (*Hmong dub*), "Blue" Hmong (*Hmong njua*), and "Striped Hmong" (*Hmong txaij*). These "tribes" are represented among Hmong populations in China and Southeast Asia, showing some minor differences in language and customs.

Origin Myth of Shamanic Healing

The origin of shamanic healing is related in the following story we were told by the senior shaman teacher Zong Koua Thao. In the beginning, people on earth did not die. When they had lived about 120 years their skins became very thin and wrinkled, so they went to a certain place where they would shed their skin like a snake. After three months the new skin would be strong enough and they returned rejuvenated to their homes. The Heavenly Shaman would ride down to earth on his winged horse to restore those who were wounded or sick. Then he would ride back to heaven and close the gates. Once when he was on earth, a bad spirit cut off the horse's wings so the Heavenly Shaman could not ride back to heaven; his horse died and after a while he also died. But in the meantime heaven's gates had remained open so that many wicked spirits, among them the spirits of death and disease, had escaped and came down to earth to plague the people with sickness and death. The Heavenly Shaman's spirit returned to heaven on his horse's spirit. Since then he is sending his horse's spirit into the shaman's bench, and his healing spirits into some people so that they may become shamans and ride on the spirit horse, the shaman's bench, to heaven in search of a lost soul, fighting off evil spirits with the help of their auxiliary spirits, *qhua neeb* [pronounced: khua neng].

Contemporary Shamanic Practices

As in all small-scale tribal societies, every Hmong household head and the elders can perform minor healing rituals and know how to conduct

ancient ceremonies. Every Hmong family has a house altar consisting of a wooden shelf decorated with gold and silver paper cut out in the form of gold and silver bars. The house altar has to be remade every year at the Hmong New Year "to keep together the family line". At this place the elders carry out divinations, feed ancestral spirits, offer sacrifices and "fix" herbs to imbue them with curing power. The elders also call upon house spirits, plant and animal spirits to ward off harm from family members, making appropriate rites to placate angry spirits when taboos have been violated.

Hmong herbalists, usually older women, know a great variety of medicinal plants. They gather "wild" plants in the mountains at predetermined times and cultivate "tame" plants at secret places. Before using herbal remedies, candles are lit, "spirit money" (i.e. gold- or silver painted paper, or Chinese funeral "money") is burnt and magic words are chanted to the spirits of medicine at the house altar. Herbalists have to sacrifice a chicken at this altar every year to convey healing power to their plant medicines. General and pressure point massage is also employed with magic formulae in the curing of minor ailments. When these measures do not suffice, a shamanic healer, *neeb* [pronounced: neng] will be asked to take over and perform ceremonies which include the classic shamanic journey to the Otherworld, or "heaven", as English speaking Hmong say nowadays. The Hmong shaman or shamaness is also a diviner who diagnoses the cause of illness with the help of auxiliary spirits. Appropriate for shamanic intervention are conditions for which the following causes have been determined in divination: (1) a deceased person's spirit feeling lonely and desiring to be with the living; (2) a hungry spirit wanting food; (3) the patient's *plig* [pronounced: pli], in English rendered "soul" but actually meaning *life force*, having become sad, ashamed or angry and no longer wishing to stay with the living; (4) the patient's "licence for life" coming close to expire unless renegotiated with the divine powers by a shaman; (5) sudden fright which made a *plig* jump out of the patient's body and wander about. The *plig* of small children are said to be vulnerable and not yet well anchored in the body, they often wander and want to return to the Otherworld; infants therefore fall ill easily and have to be treated with special care.

The Hmong world is inhabited by a great variety of spirits. Plants, trees, stones, crops, animals, houses, all have their spirits; there are dead peoples' spirits, ancestral spirits and divine spirits. The Hmong say that in the mythic time, humans and spirits would meet and talk to each other, and passage between the seen and unseen world was easy. But then the two worlds became divided into the human side of the world, *yaj sab* [pronounced: ya šă], and the world of gods and spirits, *yeeb sab* [pronounced: yeng šă]. Now only the shaman can venture to the Otherworld, deal with spirits and return safely to this world again. All these spirits can harm or help mortals; only the shaman can see and influence them when going on the shamanic journey to the world of the spirits. Hmong shamans in the refugee camps explained to us the eternal cycle of life, death, and rebirth: Each person has three main *plig*. When a person dies one of them lingers around the house becoming a spirit [*dab*, pronounced: dă]; one goes into the grave and one goes to "heaven" on the third day after death. A shaman must conduct a ceremony, "spirit money" must be burned to be available to the spirit on its journey and the shaman must see whether the spirit of the dead person is allowed to enter through heaven's gate. If the dead person's "papers" are not in order, the gatekeeper will not allow the spirit to enter. The shaman must correct the "papers" and pay a lot of "spirit money" to the gatekeeper so he will finally allow the dead person's spirit to enter. After a certain time, which is specific for each person, the dead person's spirit is allowed to return to earth and pass into a newborn child as its "soul". This soul is issued a "licence" which tells how long that person's life on earth will last. A newborn baby that is very weak may have arrived on earth without proper licence for living. When the licence expires, the person will die. However, sometimes the shaman can bargain with the Lord of the Otherworld to obtain an extension of a patient's licence for life on earth. The dead person's *dab* spirit who stays around the house may have benign or harmful effects on surviving family members and friends. A deceased relative's or friend's *dab* may become dangerous by taking a living person's soul with it, thus causing illness or even death. The *dab* spirit of a close friend or relative, but especially that of a boyfriend or girlfriend who suddenly dies, can make the surviving friend "crazy"; he/she may then run into the jungle and/or become extremely unhappy and depressed. The shaman called in to

protect that person's life is likely to advise performance of a ceremony in which the head of a sacrificed black dog is planted on a stick and fastened to the house roof. The dog's head will "bark and frighten the evil spirit away". One of our depressed patients performed this ceremony to protect himself from the *dab* of a close relative who had suddenly died an unexplained nocturnal death, a fate not uncommon among young Hmong men in the camps.

There are also special spirits, *dab vwm* [pronounced dă vŭ; "crazy-making spirit"]. The person such a spirit enters becomes insane for a long time, unless a shaman can drive the *dab vwm* out, catch it with his "shaman's scissors" and send it back to the Otherworld. To prevent a relapse of the patient, the shaman has to travel to heaven which has but one gate, guarded by a "high official" with whom the shaman negotiates, paying him handsomely with spirit money not to let the *dab vwm* out again to re-enter the patient. The shaman can exorcise evil spirits by "swallowing a red hot piece of iron without hurting himself" and then moving the ring-shaped "shaman's scissors" over the patient from head to foot. As the patient "goes through the scissors" the evil spirit leaves him/her and is chased through the house by the shaman who chops off the evil spirit's head with his sword. By performing a "cross-road gate ceremony" *ua neeb quas dab* [pronounced: wa neng kwas dă] the shaman can protect a house from evil spirits. At crossing paths near the house a thatched gate is erected and a wooden sword, fashioned after the shaman's sword, is hung up dangling over the crossing paths; evil spirits will not pass there.

Becoming a Shaman

A person whose unexplained illness has been treated unsuccessfully for a long time may be suspected of suffering from "shaman's illness", having been chosen by a shaman spirit as a potential candidate for healing power. The "shaman's illness" of the Hmong is identical to what Eliade (1964) called the "initiatory sickness" of shamans to-be. The Hmong believe that a shaman spirit may reveal itself to an afflicted person in a special dream or during an altered state of consciousness. If the person fails to respond or refuses to become a shaman or shamaness, the spirit will trouble that person with serious illness and the person

may die. Shaman's illness manifests itself in certain ways, through (1) chronic affliction unsuccessfully treated for a long time; (2) "wasting away" of the patient; (3) spells of altered states of consciousness or unconsciousness; (4) shaking spells and convulsions; (5) hallucinatory experiences. Other indications that the sick person should become a shaman or shamaness are: (1) a deceased close relative was a well-known shamanic practitioner whose shaman spirit is looking for a new vehicle; (2) the patient's condition improves when a shamanic ceremony is performed and the shaman spirit is invited to reside in an altar built in the patient's home; (3) the patient starts trembling and goes into trance when the shaman beats the gong-drum; (4) shamanic divination indicates the patient should become a shaman or shamaness. When the sick person has accepted the shamanic calling, a shaman teacher, *xib hwb txiv neeb*,"great honourable shaman teacher", is invited to guide the candidate on the path of becoming a shaman. This shaman teacher will conduct a ceremony in which the spirits are asked in an oracle by casting bovine horn halves to determine the auspicious time for the obligatory animal sacrifice. The shaman teacher will then take the candidate along on the first shamanic journey to the Otherworld, introducing the novice to the world of the spirits. After returning from the spirit world the shaman teacher will pour some of the water from his altar into the novice's bowl and will help construct a new "shelf" or temporary altar for the novice. For the time of training, shamanic paraphernalia are loaned to the candidate by the shaman teacher. The candidate is then tested. If the candidate tries out the paraphernalia and starts to shake right away when the shaman teacher is beating the drum, then it is evident that he/she is called upon to become a shaman or shamaness. The new shaman or shamaness eventually receives his/her own paraphernalia from a retired or deceased member of the proper descent group who had also been a shamanic practitioner and whose helping spirits will come along with the paraphernalia. Lao Hmong shamanic practitioners use the following paraphernalia: (1) shaman's gong-drum, *nruas neeb* [pronounced: rwas neng], beaten by the *tus sai neeb*, shaman's assistant, with a drum stick made of gibbon monkey bone; (2) shaman's "scissors", *xiab neeb* [pronounced: tsa neng], serving as soul and spirit catcher to retrieve the patient's aberrant soul, *ha plig*, or to catch a crazy making spirit, *dab vwm*, during exorcism; (3) shaman's

finger rings or bells, *tswb neeb*, made of brass, one around the index finger and one around the thumb, representing the spirit horse's harness; (4) buffalo horns cut into equal halves for the *kuam* oracle, cast in divination; (5) shaman's sword, *ntaj neeb*, an ancient-type Chinese sword with which the shaman decapitates evil spirits expelled through exorcism.

Once established, the new shaman or shamaness will build a permanent altar, *thaj neeb*, and the number of its shelves will be increased with his/her experience and status. The altar is decorated with silver and gold paper. On the altar of one shaman we saw six human-like figures cut out of gold and silver paper; these were effigies of the shaman's helping spirits, *ghua neeb*, who on a shamanic journey to the Otherworld "fell down and had to be stood up again". The following items are usually found on the altar shelves of Hmong shamans: a bowl with fresh water to make the "rainbow" by spraying water in the four cardinal directions at the start of a healing ceremony; a bowl with rice and maize to feed the shaman's helping spirits; cups filled with "whiskey", i.e.,water, to "cheer them up"; incense sticks; a boiled egg; and the buffalo horn halves for the *kuam* oracle. For the divination oracle the shaman throws the two horn halves to the ground muttering invocations. From their final resting position on the ground he determines whether the time is auspicious or not to conduct a certain ritual procedure: it is very auspicious if both halves come to lie with the cut surface up, "the door is wide open"; one cut surface up and one down is still a positive response and "leaves the door open"; both cut surfaces down indicates a negative response, "the door is closed". During ceremonies the established Hmong shaman speaks an "ancient language" that is apparently only understood by his assistants.

The Story of the Senior Shaman Teacher Zong Koua Thao (Age Ca. 53 Years)

"I have been a shaman since age 30. I was really sick then, had headaches and high fever with convulsions, attacks three times a day, they lasted about half an hour. My body was weak, I became skinny. This went on for a month or more. An herb doctor gave me medicine but it did not cure me. Finally, one shaman helped me—others had tried in vain. This shaman rode to heaven and saw my spirit there, he recognized it was a shaman spirit. He said, 'If you are

better after three days, you must become a shaman yourself. If you refuse to accept your shaman spirit, you will die for sure.' After three days I was better, but still very weak. My family had to carry me to the horse [bench]. When the shaman who treated me beat his drum, I started to shake right away, I could not refuse the call of my shaman spirit, I knew I would have to become a shaman. Every powerful shaman was ill before he became a shaman. A few may not have been ill but their healing power remains weak. When the shaman that treated me saw that I accepted my shaman spirit, he loaned me his things [paraphernalia] and I started to practice. My shaman spirit came into my heart and made me sing, teaching me the shaman songs; I heard them only in my heart, not with my ears. I never saw my helping spirits when awake but they appear in my dreams: many soldiers on horseback. I have a total of 90 helping spirits; they are divided in 9 groups of 10 each and have different positions in heaven; they are dragons, clouds, medicines, thunder, gold, silver, bronze, moths, birds. I got them right away when I became a shaman, and they always come to my help and fight for me when I need them on my travels to heaven to cure a sick person. It is a very dangerous journey with many obstacles. When a shaman travels to heaven, his helping spirits may fall down. Those who fall down have to be stood up again. The picture of a fallen spirit is cut out of silver and gold paper and put on the altar shelf. At the Hmong New Year I have to send all my spirit helpers back to *huab tais neeb*, the Lord of Shamans in heaven for 15 days every year; that means I cannot do any work then for 15 days. When I became a shaman my shaman spirit taught me the shaman songs. The shaman that treated me, my shaman teacher, introduced me to the ways of the shaman. He taught me the rules of being a shaman, the know-how of riding to heaven and searching for the stray souls of patients, but it is always my own shaman spirit that tells me where to find the wandering soul of a patient. After I had accepted my shaman spirit, I trained by myself under the guidance of my shaman teacher three times a day. I had a temporary shelf built immediately, a kind of table like the one here that belongs to my wife who is a herb doctor. While I practiced, my wife held me on the horse [bench] so I would not fall during my journeys. After three months, my shaman teacher told me I would now be ready to treat sick people as a full-fledged shaman. So I built my *thai neeb,* permanent altar shelves. When that was ready my shaman teacher pushed me on to the shelves, in this way he shared his healing power with me. Then I got my own things [paraphernalia] and started to cure people. After three years of practicing as a shaman, you can start pushing a patient to become a shaman if he has a shaman spirit. But I waited five years before I did that because I only pushed those patients who wanted to become shamans. You can often see it in the patient's eyes that he must have a shaman spirit. But it is necessary to actually see the patient's

shaman spirit in heaven. Say a family calls me in to cure a sick family member. While curing that patient I may recognize that he has a shaman spirit. I know the patient has a shaman spirit because I see that spirit when I ride to heaven. I check every room in heaven for the patient's souls and if I see a shaman spirit with the patient's souls in heaven, then I know: this patient should become a shaman in order to be cured. I waited another five years before I pushed the second patient to become shaman; then I was called a senior shaman teacher by other shamans. To become a senior shaman teacher you should be a well experienced shaman. I was a shaman around age 30 and a shaman teacher about 10 years later. Since I started shamanizing I have treated hundreds of people, but only eight of them I pushed until they became shamans, two of them women. I have the greatest experience in treating patients that have problems with their *plig*; I catch and retrieve their stray souls. Everybody can do *ha plig*, calling a soul back on earth, by burning incense at the door. But only the shaman can travel to heaven and *ha plig* a soul from there. The shaman does this with his *xiab neeb*, shaman's scissors. By throwing my *xiab neeb* I can catch souls like fish in the net. With babies I mostly use the rainbow power that I have, by blowing water from the rainbow bowl and saying power words. In a sick child I feel the pulse, it tells me what kind of sick-making spirit is causing the illness, a sky spirit, an earth spirit, an evil *dab* spirit, or another spirit. When called in to help a very sick child, or any patient with a serious sickness, I have to ride to heaven and try to extend the patients' licence to live. In order to do so I have to talk and deal with the gods and pay spirit money and the patient's family has to make sacrifices. In most cases I have succeeded in extending the patient's life licence and they got better. But if the life licence is not extended after all, the family cannot and does not blame the shaman. I accept every case when I am asked to help as shaman but if I think the patient's life licence will probably not be extended, I tell the family so."

The Story of the Shamaness Zuoa X. (Age Ca. 40 Years)

"I was about 30 years old and a mother of eight children when I became seriously ill. I had high fever and spells of falling unconscious. A shaman was called in, but after he tried several healing ceremonies he declared that I would have to become a shamaness or I would die. As there had been several shamans in my family, I was not surprised and agreed at once. My husband agreed to become my assistant. Since then my husband always accompanies me and beats the gong-drum for me when I go on my travels to heaven in a healing ceremony. He holds on to my 'horse' [bench] when I am riding and

watches that I don't fall off the 'horse' when I am fighting evil spirits. My shaman teacher told me how to prepare for these travels and accompanied me on my first trip to heaven. He explained to me the dream I had before I became a shamaness. The dream revealed that I would receive the most powerful helping spirit that exists, the spirit of Thunder. Because of that I have to wear the red cloth to cover my head and eyes whenever I travel to heaven. I have Thunder's permission to use mother's milk in my curing because mother's milk is powerful. There is a connection between the Thunder Spirit and mother's milk. Once in the beginning of time, Thunder lost his wife. He came to the Hmong asking for mother's milk for his baby but none of the Hmong people would give him any. Thunder got very angry and said: 'From now on I shall kill any Hmong who drinks mother's milk, except for a baby in the time before it starts to eat food, and for the shamaness to whom I shall give my helping spirit.' And so it is: even if only one drop of her milk should fall into the food a mother prepares and somebody eats of that food, that person will be struck down by lightening and die. But in the hands of a shamaness who has Thunder as her helping spirit, as I have, mother's milk is a powerful medicine. However, I must only use it for very special healing ceremonies."

One of the ceremonies we observed the Thunder Spirit shamaness conduct, was aimed at strengthening a newborn baby. While preparing for the ceremony in front of the altar she turned to the child's father and asked him to sacrifice a piglet. She would send the sacrificed piglet's spirit to heaven's gate to keep watch there so that the baby's wandering soul could not slip back into heaven, because then the baby would die. She then performed incantations over mother and child. Walking around them she sprayed mother's milk in the four cardinal directions. With a string she drew a protective magic circle enclosing mother and baby. The child's father brought a tied-up squeaking piglet and placed it behind the bench of the shamaness. The shamaness burned "spirit money" for necessary toll payments to the heavenly gatekeeper. Then she cast two buffalo horn halves to determine the best time for sacrificing the piglet. She announced the oracle's answer: "The door is wide open", as both horn halves came to lie with the cut or "open" side up. When the piglet was killed, some of its blood was smeared on the "spirit money" and on the baby's back so the piglet's spirit, watching at heaven's gate, would be able to recognize the baby's soul and prevent it from re-entering heaven. The tip of the piglet's tail and a piece of its head skin was sown to the baby's shirt for easy recognition of the

baby's soul and for protection from evil spirits. The shamaness, head and face covered with the red cloth of her Thunder Spirit, now started her dangerous journey to the spirit world. While her husband was beating the gong-drum she worked herself into a trance state: she bobbed up and down on her "horse" [bench], incessantly chanting, yelling utterances, shaking her bell finger-rings and rattling her shaman's "scissors". These noises were intended to chase away evil spirits trying to get hold of the baby's errant soul. The shamaness' task was to guide the piglet's spirit to heaven's gate where she paid money to the gatekeeper to ensure that the piglet's spirit was well accomodated in heavenly quarters for one year. One year the piglet's spirit would watch at the gate for the baby's soul to send it back to its earthly abode. For hours the shamaness exerted herself on this celestial journey until she finally returned to earth and normal consciousness. The ceremony was concluded with a festive meal at which the shamaness was honoured and presented with gifts. Her ritual-symbolic psychotherapy had alleviated the parents' anxiety and restored the family's confidence.

Integration of Shamanic Ceremonial in a Modern Drug Therapy Programme

We had the opportunity to assist in a pioneering venture of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) at Chiangkham refugee camp in which Hmong shamans collaborated with health staff in a modern opium detoxification and rehabilitation programme. Each new group of hilltribes refugee patients entering this programme was inaugurated by a shamanic ceremonial bolstering motivation and facilitating compliance with the therapeutic regime. The ceremonial was based on an ancient ritual called *qhuas dab neeb* that older shamans still remembered as being performed in Lao Hmong villages to free inveterate opium smokers from their dependence. This ritual derived from the Hmong mythology surrounding opium. The Hmong origin myth of opium tells of a powerful Hmong king in the beginning of time and of his daughter who was beautiful but unfortunately "smelled like shit" so that no man wanted to be betrothed to her. She vowed to take revenge on men after her death, announcing that whoever uses her special magic, opium, would never get rid of it. After she was buried, opium poppies that give

opium sap (milk) sprouted out of her breasts while tobacco plants grew out of her vagina. The Hmong king's beautiful but foul smelling daughter became the opium goddess, *nkauj yeeb,* who visits the male opium smoker in his narcotic dreams as his "opium girlfriend" and eventually possesses the opium addict. In the refugee camps some women also became opium users and it was said they receive dream visits by a handsome young man called "opium boyfriend"; however, this appears to be a recent concession to the equality of the sexes under Western influence. The shamanic inauguration ceremonial we encouraged as consultants and observed at the IRC Detox Hospital in Chiangkham refugee camp, was conducted to appease the opium goddess so she would leave the addict's body. She was enticed to take up residence in a miniature palace built for her by the shaman's assistants from a homemade basket, gaudily decorated and fully provisioned for her royal needs with clay and paper figurines of livestock, servants and guards. A yellow clay model of the opium goddess was placed into the palace together with selected specimens of the self-made opium pipes and utensils, which the patients had surrendered on admission. The senior shaman respectfully requested the opium goddess to quit the addicts and with much persuasion urged her to move to this new abode, richly provided for her. The patients had to take a solemn vow to never use opium again. The senior shaman invoked supernatural powers to witness and sanction this vow which was spoken by the entire patient group standing and repeated by each individual patient kneeling in front of the "palace" in a public act of obvious motivational significance. The senior shaman then exorcised the patients and their beds from evil spirits by waving "spirit money" around them and speaking magic formulae, he also placed a power-charged paper figure under each bed mat. He then made the patients stand close together in a group and tied a rope around them, fastening its ends to a still living but firmly bound pig. This pig would be sacrificed to be sent to heaven as a messenger negotiating the freedom of the addicts' souls held in captivity by the opium divinities. He sprayed a "rainbow" of water from the altar at each patient, making exorcising and protective gestures. At the auspicious time indicated by the oracle of buffalo horn halves, the pig was slaughtered. The carcass was set up in state, facing the shamanic altar, with four heaps of "spirit money" placed around it. The "spirit money" was

then burned so the messenger-pig could draw funds from these "spirit banks" to spend on celestial bureaucrats and divine hierarchy to facilitate the release of the addicts' souls. Also placed near the pig and burned were paper-cut effigies of the captive souls. Meanwhile another shaman, his face covered with a black veil, had mounted his "spirit horse" [bench] and started his shamanic journey to heaven in order to help retrieve the addicts' souls. For hours he continued "riding", hopping up and down on his bench, chanting in "shamanic language", accompanied by the gong-drum beat of his assistant. Sometimes he would jump and shout in order to "make thunder" and thereby scare evil spirits off his celestial path. Finally he jumped to the door, lying there as if struck down. At the oracle-determined moment the "palace" of the opium goddess was carried away to a hole dug at the camp fence where it was burned in a big bonfire together with the surrendered opium smoking utensils of the patients. It was said that as the smoke from this fire went up to heaven, so did the opium goddess together with her retinue and the implements of opium addiction. The charred remnants were covered with earth to "separate them from the world of the living". The ceremony was concluded by a festive communal meal in which the messenger-pig's cooked remains were consumed by shamans, patients and health staff.

In marked contrast to the general experience with purely Western-type opium detoxification and rehabilitation programmes among hilltribes populations, the programme with shamanic input at the Chiangkham refugee camp was showing unexpectedly high course completion rates (80%–90%). This demonstrates that the integration of shamanic practices in modern treatment programmes for drug dependence can make these much more effective if such practices are culture-congenial in a still tradition-directed population; just as substance addiction treatment programmes based on religious traditions and herbal medicine in Buddhist, Chinese and Islamic centres of South East Asia can also be highly effective (Jilek 1994).

Shamanic-Inspired Messianic Movements and Syncretistic Religion

What we heard from our informants in the refugee camps of Northern Thailand about the messianic *Chao Fa* movement among the Hmong had important characteristics in common with other shamanic-inspired messianic-nativistic movements (cf. Guariglia 1959; Lanternari 1963; Mühlmann 1964); features such as the prophecy of the redemption of a people from foreign oppression and the magic ritual of bullet proofing conducted by shamans. Examples are: In the late 19th century, the Prophet Dance among North American Indians of the Pacific Northwest that inspired the great Amerindian Ghost Dance movement which led to the Sioux outbreak against oppression by U.S. authorities in 1890 (Mooney 1896); the "Boxer" rebellion of 1900 against western domination in China (Bodin 1979); and the *maji-maji* (magic water) movement and uprising among Bantu tribes 1905–06 that threatened colonial rule in German East Africa (Götzen 1909).

Chao Fa is a reverential title used for Laotian and Thai royalty, signifying "Divine Lord". However, in Hmong usage, *Chao Fa* is synonymous with *huab tais ntuj*, the divine King of the Heaven, but can also stand for a messiah-like redeemer of the Hmong people, a messianic king or heroic warlord who will lead them to a life in freedom and plenty in a Hmong Realm in Laos and northern Vietnam. The idea of redemption of the Hmong people in such a promised land is not only the stuff of tribal legends but also of political propaganda; it has in more recent history been advanced by Hmong emigré leaders and at times been exploited by certain military and geopolitical interests. Hmong elders tell of an ancient "Hmong Kingdom" under the protection of *Chao Fa*, a "heavenly fighter". His general Joua Xue had supernatural powers and vanquished the Chinese Emperor's armies through his invulnerable soldiers who cut off enemy heads with magical daggers. Hmong uprisings against oppression by Chinese imperial authorities in past centuries were led by shamans who claimed to be divinely inspired. During the Hmong rebellions in southern China 1795–1806, a shamanic prophet named Long Lui Sheng proclaimed himself "King of Heaven". The main leader of the major Hmong uprising against French colonial authority in northern Indochina 1918–1921, Pa Chay of the Veu clan,

aimed at establishing his own kingdom. The Laotian Hmong saw in him the *Chao Fa,* the prophetic messiah who would free the Hmong from colonial rule and taxation, while the French referred to him as insane madman, and labelled his campaign "*guerre du fou*". He was an inspired visionary who climbed trees to receive orders directly from heaven. His warriors were said to be bullet-proofed by magical ritual. This insurrection was also called the "War of the Sorcerers" by the French as shamans played an important role and were able to extend their influence over the Hmong people (cf. Yang Dao 1975; Mottin 1980; Radley 1986). Hmong prophet-leaders were legitimized by the Sky God who revealed to them the "ancient Hmong script". The copy of a manuscript describing the symbolism of the Hmong temple in Chiangkham refugee camp and a certificate of friendship that we received from the temple chief, is written in this script which contains elements of European alphabets besides other signs. We were told that this script is from one to three thousand years old, "older than the Buddhist era", and that it originated in Mongolia, believed to be the ancestral land of the Hmong. It is said to have been brought from China to Laos at the end of the 18th century by Yang Shee Mee, a religious sage who "swallowed" a sacred scroll with the script before swimming across the Mekong river. Inspite of attempts by the rulers of Laos to suppress the ancient Hmong script it was "reborn" again through divine revelation to inspired Hmong leaders, last time to Yaj Chong Leu, who apparently devised the script in the 1960s. Yaj Chong Leu was a charismatic shaman who prophesied the imminent coming of the *Chao Fa* and started a militant messianic movement for a free Hmong homeland. This movement was not only against the pro-Soviet Pathet Lao but also against the Royal Lao Army and the CIA-supported hilltribes volunteers, so that he became a nuisance to the belligerent parties in Laos and was liquidated in 1973. After the Vietnamese invasion of Laos, the *Chao Fa* movement was revitalized as a secret warrior-society of Hmong men who vowed to fight for their promised land and to not cut their hair until they obtained a free Hmong homeland. In traditional black attire they fought bravely, mostly with traditional weapons, crossbow and sword. However, in their secret training camps on both sides of the Thai–Laotian border they were outfitted with 1960s-style Chinese People's Liberation Army uniforms and with modern weaponry from Chinese

and Western arsenals, hiding their bundled hair under Mao caps. Candidates for the *Chao Fa* movement were initiated by magic ceremonies. These included a "bullet proofing" ritual in which a shaman sprinkled the future warriors with "fixed" (magically treated) water from clear mountain streams. They then drank this "fixed" water, which was sometimes also magically "boiled" by inserting in the cup a piece of a "sacred stone" found in Laos. They vowed to fight for *Chao Fa* with the movement's flag tied around the chest protecting them from bullets but not from hand weapons and only in front; as brave warriors they would never show the back to the enemy. The *Chao Fa* flags we saw showed on a red background variations of a yellow sun or the white sun symbol of Laos, faced by seated figurines, hands raised in reverence, surmounted by yellow stars.

Chao Fa warriors were sometimes bound to each other by "blood pacts" which meant that if one died fighting the other would have to seek death in action. The *Chao Fa* paramilitary units were led by a Hmong officer well known in Northern Thailand, a former captain in the Hmong forces of the Royal Lao Army who in the 1970s split from General Vang Pao's command. His charismatic reputation as a magically bullet-proofed hero was based on the valiant stand he made against numerically superior Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces at Mt. Pah Mun where he allegedly "killed 40 enemies singlehandedly while standing up in a rain of bullets". In their mountain hideouts in Laos, militant adherents of the *Chao Fa* movement erected "highrise houses" built on tall wooden structures. Like small temples they contained altars and sacred paraphernalia; serving no military purpose but rather the communication with the spirit world in order to attract help from the *Chao Fa* and from the supreme Sky God by appropriate ritual invocations. In the Laotian civil war, help for beleaguered Hmong groups came from the sky in the form of U.S. airborne supplies which gave rise to ideas of supernatural provision similar to those propagated by Cargo Cult prophets we encountered while working in Papua New Guinea.

Members of the *Chao Fa* movement, while sharing the traditional shamanic belief system of the Hmong people, also subscribed to a syncretic religion in which prayers are offered, kneeling with folded hands in Buddhist fashion, to the Sky God *(ee bee)* and to the divine King of Heaven *(huab tais ntuj)* who is often considered identical with

the *Chao Fa*. In one of the training camps for *Chao Fa* soldiers, religious services were conducted in front of an open-air altar similar to those erected in the Hmong temples at Chiangkham and Ban Vinai refugee camps. The temples in the refugee camps were run by Hmong priest-teachers called *shao*, attired in traditional black Hmong garb and cap, who knew and taught the "ancient Hmong script", a writing system different from other current Asian scripts which is also used for secret communications between *Chao Fa* leaders. The chief priest at the Hmong temple in Ban Vinai gave us a copy of the textbook used for teaching this "ancient script". Hmong priest-teachers (*shao*) are distinct from shamans (*neeb*) and communicate in their dreams not with shamanic spirits but with the Sky God and pray to Him and to the *Chao Fa*. They were said to be inspired by the *Chao Fa* to advise the leaders of the movement. The influence of the Thai host country's Theravada Buddhism was apparent in the form, if not in the meaning, of temple monuments and symbols. At the Ban Vinai camp temple, statues of a Buddha-like figure represented *chong fa theng*, First Hmong Man in Heaven; a standing female figure, *via pa tia*, First Hmong Woman in Heaven; the figure of a bemedalled general to some embodied *va chee chou chee*, great Hmong hero of the past, to others the *Chao Fa*. The monument of a huge black pig was erected in honour of the ancestral boar of Hmong origin myths and also the sacrificial "messenger to heaven" of Hmong shamanic rituals. In the centre room of the temple the Sky God was sitting on a platform inscribed with "ancient" Hmong letters and blessed the worshippers with raised right arm. He was well guarded on each side by a dragon spirit in the shape of the mythical *naga* serpent of Thai-Lao tradition. Other rooms contained priestly and shamanic paraphernalia and also ancient Hmong string instruments. The chief priest of the temple at Chiangkham camp carried an official seal featuring the three-headed rhinoceros, reminiscent of the three-headed white elephant, *eravan*, of Thai and Lao royal symbols. The priest presented us with the copy of a Hmong scripture containing allegoric and symbolic images of the "Hmong Buddha religion", including "stamps for military use" and "spirit flags" depicting the three-headed rhinoceros. In the main room of the Chiangkham temple stood an elaborate altar representing the palace of the Sky God. The god was seated on a pedestal in Buddha-pose, flanked by his assistants and guarded by three *naga* serpents

forming a protective circle around the divinity. The twelve animals of the Hmong calendar with flowers and candles surrounded the basis while the winged Thunder Spirit who traditionally lends curing powers to Hmong shamanesses, crowned on top of the altar, indicative of the healing function of the temple. Attended by many Hmong refugees, not only by members of the *Chao Fa* movement, the Hmong temples in the camps were important centres serving the ethno-psychological identification of an uprooted people.

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Fig. 1. Hmong shaman riding on his "spirit horse" (bench) to the Otherworld, holding his "scissors" which serve as soul and spirit catcher.

Fig. 2. Hmong shaman casting buffalo horn oracle in front of the service altar on which his finger ring bells are placed.

Fig. 3. Hmong shaman's sword for the decapitation of evil spirits.

Fig. 4. Hmong Thunder Spirit shamaness riding on her "spirit horse" to the Otherworld.

Fig. 5. Hmong Thunder Spirit shamaness giving "strengthening" treatment to newborn baby.

Fig. 6. Author Louise Jilek-Aall toasting a shamaness honoured at a festive meal. In the background the permanent altar of the shamaness.

Fig. 7. Author Wolfgang Jilek with the Hmong shamans' team at the IRC Opium Detox and Rehabilitation Centre, Chiangkham refugee camp.

Fig. 8. "Palace" of the Opium Goddess with opium smoking utensils surrendered by the addicts.

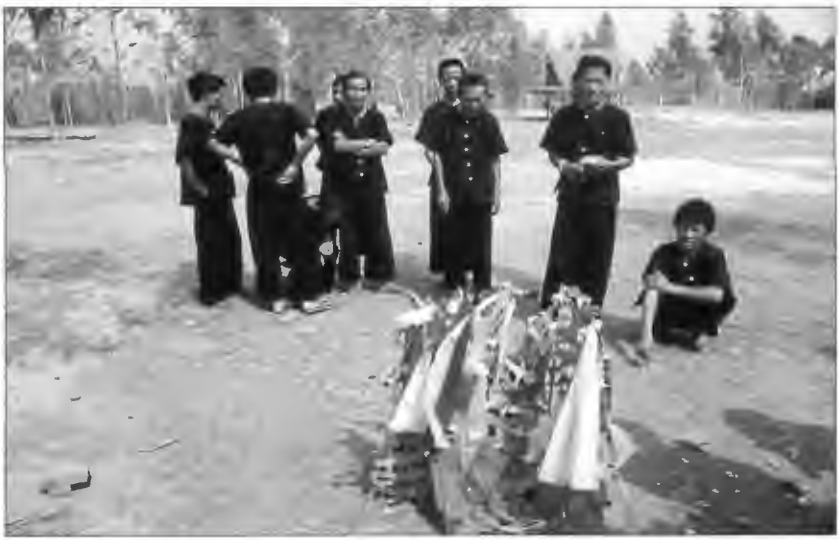

Fig. 9. Addicts taking a solemn abstention vow in front of the "palace" of the Opium Goddess.

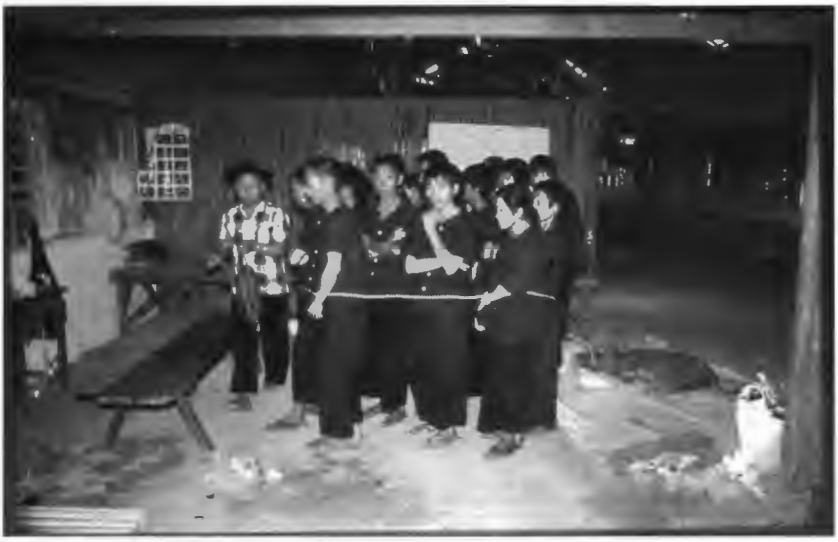

Fig. 10. Hmong shaman ties a group of opium addicts to the sacrificial "messenger" pig.

Fig. 11. The sacrificed "messenger" pig with "banks of spirit money" for celestial disbursement, accompanied by Hmong shaman travelling to the Otherworld.

Fig. 12. Unit of Chao-Fa fighters with their bullet-protecting flag.

Fig. 13. Chief priest of the Hmong temple, Ban Vinai refugee camp, saluting the Sky God guarded by dragon spirits.

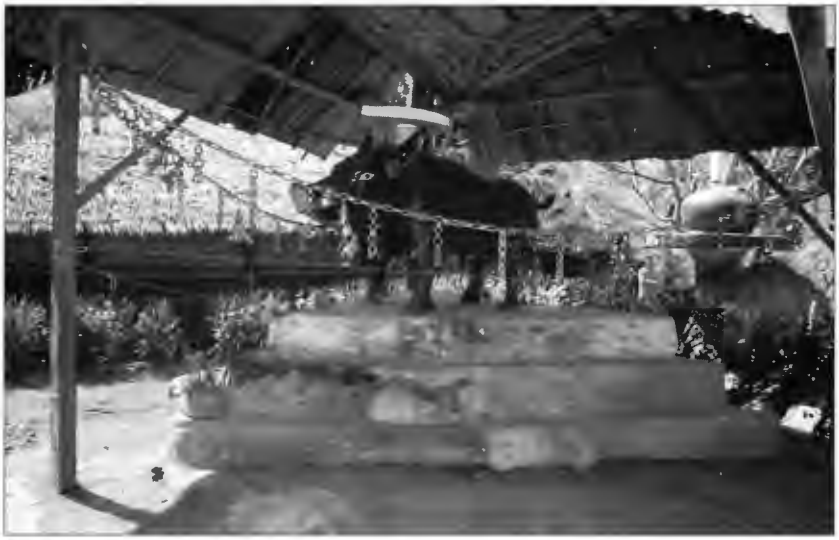

Fig. 14. Monument of the ancestral black boar at the Hmong temple, Ban Vinai refugee camp.

Fig. 15. Hmong scripture with "spirit flags" and official seals depicting the three-headed rhinoceros; Hmong temple, Ban Vinai refugee camp.

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An Old Shaman in a Tile-Roofed House

LAUREL KENDALL NEW YORK

This is the story of two encounters with an old shaman in the city of Seoul. On the first occasion, the setting of a decrepit old house enhances the shaman's self-image as the last bearer of distinctive oral and ritual traditions. Four years later, the house has been replaced by a modern "traditional" dwelling and the shaman is seen to be a self-conscious performer for students of folklore. The moral of the tale is in the ability of shamans and spirits to adapt to a changing landscape, even when adaptation means claiming the mantle of "authenticity."

This essay falls somewhere between a field narrative and a fairy tale. It is a field narrative insofar as what I have to say comes from field notes, transcripts, and memory. The fieldworker's objectivity is, of course, imperfect, but I am not consciously embroidering, or elaborating, or making it up. But even as it was happening I was reminded of a particular genre of "fairy tale," those attributed to Buddhists or Taoists, where illusions are at play and a lesson may be learned in confronting them. Obliquely, it is an essay about time and the wisdom it sometimes imparts, and as such, it seems a fitting offering on the occasion of Mihály Hoppál's sixtieth birthday.

In the summer of 1994 I was in Seoul visiting commercial shrines (*kuttang*), places that rent out rooms to shamans for their more elaborate and percussive rituals. I wanted to follow up some hunches as to why shaman rituals remain a vibrant part of the Korean urban scene and how the shaman's world now differs from what I had observed during my first fieldwork in the 1970s. Ms. Kim, my assistant in these efforts, was an amateur folklore buff with a keen interest in the shaman world and in old Seoul traditions. When a knowledgeable shrine-keeper told

us about a venerable shrine in the southeastern corner of the city, we were both keen to find the place.

We took the subway to an urban neighborhood that had been a rural village not so long ago. The student we queried on leaving the station seemed to know exactly what we were talking about and told us that he had grown up in the immediate neighborhood of the shrine. He had vivid memories of the shamans and their *kut*. But when we tried to follow his directions, asking others along the way, the shrine seemed to retreat from us like a mirage. Some people nodded with recognition, but their directions sent us down blind alleyways or to a recently constructed apartment building where an inspirational diviner had set out her shingle. Some people gave us only blank stares when we asked about "a place where shamans perform *kut*." In desperation, we went to the district office to consult their neighborhood map, our queries drew a gaggle of old men. Ah yes, they affirmed, there has been a shrine here for three or four centuries. A scholar built it to honor his daughter who had died before her wedding ("and to placate an undoubtedly mischievous virgin ghost" I thought). In the past, the old men had all participated in the annual community ritual for the tutelary god in the shrine, but the neighborhood does not do this anymore; the shaman has been left to honors the tutelary on her own. The old men pointed to a hillside path and told us that the shrine was just below the old people's home.

We followed the winding lane through a neighborhood of modest houses, none of them more than twenty years old. Then, just below the summit, we found a crumbling tile-roofed house set apart in some tall grass and surrounded by a wall, a house from another time. The big wooden gate was marked with the *taeguk* symbol, the circular swirl of red, blue, and yellow that signifies the cosmos and marks a shrine. This must be it. We knocked and shouted, but the place seemed to be deserted. A passage from Kim Tongni's novella, *Portrait of a Shaman*, ran through both of our heads, "...an antiquated tile-roofed house with one of the upper corners already crushed out of shape. On the roof tiles mushrooms sprouted dark green, yielding a sickening smell... The house was like a haunted den, long deserted by human inhabitants—deserted perhaps over scores of years." (Kim: 60–61).

We climbed up the path to the old people's home, and a few of the residents, pale from living indoors, tottered out to inspect us. One particularly spry old woman, her wispy hair dyed a flaming orange, danced out creakily from the dark interior. She gestured with a wave of an aqua paper fan as if she were some aged mountain fairy pointing the way, "The front gate is over there."

We went back and pounded on the gate, the right gate this time, and our knock was answered. A pleasant-faced woman led us inside to meet "Mother," the shaman shrine-keeper. The airy and immaculate interior of the house belied its decaying shell. The woodwork was polished, the floors sparkled with varnish, there was fresh white paper on the door lattices and a tidy garden at the back of the house. It was the sort of house that well-to-do Seoulites might have lived in thirty years ago, a house that might have been built in the early years of this century and then upgraded with modern plumbing and appliances. The spirits were housed in spacious chambers off to the side.

The shrine-keeper, a gracious woman of almost sixty years, was, like her house, vintage but well-groomed. Her round face was still handsome and she wore her hair in an immaculate old-fashioned chignon. Her wrinkles only crinkled into view when she expressed frustration at the current state of the shaman world, and she would do this often during our conversation. She was charming and intelligent and seemed happy to sit and chat with two visiting researchers on a quiet midsummer afternoon, surrounded by her apprentice "spirit daughters," all dressed as she was in loose and comfortable house clothing.

No, this was not a *kuttang*, a shrine that rented space to shamans, and that explained some of the confusion that had greeted our queries on the street. This was the shrine of a powerful local tutelary god, and it had been here for centuries. The resident spirit was a princess of the ancient Kija Chosŏn Kingdom who fled here when the kingdom fell more than two millennia ago. The shrine-keeper speculates that this powerful lady would have wrecked a series of disasters on the community until her will was heeded and her worship established. How different from the pathetic dead daughter that the old men had conjured for a shrine spirit! She was a formidable spirit. The Manchu invaders of the early 16th passed the village by as though it were invisible, owing to

the tutelary goddesses' protection.[1] When People's Army soldiers had commandeered the shrine during the Korean War, the all got diarrhea and promptly fled the place.

The shrine has been designated as a "district cultural treasure" (*tong munhwaje*), a local version of a national monument. The shrine keeper's immediate family have maintained the shrine and provided it with shamans for four generations. Her grandmother, whom she honors as a guardian spirit, was patronized by Queen Om, the second royal consort of Korea's last King. No, the women of her family were not hereditary shamans; they were chosen by the spirits (she uses the Korean folklorists' terms for hereditary [*sesŭp*] versus spiritually-inspired [*kangsin*] shamans). Her mother and grandmother had married in as shamans. She herself had been chosen by the spirits when she was only 7 years old and had been initiated in her early teens. Her own grandmother was her teacher and had instructed her in all of the old ways.

She evokes grandmother time to recall a purer tradition that was practiced in the twilight years of the Chosŏn dynasty; but Korea had been annexed into the Japanese Empire a full generation before her own birth. With a pained expression, she complains that shamans today think of their work merely as a means of livelihood. They no longer tend their shrines with a proper attitude of respect. A shaman should serve the spirits first (converting her earnings into offerings and ceremonies to honor her spirits), and live as best she can off of the remains. She deplored the current tendency among shamans to style themselves as "teacher" (*sŏnsaeng*) and "disciple" (*cheja*) or to call themselves *posal* after female Buddhist temple keepers. "In the Chosŏn period it's true that shamans were oppressed by Confucian ideology, but those who knew us used terms of respect. In dynastic times, they would say

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[1] She gives a complex reason for the tutelary god's effectively repelling the Manchus. The tutelary god was a refugee princess who fled to this place with the fall of the ancient (legendary) kingdom of Kija Chosŏn, purported to have fallen two centuries before the common era. The shaman repeats popular historical understandings of a "Korean" kingdom that once dominated Manchuria, asserting that for this reason, her spirit was effective over a barbarian army, the putative former subjects of her house.

'*Kijanim*[2] has arrived' or call us '*sabuin.*' Male shamans were not called *paksa,* but *kyŏksa,* and among ourselves, we called them *tŏrŏni.*" We scribbled in our notebooks. She smiled and told us more.

Several distinguished professors of folklore had already been at her door. The names she cited were familiar to us. When she read what one of them had written, she was horrified to see how he had distorted her words. She advises a local folklore group interested in preserving the traditions of her shrine, but their approach also displeases her. Her vexation with those who are ostensibly dedicated to recording her tradition compounds her self-image as the last of her line. We asked why she thought the old ways had been lost. "It's because the world has become a mercenary place and everything has been simplified, and because too many foreign religions have come in. It takes a great effort to do this work, and modern people want things to be easy. [Ritual procedures] are abbreviated...things that should take an hour or more are done in thirty minutes...and then, over time, things are lost. When those who are my age are gone, it will all be gone." She speaks at length about an elaborate ritual for calling in the house tutelary. She can no longer perform it because there is no one who can serve as a performance partner and match her chant with the proper refrains. She speaks of the great body of knowledge that the illiterate "spirit mothers" of the past transmitted to their apprentices by word of mouth. "[The spirit daughters] had to commit it all to memory. How hard it was to learn that way. The old people in the past must have been very wise and had sharp memories." She faults young shamans who seem to think that they can get by on their powers of inspiration alone without fully mastering the teachings of a senior shaman. She acknowledges that no one is willing to endure a long apprenticeship today, living under the harsh tutelage of a spirit mother for several years and docilely turning their earnings over to her.

These observations are not unique. Any shaman over the age of fifty who has been practicing for more than twenty years can be counted on to express similar sentiments. I had been hearing these things for several

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[2] The derivation of this term is unclear. She attributes it to a shaman spirit, a Princess of the ancient royal family of "Ki." I have heard it used among older shamans, but not by their clients.

years. Have spirit mothers always felt that their own apprentices have it easy relative to the ordeals they endured in their own apprenticeships? It was the setting that gave the shrine keeper's remarks a special poignancy, the old shrine and the aging shaman's deep-rooted connection to it. It had been a long time since I had sat in a tile-roofed house with lattice and paper doors. Perhaps, at middle age, I was nostalgic for the Seoul I had first known in the early 1970s, or for the Seoul I had never seen because by the early 1970s, so much had been bulldozed away.

Korea is a place of displacement; few adults live where they were born, and old tile-roofed houses are found in artificially preserved "Folk Villages." The shrine keeper's own remembered neighborhood landscape included other shrines that had disappeared completely or were not adequately maintained. In fact, this house, with its old-fashioned gate and decrepit tile roof, was only fifty years old. As the neighborhood was built up after the Liberation (1945), the shrine was moved to what was then a desolate hillside. In the shrine keeper's youth, wolves sometimes appeared at the summit. Her grandmother had remembered another move, early in this century, when the shrine had been displaced by a rail line, a fitting image of modernity's assault on local religion. The village was absorbed into a burgeoning urban neighborhood, the original inhabitants surrounded by newcomers who lacked the same deep-rooted connections to the place. The annual shrine ritual that had spiritually fortified the community through its veneration of a most Durkheimean tutelary spirit lapsed as the old residents died or moved away.

Now the shrine itself was in danger. Urban planners had designated the area as park land. All of the buildings in the neighborhood were to be torn down. The shrine keeper had already received three eviction notices but was fighting fiercely for the right to remain. She had nowhere else to go. There was no open land left in the vicinity to house a shrine. She saw the threatened eviction as of a piece with all of the forces that had assaulted her world over the course of the twentieth century: the Christians who called her practices "uncivilized," the successive governments—beginning with the Japanese[3]—who had initiated anti-

[3] In 1896, cheered on by reformist elements, the Seoul police arrested shamans and destroyed shrines; this was probably the first explicitly pro-"modernist" campaign against shamans (Walraven 1995: 110–111). Even in dynastic times, some officials

superstition campaigns against the shamans, and the materialism and impatience of the current moment. She was fierce, but also pessimistic, the last uncompromising loyal retainer of a dying tradition.

I was not seduced by her claims to "authenticity." I do not hold, as many students of Korean shamans do, that an older shamanic practice is necessarily "truer," "better," or "more authentic." I have always done my fieldwork in the present tense, considering "tradition" as a moving target. What intrigued me was her tenacity. My fascination began with the shrine itself, as a material representation of spiritual fixity, of gods in place protecting designated territories. This was not the world of quicksilver late twentieth century urban Korea where I knew of local shrines and shrine-keepers only in remnant forms of village rituals I had seen or read about in books of folklore. The encounter brought these things to life in a moment of danger, in the pained expression on the shrine-keeper's face when she spoke of ritual knowledge that would not outlive her own memory. If not "better," "truer," or "more authentic," the shrine keeper was a well-maintained and elegant antique. The threatened and already crumbling house was an appropriate metaphor for the shrine keeper herself, and I suppose I did romanticize them both.

When I returned to Korea, four years later, Ms. Kim and I went back to the neighborhood and looked for the shrine. We had the same trouble finding it. We half suspected that it had been torn down. But this time, we had the shrine keeper's name card, and when familiar landmarks eluded us, we placed a telephone call. She answered, seemed happy to hear from us, and sent a grand-daughter down the path to meet us and guide us to the house. The neighborhood had not become a park but it had changed completely.

The path was lined with fancy town houses and apartments, all newly built. The old tile-roofed shrine was gone, replaced by a modern reconstruction in traditional style, with shining blond wood and glazed blue tiles. It resembled a fancy restaurant specializing in traditional Korean cuisine. The shrine rooms where she housed her spirits had been colorfully painted in the manner of a Buddhist temple. The house

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challenged the efficacy of specific spirits honored in particular local shrines but only in rare instances of intellectual speculation was the very existence of spirits called into question (Walraven 1996, Yi 1976).

interior was still meticulously maintained but with some additions of western furniture including a Formica-topped kitchen table with vinyl-upholstered chairs and a sofa. But the shrine-keeper had kept the earthen storage jars that so many households have discarded when refrigeration and commercially processed foods and condiments rendered them unnecessary. Hers had become antiques, relics from her grandmother's time, displayed on an open-air storage platform as if they were still in use.

The shrine keeper seemed renovated too. Her face was fuller and she seemed to be in a happier mood, less inclined to crinkle her face into a pained expression. Had we visited her before on an off day or during a bought of ill health? Had she been tense over the threatened eviction? Even now, the issue of the proposed park has not yet been completely resolved, she tells us, but she and her neighbors would not have made such serious investments in construction if they had any real fear of eviction.

She tells us again how the shrine had stood since the Imjin wars of the late 16th century and the Manchu invasions of the 17th. She elaborates on her past complaints about women who are initiated as shamans without experiencing a strong calling from the spirits. A true initiate should be desperate, have no other recourse, feel that nothing else will work out for them. She says again what other shamans have said, adding the proverb that a destined shaman is the sort of person who, "If they vended salt, it would rain and if they vended flour the wind would blow. You haven't heard that before, have you?" Beaming as we write these words into our notebooks, she continues to dispense bits of shaman lore, like sweets to children. "In the old days, when the grandmothers went to pray on mountains, there could not be so much as one scorched particle in the steamed rice they offered to the spirits." She laments again the loss of old ways, complaining that people become Christian to avoid the bother of honoring the ancestors, that people have become too materialistic, and that the Korean *hanbok* has disappeared from everyday wear. Today, her laments for the past ring hollow as we chat together in her totally renovated house.

When she speaks again of how all of the old and beautiful shaman customs are disappearing, and how rituals are abbreviated or not performed at all, it sounds pro forma. She describes how the *kut* of the

Seoul region have been saturated with the practices of shamans from other parts of Korea and enumerates distinctive differences in regional style in the manner of a Korean folklore text. She is now more tolerant of scholars studying folklore and recording folksongs; they are more committed to preserving her tradition than are her own disciples.

When she sees us out at the gate, she affirms that as a true Korean *mudang,* she is not like the *posal*, the inspirational diviners who are possessed by child spirits and "scream out insults at everybody." She says, "We used to be called *kija.* Next time I'll tell you all about it." Our exit line makes a full circle back to where our conversation had began four years before. Walking down the path, Ms. Kim and I allow ourselves to feel let down. What had seemed last time like an earnest voice from a disappearing tradition now resembles a fixed patter, polished in conversations with others like ourselves. "When shamans sit to long with folklorists, they lose their spiritual energy," Ms. Kim observes.

I experienced these two visits as an old East-Asian folktale motif in reverse. In stories, the deluded person awakens to discover that the enchanted palace is nothing more than a crumbling ruin. In my story, disenchantment occurred when the crumbling ruin was transformed into a comfortable and somewhat ostentatious modernized "traditional" Korean house. I realized that the old house had thoroughly colored my view of the shrine keeper. Who in 1990s Seoul would live such a place? They must, somehow, be of another time, or at least fiercely loyal to it. But she had wanted a convenient kitchen after all. Can I begrudge her that? Perhaps the old house had lived past its time only because of her uncertainty about the public park. I had confused an old house with rootedness, fixity, but this had never been the case. The shrine was a portable entity. The spirits, their trappings, and the traditions of venerating them had moved from place to place; this was part of the history she had shared with us. The new traditionalist structure was the third new shrine in the 20th century. The "old house" that had so seduced me was no older than half a century. The shrine keeper's claim that her shrine was a "cultural treasure" (*munhwaje*) had nothing to do with the physical building but with the spirits installed inside it, and with the procedures she used to honor them. She had rebuilt the shrine as a structure that signified "tradition," and herself into a self-conscious repository of old customs.

In the end, shine keeper and the shrine were part of the fluid landscape that I had been studying all along. Where intellectual views and popular culture have made the *mudang* an icon of a distinctively Korean past, it is perhaps inevitable that some shamans will also obligingly present themselves within the trope of a vanishing authenticity. I have described this encounter in fairy tale mode to suggest one such shaman's powers of enchantment.

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Fig 1. Before 1994. Photo: Laurel Kendall.

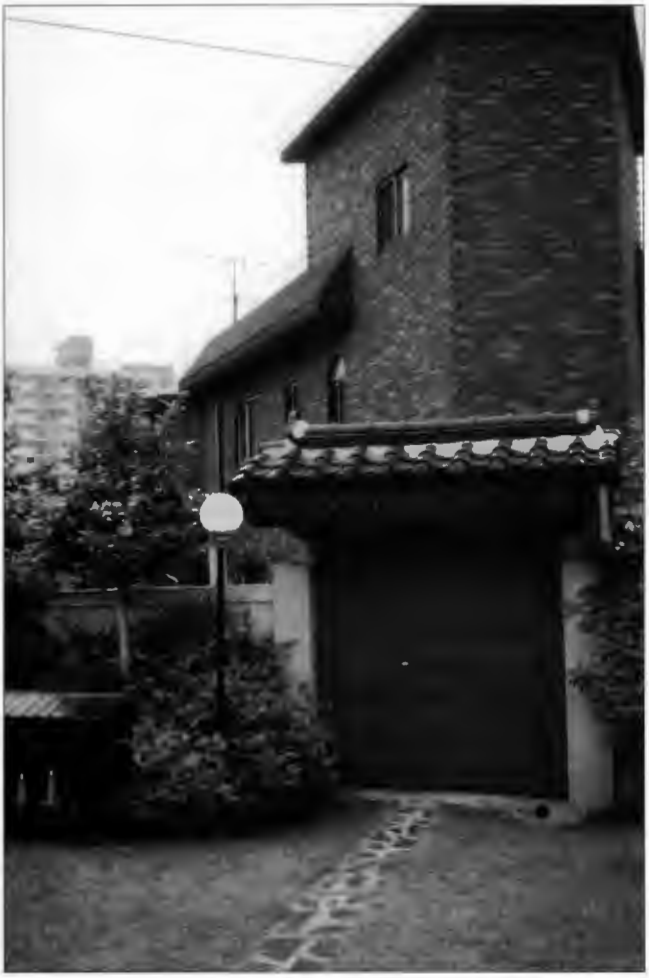

Fig 2. After 1994. Photo: Laurel Kendall.

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The Shaman's Gift

DANIEL KISTER SEOUL

The shamanic gift is commonly seen as consisting of unusual parapsychological powers. But a Korean shaman's gift to her community consists mainly in the wonder of her life as one chosen by the gods and in the life-enhancing effect that her rites have on believer's lives through the aid of more ordinary powers that she shares with other psycho-therapists and artists. Rites of family healing, village rites, and rites for the dead exemplify her psychological and artistic powers.

A shamanist initiation rite was sponsored several years ago by a Korean mother for her daughter. A married woman in her early thirties, the daughter had experienced several years of physical illness, mental difficulties, and marital problems. She and her husband came to live in separation, the husband taking custody of their two children. Finally, she consulted a shaman—in Korea called *mudang* and usually a woman. The shaman judged that the young woman's problems were due to the "spirit illness"; and she said that she could be cured only by having an initiation rite, or "Rite for the God's Descent," and becoming a *mudang.* The woman's mother said that no parent wants an offspring to become a *mudang.* For in Korea, a shaman has a low social status and leads a hard life. The mother recognized, however, that this was her daughter's fate. It could no longer be resisted. In the course of the rite, the Mountain Spirit, through the believed mediumship of the officiating shaman, began to weep for the daughter. The spirit foresaw the hardships of the life that she was now entering in his service and in the service of persons in distress.

In the view of the community she serves, the hard life of a shaman is a gift. Painful though it is, the spirit illness is a gift bestowed on the *mudang* by the gods and spirits for her own inner growth; and the life

of the *mudang* as a whole is a gift bestowed by the gods on her community for the enhancement of their lives. Concentrating as it does on the extraordinary powers that a shaman may manifest while in an altered state of consciousness, much research on shamanism sees the shamanic gift mainly in terms of unusual parapsychological powers. In Korea, however, neither shamans nor those whom they serve are concerned about the state of consciousness in which a *mudang* acts or speaks in a rite; and it would be a mistake to limit a Korean *mudang's* gifts to whatever wondrous physical or psychic powers she has in themselves. In the worldview of shamanist believers, whatever unusual powers a shaman may have are seen as a valued gift because they have a share, on the one hand, in the wonder of the shaman's life as one chosen out by the gods and, on the other, in the life-enhancing effect of the rites in their lives through the aid of her more ordinary psychotherapeutical, priestly, and artistic abilities.

During an interlude in the Rite for the God's Descent described above, I asked the officiating *mudang*, a sturdy, kindly grandmother in her late sixties, how she feels about her life and abilities as a shaman. She replied that, despite the god's tears for the young initiate, she herself has no regrets about her life. She admits that she sometimes dreads "riding the blades," the dramatic feat that Seoul-area shamans do as a wondrous sign of a spirit's power. This feat consists of dance-like movements performed barefoot on sharp straw-chopper blades, and she says that she has been cut while performing it when someone present is unclean. More taxing than this extraordinary feat, however, is the ordinary daily inconveniences that she experiences from the fact that her life is always at the disposal of the spirits and of persons in need of the spirits' help. She says that she must sometimes suddenly set aside her own plans in order to serve the spirits and perform a rite, in Korean *kut*, for a person in need. Nonetheless, she seems at peace with her life. Every morning she prays for those who seek her aid to "Grandfather," the god she worships at an altar in her home. She is a well established shaman, with more than sixty "spirit daughters" or "spirit sons" whom she has initiated and apprenticed as "baby *mudang*" and for whom her life has been a gift. She has been appointed, moreover, as the preserver of one form of shaman *kut* by the Korean government.

I asked the *mudang* what abilities she seeks to cultivate in the training she gives to the shamans she has initiated. She said simply that she tells them to use polite language when speaking the spirits' words to those offering the rites. The gods have a status that is superior to that of the persons they address; but when speaking in the role of the gods, it is not good etiquette, she said, for shamans to use the linguistic forms that the Korean language provides for speaking to persons of a lower status.

I recently asked another shaman, a refined grandmother in her seventies, about her life and the special powers of a *mudang* as she sees them. Responding initially more as a mother than as a shaman, she talked of the satisfaction she experiences because of her five children. She then said that she has been successful in the large number of clients she has had during the forty-five years of her profession as a shaman. She is satisfied with her life as a shaman because, as an instrument of the spirits, she has contributed to the well-being of many families and the health of many individuals. She went on to say that she herself has never "ridden the blades," and she added that these days ridding the blades does not amount to much of an extraordinary feat because the cloths used to bind the blades cushion the blades' sharpness. For her, a shaman's special powers consist of two things. On the one hand, an accomplished shaman is a person through whom the gods and ancestral spirits truly speak. On the other, she or he is a person with a good theatrical sense. "It's like a stage," she said. A *mudang* must be skilled in using apt words and vivid actions to bring the spirits to dramatic life before the eyes of those present.

The Korean Shaman's Initiation Process

Some *mudang* acquire their powers and skills by heredity and training as members of a *mudang* family. But those whose lives stand out most clearly as a gift and a wonder are persons who, like the two women just mentioned, become a shaman through the initiatory experience of the "spirit illness." The social alienation and the psychic dissociation of the spirit illness fit the classic shamanist model. The afflicted person cannot eat normally and may experience weakness, pain, or weight loss, but for no diagnosable reason. The person may suffer a disruption

of family ties. She or he has dreams of contact with gods and spirits and may become unable to distinguish dreams from reality. She may wander in the mountains, sometimes finding there, it is said, the buried tools or clothes of a deceased *mudang*. The first mentioned *mudang* above found a rock that she had seen in a dream. She preserves this rock on the altar of her home as something especially sacred.

Those afflicted by the spirit illness may continue in this state for many years. As Rhea A. White has said of anyone suffering from an anomalous experience, they may wonder "'Why did this happen to *me*?'—as if the universe had it in for them" (in Krippner 1997: 94). They may suspect that their affliction marks a call to become a shaman, but they then in no way see this call as a gift. They resist the call as a fate worse than death. Finally, however, they realize that the only way to be cured is to submit to destiny and undergo the initiatory Rite for the God's Descent, or *Naerim-kut*.

The Rite for the God's Descent is commonly held at a shaman shrine in the mountains. It progresses from initial purification rites to a sequence of prayers to the gods, the sharing of food, and various symbolic actions. The ritual loosening of knots tied in a long cloth symbolically releases the burden of the initiate's past. The shaking of a tree branch held by the initiate is believed to manifest the god's presence. A pig may be sacrificed. The initiate may seek out garments of the gods from among ritual clothes hung out at the *kut* site. She may manifest the power of her god by riding the blades while dressed in the costume of the Spirit General. For the first time in her life, she is thought to speak the words of the god.

The Rite for the God's Descent brings to a head all the suffering of the initiate's past, but it can be an exhilarating experience. For one new *mudang*, a comely young woman in her late twenties, the experience of the initiatory rite was, she said, like being purified of all that had burdened her for many years. When she experienced that the god had descended to her, her face was radiant with joy. For her, that experience was certainly felt as a wondrous gift. For a man in his forties, the rite restored a sense of inner manly confidence that he had lost years before. As a young boy, he had gotten separated from his parents. When he finally came to know of his family and sought them out at his grandfather's former home, his grandparents and parents had all died. During

one part of the rite, he was believed to have an exchange with his parents through the *mudang* and thus found release from decades of grief and longing. Awkward though he was as a fledgling *mudang*, when he stood high on the straw-chopper blades proclaiming he was the Spirit General, he displayed to himself, his wife, and all present a newly found manly power and god-given inner freedom. The story of his life suddenly took a new turn. The dramatic display brought to a head years of suffering and personal insufficiency in a public sign that the gods were at work in his life, calling him to personal fulfillment in a life dedicated to the needs of his community.

The experience of the spirit illness gets transmuted into a gift for the shaman's community to a great extent in the life-potentiating power it gives her or him as sympathetic healer. The intent to live in accordance with this power and accept the spirits' call to dedicate her life as a gift to persons in distress is well expressed in the solemn promise that a new *mudang* may make to the officiating shaman in a Seoul-area initiation *kut*:

Officiant: What will you become?
Initiate: I will become the people's *mudang*.
Officiant: What will you do as the people's *mudang*?
Initiate: I will live for those who are mistreated and victimized, for those suffering pain, and for those who feel anxious and oppressed. (Quoted from Kim I. 1986: 40)

The experience of the spirit illness gets transmuted into a gift for the community, too, in the expansion it can give rise to in the community's mental horizons. On the one hand, the anomalous, unsought character of the spirit illness gives evidence to the community that human life is open to the possibility of interaction with the world of the gods and ancestral spirits. On the other, the dramatic change in the initiate that can occur in the Rite for the God's Descent gives evidence that human life is by no means the never-ending cycle of pain and distress that Koreans are prone to see it as. Life is open to liberating change.

The spirit illness and the whole initiatory process can explained in terms of the psychological dynamics through which an anomalous experience can become what White calls an "exceptional human experience" or EHE:

> Some who have an anomalous experience feel singled out by it in a personal way. At the least, the experience seems personally very special and meaningful. This may be the primary distinction between an EHE and an anomalous experience... Those who respond in a life-potentiating way are bolstered by this feeling of being singled out (although they may well be frightened by it as well) and weave it into their life narrative... The main difference between an EHE and a form of mental illness is their life-potentiating aftereffects. If they are life-enhancing, lead to a fuller life, and do not harm others, they can be viewed as a form of increased mental health rather than as a product of mental illness. (in Krippner 1997: 93–94)

White's psychological schema provides a framework within which scholars can understand the dynamics of a Korean shaman's initiatory process. The *kut* community, however, understand these dynamics in terms of the workings of the gods and ancestral spirits. The two explanations are not mutually exclusive. They may very well both be correct.

When a shaman dramatizes the spirits' power and presence in a *kut*, those watching may wonder whether she speaks or acts through the power of a spirit or out of her own skills in play-acting or sleight of hand. It is clear, however, that the anomalous experience of the spirit illness is not play-acting. It gives evidence to the believing mind that a god or spirit is truly at work in her life. These days, some persons choose to become a *mudang*; but the fact that the person afflicted by the spirit illness does not normally choose to become a shaman gives evidence that she has been chosen out by the spirits. That a person does not normally choose, but is chosen, is essential for a proper understanding of the *mudang's* life as gift. A self-appointed shaman cannot serve as a sign of the presence of the spirits in this radical sense.

The dreams and hallucinations that may accompany the spirit illness provide reinforcement in the mind of the shaman of the reality of the working of the spirits in her life and allow her in turn to reinforce the community's belief in the spirits' presence in their lives. At the same time, however, in the Rite for the God's Descent it is the community's belief in the gods that reinforces the shaman's belief in the work of the gods in her life. Robert R. Wilson, in *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*, has stressed that shamans and other persons who serve as intermediaries with supernatural beings have a role only within a society or

sector of society that believes that those beings "can influence earthly affairs and can in turn be directly influenced by human agents" (1980: 29). The shaman initiate has special experiences and may have special powers, but these are meaningless without the corresponding faith experience and power of belief of her community. In the Rite for the God's Descent, as in all *kut* activity, there is a symbiotic relationship between the shaman's experiences and powers and the religious experience and power of belief of her people. The Rite for the God's Descent no doubt cures to a great extent by allowing the initiate to see the painful years of the spirit illness in terms of the beliefs of her community as a gift from the gods for the benefit of the community. It is the power of the community's belief more than any extraordinary power of the officiating *mudang* that brings about her cure. The community's belief in the work of the spirits provides a narrative context and religious world-view that allows the initiate to accept what was previously felt to be a dreaded fate as a blessing. The fact that the term to describe the activity of "shamanism" derives from the term used to describe the performer of this activity, the shaman, draws undo attention to the personal gifts of the shaman. Any *kut* is the work not just of the shaman, but of the whole believing, praying community.

Rites of Family Healing

The extraordinary, paranormal powers that a shaman may manifest in the rites she or he performs are seen by the community of worshippers as a gift not only because they have a share in the wonder of the shaman's life, but also because they have a share in the life-enhancing effect that her ritual activity has in their own lives. In contributing to the community's well-being, they function part and parcel with the shaman's more ordinary psycho-therapeutic and artistic abilities. Indeed, apart from the shaman's ordinary psychological, social, priestly, and artistic abilities, her paranormal powers would have little effect on her community's lives. Essential to her role for the community are skills and abilities that she shares in common with any psychotherapist, priest, or dramatic artist.

Probably the most commonly held rite in the metropolis of Seoul today is a *kut* to provide healing for a family beset by misfortune. The

misfortune may take the form of frequent illness, death, or financial setbacks; and the rite may be held in the family's home, at the home of the officiating shaman, or at a rented shaman ritual shrine at the foot of one of the numerous mountains in or around Seoul. In a typical Seoul-area *kut*, a *mudang* begins with a gradually quickening dance to summon a god or spirit, who is then believed to address those sponsoring the *kut* through the *mudang*. What ensues amounts to a psycho-dramatic encounter between the spirits and the family that draws both upon her believed special powers of contact with the spirit world and her ordinary human powers as psycho-therapist and performing artist. She seeks to alleviate family stress and restore confidence through her ability, as the *mudang* quoted earlier said, both to speak the true words of the spirits and vividly dramatize their presence.

I have said elsewhere (Kister 1997: 5) that the dance that ushers in the spirit induces a trance-like state; but the more I see Korean shaman rites, the less there seems evidence of regular trance activity or any noteworthy altered state of consciousness. The shaman may be in a light trance for some or all of a particular segment of a rite, but she remains keenly aware of the psychological needs of the sponsors and the practical needs of the situation. If the phone rings while she is speaking in the role of the Mountain God, she may in the same breath tell an assistant to answer it. The late authority on Korean Shamanism Kim Tae-gon has privately suggested that a *mudang* may go into a true trance only a couple times during her whole life.

Trance or no trance, skills at vivid play-acting are essential. A fierce demeanor on the part of the shaman, together with an old-style military uniform and weapons, dramatize the authority of the Spirit General. In an initiation rite, as we have seen, the Mountain Spirit sheds tears of sympathy for the hard life of the new *mudang*. The playful *Taegam* Spirit breaks the serious atmosphere of a *kut* encounter with jokes and a round of drinks. A whining voice and peevish gestures give theatrical life to the spirit of an ancestor who died as a young girl. In a Seoul-area rite, multiple changes of costume, one for each new god or ancestral spirit, reinforce the theatrical illusion.

Family rites commonly begin by summoning various gods, but then move on to what the family more eagerly awaits, encounters with ancestral spirits, members of the family who have died. The *mudang*

mentioned above has said that the dramatic interplay of these encounters is hard to perform, especially when she does not know the family well. In some *kut*, a seemingly interminable file of deceased aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, and then closer family members—deceased father, mother, sister, or son—come forward, each with his or her own ritual suit of clothes. Some simply greet the family, give brief words of encouragement, and leave. Others take more time and evoke deeper feelings in the hearts of those present. Sometimes, as in the case of a *kut* that a woman held for her husband who had been recently killed by his mistress, the atmosphere of the encounter may be utterly serious. Sometimes it is like a happy family reunion.

Unsettled or disharmonious relationships with ancestral spirits are often seen as the cause of family misfortune. In one rite held recently, a family had been encountering various problems ever since the father died three years ago. It was thought that these problems stemmed from the fact that the soul of the father was disturbed by the fact that he had not been able to leave a large inheritance to his wife and children. In another rite held by the same shaman, it was thought that the family had broken with its shamanic roots. A grandmother or great grandmother had been a prominent *mudang*; but when she died almost twenty years earlier, a *mudang* friend of hers suggested that the family become Christians, which they did. It was now believed that this severance of the family's religious roots had given rise to problems in the family fortunes. Among the file of ancestors summoned by the shaman was a deceased uncle who had become a Catholic. As a gesture to help the family, he gave them a large sum of money—money that the shaman had received from the family in the course of the rite and now returned to them. The gods and ancestral spirits sometimes give particular points of advice to the family sponsoring the *kut*, helping them to clarify their present situation and giving hope for a better future. Sometimes, however, the spirits merely give general advice concerning common human failures or misfortunes that could apply to any family. The spirits tend to speak in set formulae, which are one of the things that a new shaman must learn. They repeat commonplace words of encouragement, such as "Don't worry," "I'll be with you," "I'll make things turn out OK." At the same time, they, or the shaman, maintain a sense of realism with expressions like, "Sooner or later!" That is, sooner or later, all must

die. One *kut* borrowed words of wisdom from Confucianism and Buddhism: "Old men, don't think that you'll die soon. Young men, don't think you'll live long. While alive, honor your parents [Confucianism] and treat others with compassion [Buddhism]."

In seeking family healing and harmony through dramatic interplay with the spirits, a Korean *mudang* makes fruitful use of the objectifying, liberating power of comic banter and childlike play; and she draws as well on her innate sense of empathy and the sympathetic audience of the family's friends and neighbors. In dramatic activity that is sometimes deadly serious, sometimes playful, she brings a family's troubles, pain, grief, and fears out in the open, provides objectifying perspectives on the troubles at hand, encourages release from pent-up feelings in tears and laughter, and reinforces the family's belief in the continued presence of the deceased. Belief in the presence of the soul of the deceased plays an essential role in the healing process; but techniques of participative drama, the public use of the stage comedian's humor, and theatrical play provide liberating, objectifying perspectives on the family's situation that modern psycho-therapists have much to learn from.

The *mudang* quoted above said of *kut* activity that, "It's a stage." This sounds like saying, "It's all play-acting," but the stage play reinforces what the community takes as real—the presence of the spirits and their desire to be of help. Nonetheless, neither the *mudang* performing a rite nor those in attendance take the performance as real in the way a child would. Both the shaman and the family seem well aware of the element of theatrical play. Like the private hallucinations that a *mudang* initiate may have in the process of becoming a shaman, the public theatrical activity of a *kut* reinforces a sense of reality of the world of the spirits. Now, however, the *mudang* does not hallucinate. Her dramatic gifts are conscious and controlled. She regards her words as the words of the spirits and may say in the ritual, "I am the Spirit General" or "I am the Mountain Spirit"; but she does not suffer from dissociative illusions like a schizophrenic who thinks he is Jesus Christ. With reference to shamans in other parts of the world, Stanley Krippner has said that "dissociative experiences may occur during their 'call' to shamanize, but the subsequent apprenticeships emphasize discipline, control, and the maintenance of conscious awareness" (1997: 28). In stressing skill in stage performance and the use of correct linguistic forms when

conveying the words of the spirits, the shamans referred to at the beginning of this paper called attention to this kind of conscious control in a ritual performance.

In a family rite, too, there exists a symbiotic relationship between the *mudang* and the community of *kut* believers. A family rite has an effect only on a family that is prone to believe. The effect of the rite would seem to depend more on the inner state of those who hear the spirit's words than on that of shaman who proclaims them. It certainly depends more on their belief than on any altered state of consciousness on the part of the *mudang*.

When family healing rites involve an altered state of consciousness, it is not necessarily an altered state on the part of the shaman. One rite was held a few years ago for the recently deceased mother of six children, ranging in age from their mid-thirties to mid-fifties. In life, the relations between the mother and the first daughter-in-law had been strained; so the mother had ceased living in the first son's household, as is the traditional custom. In the course of the dramatic interaction of the *kut*, the mother's spirit was thought to speak through the mediumship of the daughter-in-law as she held a branch of oak standing in water that symbolized the deceased. The branch began to shake, and the daughter-in-law shrieked out. She then went on for a quarter of an hour in a trance, speaking sometimes, it was thought, in the mother's voice, sometimes in her own.

At one point, referring to the first son's bad health, the mother cried out, "What's to be done?" The words were believed to be those of the mother, but they seemed colored by the daughter-in-law's own pent-up feelings of grief and anxiety. The daughter-in-law confessed that she was sorry, and the mother promised to give assistance from the grave. Finally, the daughter-in-law came out of her trance. The whole experience was traumatic for her and rather frightening for all present. But it constituted a healing psycho-drama, directed by the shaman but participated in by all present, that gave the daughter-in-law a unique opportunity to seek her mother-in-law's forgiveness and contributed to a restoration of family harmony.

Sometimes a Korean shaman's healing gift involves neither trance nor dramatic interaction. On the Korean island of Chejudo, a healing rite can be a simple, purely symbolic event. The purpose of one such

rite was to call back the "lost soul" of a man in his mid-thirties, a successful office worker with an attractive wife and two young children. The man was thought to have lost his soul almost two decades earlier, while he was in his teens. At that time, his father, a Korean War veteran whose war experiences had left him unsettled, left home. The teen-age son had tried to commit suicide and had a free-floating anxiety about robbers. Now, as his mother and wife assisted with their prayers, a male shaman invoked the assistance of the Jade Emperor, the Dragon King of the Sea, and other gods. At the same time, he made use of water as a sign of life and cleansing. He covered the man with an article of his clothing, the edge of which has been dipped in pure water. He also used ritual knives to press the seventh vertebra, where the soul is thought to return. The action accelerated faster and faster to the beat of a drum, and it reached its climax when the shaman took a mouthful of water and sprayed on the man's head.

The effectiveness of such a healing ritual in no way depends on unusual activity performed by a shaman in an altered state of consciousness. For in this case there is no such activity. The effect depends on simple symbolic gestures and the prayers and support of the assembled family. If prayers are answered, believers are grateful; but if not, they do not take that as a sign that the gods have abandoned them. In any case, no spectacular cure is expected from the rite. As the officiating shaman said, if the rite is successful, the patient simply experiences signs of improvement over the following few weeks. Whether or not physical healing takes place is probably not so significant as the gift the rite gives by reinforcing the patient's world of trusted, harmonious relationships—human and divine.

Village Rites

The oldest recorded Korean religious rituals are public communal rites such as are preserved today in coastal fishing villages and island communities. As with family healing rites, the effectiveness of village rites as a gift that enhances the lives of participants depends not so much on unusual activity performed in an altered state of consciousness, but rather on ordinary dramatic and artistic activity. In the spring or fall, East Coast villagers hire a family troupe of hereditary shamans, set out

offerings under a tent at the seaside decked with colorful paper flowers and lanterns and devote hours on end to festive entertainment for both the gods and the villagers. The rites aim at enhancing villagers' lives by insuring village harmony, seeking the gods' assurance for good fishing and healthy children for the coming year, and sometimes insuring the peaceful rest of family members who have died during the past year in the dangerous business of sea fishing.

In the key event of an East Coast Village Rite, not a shaman, but an ordinary person from the village may manifest an altered state of consciousness. In this event, villagers gather at the shrine of the Village God by the sea or in a grove of trees to summon the god. With anxious expectancy, they look for a sign of the god's presence in the shaking of a tall bamboo "spirit pole." One of the villagers, sometimes in a trance, holds the pole firm. The *mudang* asks the advice of the god regarding the village's present state and interprets responses manifested in the shaking of the pole.

In the course of an East Coast Village Rite, an initiatory *mudang* may work herself into a trance when she displays a sign of the powerful presence of the Spirit General or Military Hero by holding a huge pot of rice cake by her teeth. It would be a gross mistake, however, to gauge the value of the gift that the shaman troupe gives villagers by the degree to which one of their company enters a trance while performing this feat. The value of the rites lies rather in the freeing, objectifying, harmonizing effect of festive laughter and play.

The main activities of the rite depend on the shaman troupe's theatrical skills and comic interaction with those present. They entertain both the gods and the villagers with song, dance, comic skits, and tear-jerking legends. Since hereditary shamans have not usually had the extraordinary experience of the spirit illness, their lives do not stand out as a gift for their community in the striking way that the life of an initiatory shaman does. But their theatrical gifts of mimetic stage-acting and liberating, objectifying comic play stand out even more.

In numerous comic tales and skits, members of the shaman troupe fuse the audience together in side-splitting laughter at the expense of a village leader or revered old grandmother. At the end of the *kut*, a male shaman brings before the eyes of those present a comic panorama of the ups and downs of village life in farcical skits imitating the adventures

of a Fisherman, a Blind Man, and a Woman in Childbirth. The skits add to the lively entertainment of the *kut*. At the same time, they bring the everyday realities of the villagers' lives into the ambiance of the gods' blessing and protection as symbolized in the ritual encounter with the Village God in the spirit pole.

This key ritual encounter exemplifies a theater of a more symbolic sort and sometimes takes place in an event that manifests a keen aesthetic sense on the part of the performing shamans. The best shaman troupes are adept at using paper flowers, the sophisticated rhythms of the music, the graceful arm movements of Korean dance, and the natural setting at hand to transform this dramatic encounter into an aesthetically harmonious event. Korean founding myths are said to imply an ancient Korean sense of beauty as the light of the God of Heaven radiating harmony in the world (Min 1994: 20–22). At the hands of an adept shaman troupe, the rite greeting the Village God gives a sense of this harmonious radiance.

As in other rites, the prime life-enhancing gift that shamans give their people in village rites is harmony—inner personal harmony, harmony with one another, harmony with the gods, and harmony with nature. Held as they are by the sea or under an ancient tree on the slope of a mountain, however, village rites reinforce a sense of harmony with nature more surely than most other rites. Some years ago a group of the world's distinguished scientists stressed that "what is regarded as sacred is more likely to be treated with care and respect." They urged that "efforts to safeguard and cherish the environment need to be infused with a vision of the sacred" (quoted from Toolan 1991: 1). The harmony with nature maintained in village rites is a timely gift that the shaman gives to modern society.

As with the Chejudo healing rite we saw above, spring rites honoring the Village God on the island of Chejudo sometimes give no evidence of anyone being in an altered state or consciousness and involve no special feats, very little drama, and practically no humor. Villagers gather in the morning at the Village Shrine, which may consist of an uncovered rock enclosure under a huge old hackberry tree. Dressed in simple, yet elegant ritual garb, the principal shaman chants a lengthy welcome to the Village God while doing a graceful, stately dance to the solemn beat of drum, gong, and bell. He then chants the mythic

legend of the Village God. It is said that by the very chanting of the myth, the god becomes present (Hyun 1986: 276). At one point, all stand; the dance quickens; and the shaman places symbolic clothes of the Village God on the table of offerings as a sign that the god is now present. Worshipers take what the shaman then addresses to them as coming from the god. One respected shaman has said that he has no extraordinary felt experience of contact with the god at this moment. He simply knows the god is present once the proper ritual actions have been performed. In its simple dignity and artistic grace, the rite as a whole probably represents a more deeply felt harmony of the villagers with their gods than does a mainland East Coast rite. For many East Coast villagers appear to participate in their communal rites more out of a sense of play and entertainment than belief in the gods; and the burgeoning Christian churches that dot the East Coast oppose participation on the part of church-goers. Chejudo villages seem more likely to maintain their religious homogeneity than do mainland villages, and most participating villagers still appear to have a firm belief in the gods that they invoke.

Rites for the Dead

In village rites, Korean shamans give their people a valuable gift by transforming ordinary village life into a sacred, harmonious reality graced by humor and beauty. In rites for the dead, they do the same with an individual's death; and once again, they achieve this at least as much through the aid of the shaman's ordinary dramatic skills as through whatever extraordinary, paranormal powers she may have. Rites for the dead aim to send the deceased in peace to the "good place." They also seek to assuage the sorrow of the grieving family, reinforce family harmony, and renew the family's confidence in life at this time of dire crisis. The rites heal a family's grief by giving them an opportunity for a final encounter with the deceased soul. They bolster their confidence in life by engaging them in laughter and play even in their grief. They renew their faith in the caring presence of the gods. At the end, they employ aesthetically refined symbolic gestures to transform death into a moment of beauty. To round off this discussion, I shall briefly call attention to the climactic endings of several Korean rites for the dead.

These represent the best of the gifts that a Korean *mudang* gives her people, the transformation of the painful separation of death into an event of grace and beauty. This gift is the fruit, not of any paranormal activity, but of pure dramatic genius.

At the end of a Seoul Rite for the Dead, the officiating shaman dresses in the elegant royal robes of the Abandoned Princess, the psychopomp spirit, and leads the deceased to the "good place." She does so in a graceful, slow-paced dance around the tables of offerings and before the "gate of thorns" to the other world. Through its power as well-wrought drama, not through whatever trance-like state the *mudang* may be in, this dance transforms death into an event of peace, dignity, and beauty that remains long afterward as a treasured memory in the hearts, not only of believers, but of anyone present.

The action that concludes an East Coast rite for one who has drowned at sea does the same. As an assistant stretches out a long white cloth that symbolizes the watery path or bridge to the "other shore," the shaman sadly tells the deceased, "Now we must load the boat and you must go." Then she takes a staff tipped with paper flowers that represents the deceased and holds it to the heads of bereaved family members as a gesture of final comfort and farewell. She speaks the deceased's words of farewell and then uses the staff slowly, but firmly and with dignified grace, to split the cloth. Fusing the pain of death's separation with an image of the flowering of existence, this simple, but aesthetically moving theatrical image has in itself the power to transform death in all its pain and sorrow into a long-remembered moment of thought-provoking beauty.

The whole of a Southwest Rite for the Dead is a moving aesthetic event. This rite resembles a Chejudo village rite in its spare manner and solemn atmosphere, but the music is much more complex and refined and the dance gestures more elegant and moving. By no means an extraordinary feat worked in a state of trance, the rite is a masterpiece of deeply moving music and dance. It is a supreme example of the gift that Korean shamans give their people as artists. The rite achieves its dramatic highpoint in the symbolic gesture of the "Knot-Loosening Rite." A *mudang* dressed in pure white slowly and gracefully swings free loop knots that have been loosely tied in a long white cloth. The knots symbolize the tangled personal relationships and frustrations that

life may leave knotted in a person's heart. For the dead, the gesture evokes hope that death will bring release from life's pain and frustration and symbolizes such release. For the living, the shaman's dance-like gestures, enhanced by the sorrowful melody of the accompanying chant, create an event charged with grief, a sense of peaceful release, and beauty.

The *mudang* quoted at the beginning of this paper stated that a Korean shaman's gifts consist in her ability to speak the true words of the gods and ancestral spirits and her skill in dramatizing the spirits' presence. Along with these abilities, we have called attention to the gifts of the shaman's anomalous initiatory experiences and her ordinary human powers of empathy, humor, sense of play, and dramatic artistry. It is these ordinary human powers that allow whatever paranormal powers she may have to become gifts for her people. They do so by expanding her people's mental horizons, reinforcing their trust in the gods, and turning times of crisis and pain into events of healing and harmony, laughter and beauty.

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VOL.10. NOS. 1-2. SHAMAN SPRING/AUTUMN 2002

Mountains Are Not *Just* Mountains*

PETER KNECHT NAGOYA

In the Japanese folk imagination, mountains are often conceived as representing a mysterious world: the abode of divine and other spirits. In some cases their physical features are interpreted as being concrete representations of paradise or of the various sections of hell. Mountains are therefore perceived as a world apart, safe to approach by the common people only after certain ritual measures had been taken. However, they are also seen as the world where persons who function as mediums between the world of spirits and that of humans can establish their first contact with their guiding spirits and then strengthen their relationships with these spirits during repeated visits while they remain active.

In the first summer I spent in Japan I was invited by a group of students of Nanzan University to join them on a tour to the Japanese Alps. A small local train and then a bus brought us from Matsumoto to the high valley of Kamikōchi. It was the first bus on that morning, and I remember how surprised I was to find that it was packed to capacity. It was still early when we arrived at the shores of the quiet lake at the bottom of a valley surrounded on three sides by some of Japan's highest peaks. It did not take long to arrange our rucksacks and to set out towards our goal for the first day, Mount Yari, which is a peak pointing towards the sky like a finger at the end of the valley, into which we were walking. Several groups were already ahead of us, and others followed on the trail that led us first deeper into the valley. When the trail began to climb the slope towards the ridge of the Hodaka Range, it was possible to look back and see the path we had already walked. At this point I was again surprised because what at first were only a

* In gratitude and admiration I dedicate this text to the memory of Professor Taryo Obayashi, professor emeritus of Tokyo University, who taught me to see Japanese and East Asian cultures not as individual entities but as a multivocal conext.

few groups of climbers had grown into an uninterrupted line of people walking up the narrow trail towards the mountain. At such a sight I could not but express my surprise because I could not remember having seen such a sight even once in the mountains of Switzerland, except perhaps in the immediate surroundings of places easily accessible by some means of transportation. The summits of the Hodaka Range are not easily climbed, but one does not need to be an experienced climber in order to reach at least the ridge of the range and with it an altitude of about three thousand meters. There are not too many other places in Japan where a hiker can get into the high mountains so conveniently. Perhaps this is the reason why Kamikōchi and the mountains around it attract such large numbers of hikers and climbers so much so that the area is called "Ginza of the Alps."[1]

Japan has many mountains. About 85% of her landmass are mountainous terrain but most of these mountains are not of the size of the Japanese Alps. They are much lower and often covered with dense forests that seem to ward off any possible visitor. Although Japan, after the war, has experienced a boom in mountaineering of all degrees of difficulty[2], these lower mountains do not attract crowds of the size Kamikōchi does. Quite to the contrary, more often than not people do not go to the mountains just for a hike or for sheer pleasure. In villages, for example, where people rely on the mountains for their livelihood, they go there to cut timber, make charcoal, collect edible wild plants or hunt animals, but not in order to enjoy a walk or the scenery of a mountain. For them the mountains are a world that can safely be approached only at certain times and after appropriate ritual precautions have been duly taken.

This point was brought home to me one day in early spring during fieldwork in a mountain village of northern Miyagi Prefecture. I was discussing with an old man of about eighty years the days when people could safely work in the mountains. While we were talking somebody

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[1] Ginza is the name of one of the busiest shopping and entertainment districts in Tokyo. It has become a household word for any busy area or, as an expression of whishful thinking, for an area that hopes to attract many visitors.

[2] The exact number of hikers and climbers (*tozanka*) is not known, but Manzenreiter says that there are several millions of them (2000/2001: 29–30). In a table (2000: 11) their number is given as 7.8 millions.

broke the news that a short while ago a bulldozer had fallen from a mountain side where it had been used to collect sand and stones, and had crushed its driver. The immediate reaction of my partner to the sad news was: "No wonder. Today is a *shanichi*, a day you are not to work in the mountains because the mountain deity is going around checking its realm."[3] To him, it seems to me, the mountains, even those in close vicinity to the village, are not a world to be taken lightly. This attitude is also the reason for the rituals of *yamabiraki*, or "opening the mountain," that are held at the beginning of the mountaineering season at the entrance to famous mountains, as for example at the foot of Mount Fuji or at Kamikōchi[4]. Even if some of these ceremonies are recent and more or less secularized, the *yamabiraki* as such reminds the people who usually might think otherwise that a mountain may be more than a mere elevation to be climbed.[5] In the religious imagination of the Japanese, a mountain is certainly more than a simple feature of the natural landscape. It is the gateway to another world, if not even that world itself.

The village mentioned above occupies a large, mainly wooded area, on the Pacific side of Mount Kurikoma, one of the main peaks in the volcanic Ōu Range. The main sanctuary of the village, the Zaō Gongen Shrine, is popularly called Mitake Jinja. This name is taken from a lower mountain in the surroundings of Mount Kurikoma that lies within the borders of the village: Mount Mitake. The name "Mitake" might be translated as "Venerable Mountain." Legend has it that Zaō Gongen,

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[3] *Shanichi* is a day close to the spring and autumn equinox when the deity of the earth or of the rice fields is celebrated. On such a day one should not work outside, and in particular, should not move earth. My partner interpreted this day as one dedicated to the mountain deity, the *yama no kami*.

[4] At Kamikōchi, *yamabiraki* is held under the name of *Uesuton matsuri* (Weston festival) in honor of the British missionary Walter Weston (1861–1940). He is called "the Father of Japanese Alpinism" because he climbed many mountains and encouraged Japanese to do the same. He was also one of the initiators of the *Sangakkai*, the Japanese Alpine Club in 1905 (Manzenreiter 2000: 56–58; 68–70).

[5] It is not quite clear to me whether the Weston ritual at Kamikōchi in early summer is only to his memory or whether Weston himself is the *kami* addressed. Perhaps it indicates the more "secularized" character of the ceremony that it is usually accompanied by alphorn music played by Japanese men dressed in the folk costume of herdsmen of the Bernese Oberland (Switzerland).

the deity of Mount Yoshino in central Japan, once jumped to northern Japan and settled on Mount Zaō, but an image of it is said to have appeared also on Mount Mitake. A small sanctuary, Daikoku-dō, was eventually erected on the mountain. The village shrine used to harbor an image of Zaō Gongen.[6] It is noteworthy that the shrine is not known among the villagers by the name of that deity but rather by that of the mountain where the deity is said to have alighted. It is further remarkable that the mountain is known only by the generic term "mountain" but distinguished by the honorific "mi," which makes it into *the* mountain, so to speak (in Japanese *take* refers to mountain). It is the mountain of the deity and, therefore, differs from all the other mountains around it. As such it is represented in the village by the village shrine, the "Mitake Jinja."

Such an arrangement where the village shrine represents another shrine, the *oku no miya* or remote shrine that lies on a mountain, can be found in many villages. The shrine on the mountain is believed to be the place where the deity descends, and from where it then arrives at the village shrine at the bottom of the mountain at the time of a festival. In the village mentioned, however, the common name the villagers have given to their shrine seems to suggest that the mountain Mitake itself is the object of worship at the village shrine. If that should indeed be the case, then it might suggest that the villagers adhere to a concept about the deity of their shrine that resembles the situation at the famous Miwa Shrine in Yamato, where the cone-shaped Mount Miwa itself is the sacred representation of the deity. However, in the case of the Miwa Shrine the concept is followed through to its conclusion in the sense that the shrine, different from most other shrines in the country, does not need a special structure to house the representation of the deity because the mountain at whose foot the shrine is situated *is* the deity.

The important point to be made here is that a mountain may not only be considered to be the place where a deity appears at times, it

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[6] The village history claims that according to shrine tradition Zaō Gongen appeared on the mountain in the first month of the 10th year of the Tenchi era (671). The gilded statue of the deity is said to have been a work of the Kamakura period, but it was stolen in 1948 and has not been found since (Sasa 1978: 807; Hanayamamura Kyōiku Iinkai 1988: 24–26).

also may itself be the deity and the object of worship and, therefore, be addressed by the same name as its deity. Such a situation is clearly expressed by a man who was engaged in ascetic training at Mount Akakura in Aomori Prefecture, and whom Ikegami Yoshimasa (1999: 89) quotes as saying: "While I was engaged in ascetic training I spoke with many deities. These deities, such as Mount Taihei of Akita, Mount Fuji, Mount Kujū, and Fudō of Narita, they appeared on a cloud and I could speak with them." In this statement, the deities and the mountains that are their abodes become one and the same. In other words, it means that a mountain may not only be the abode of a deity, it may in fact be the physical representation of that deity. The awe inspired by the mountain makes many people not only hesitant about going to the mountain just for pleasure. In fact, it leads people to want to keep their distance from it.

Under another aspect the mountains may be conceived as having a close relationship to the people. This is the case where mountains are thought of as being the abode of the spirits of the dead. In some cases the physical features in the landscape of such a mountain are understood in very concrete terms as representing the other world, the various sections of hell, and/or paradise, as, for example, at Mount Osore in Aomori or Mount Tate in central Japan. Most commonly, as is indicated by certain features in annual ceremonies, people believe that the mountain is the place where the spirits of their dead live.

When I talked with the villagers about the question of how they imagined the existence of their dead, they mentioned three places where the spirits of their dead relatives would go: the temple, the grave, or the mountains around the village. Quite often more than one place was mentioned, and a degree of preference was given to temple and grave. However, this might be a consequence of the fact that some of the villagers now own graves in the cemetery next to the temple. If we consider the custom of visiting graves regularly at certain times of the year, in particular at Bon, the time in mid August when the spirits of the dead of a family are welcomed back to their house and entertained for a few days another aspect appears. The old households own graves not only in the present common cemeteries, they usually also care for older graves located in the mountains close to their houses. A few days before Bon people clean the graves. At that time they cut the grass and

bushes clearing a road from the old graves to their house. This makes the graves accessible for a visit at the beginning of Bon, but the villagers also say that by this road the spirits arrive at the house. There they are installed at a special altar made for Bon. At this altar certain flowers are used that include, if possible, some *kikyō* (Chinese bellflower, *Platycodon grandiflorum*). This flower is called "Bon flower" and used to be brought from the mountains a few days before Bon. As Ikegami Hiromasa (1991) and many others have argued, this and other kinds of "Bon flowers" are gathered from the mountains not simply as a decoration for the temporary Bon altar but rather because they are the means by which the spirits of the dead are brought from the mountains to the house where they used to live. In other words, this custom shows that the mountains, or at best certain mountains, are thought of as being the abode of the spirits of the dead. Accordingly, in addition to being the world of divine spirits (*kami*), the mountains are also that of the spirits of the dead, that is, of spirits that once were human beings. Since there is no absolute distinction between these two kinds of spirits because it is possible for the spirit of a dead person to eventually become a kami, the mountains emerge as a realm where spirit beings of various kinds are active or may be encountered. Such encounters may be sought out for as I shall discuss later, but they may also be chance encounters, and then they are often of a rather ambiguous nature.

One day a villager told me how he had been drinking with friends until late so that it was night when he finally went home. Since there were no lights in the village at that time he had to walk in the dark, when at one moment he noticed a light. He took this as a light guiding him in the right direction, and headed towards it. Although he walked and walked, the light never seemed to get any closer. Finally he was quite exhausted and decided to take a rest. He fell asleep and when he woke up the sun was out and he found himself in a lonely place in the mountains. His explanation was that he had been deceived and abducted by a fox spirit. Other villagers said that he was just too drunk to find his way home, but even so they were inclined to say that such abductions by a spirit in the mountains were quite possible. Abductions ascribed to spirits were, however, not always that innocuous. Yanagita Kunio relates several tales about cases of *kami kakushi* (divine abductions) from Tōno in Iwate Prefecture that had serious consequences for those

afflicted. In one of the tales a young woman after a spousal row went out to the gate of her house in the evening, never to return. Later, a man went to the mountains to cut grass, and there he met a disheveled woman who looked like a *yama uba* (a female ogre). The woman asked him where he came from. He told her where he came from and she asked if so and so was doing fine, saying that she was that man's wife but had been abducted by a *yama otoko* (mountain man) and was living with him. She then asked the man to tell her former husband and her children that he had met this old woman who would like to see them once before she died, even if it were only from a far distance (Yanagita 1974: 115).

Such stories show that a mountain with its spirit population is an ambiguous world. On one side, although the divine and ancestral spirits living there are generally thought to protect families or village life in general and to grant them prosperity, they may also show a more sinister side if not treated appropriately. In cases such as abduction they come to represent, together with some more mischievous beings, a side of the mountain world that inspires fear and keeps the villagers away from the mountain. And yet, a mountain may also be an image of *jōdo*, of paradise. On Mount Osore, for example, one walks through a sulfuric scenery of various shapes that are marked as the different types of hell, but at the end one emerges from this desolate world of despair to the sandy shore of a volcanic lake whose clear waters of various colors radiate calm and serene beauty: the image of paradise. Pictures that represent the path a pilgrim would have to follow at the sanctuaries of Ise suggest that the pilgrim completes the pilgrimage by climbing Mount Asama from whose top it would be possible to view the perfect cone of Mount Fuji emerging from beyond the sea as the symbol of the otherworld, of paradise.[7] The suggestion is supported by the reality that the pilgrim meets at the temple on Mount Asama, where a large area is covered with memorials that people of the communities surrounding the mountain have erected there in memory of their dead creating a world of death in view of paradise (Knecht 2000: 21–27).

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[7] On a clear day it is in fact possible to see Mount Fuji, but such days are very rare due to the high degree of moisture in the air, or nowadays due to air pollution. For good reproductions of several of the Ise *mandara* see Ōsaka Shiritsu Hakubutsukan 1987: plates 42, 44, and 45.

From what has been said so far it should be possible to gather that in Japanese folk imagination the mountain represents a world quite different from that of the village. In fact, the term *yama*, mountain, is sometimes used in order to refer to an area such as dry fields or fields where miscanthus is grown. Such an area does not need to be a real mountain, but it is a place somewhat remote from the *sato*, the village, where people interact intensively every day with themselves and with their wet fields. In the imagination of the ordinary villagers the mountain may be conceived as a place of mysterious forces that at times can become active in the village, but in order to have the village function properly, the forces of the mountain have to be kept apart. However, there are certain individuals in whose life and activities a mountain looms large as the immediate source and guarantor of their very existence. These are persons who not only have encountered the spirit forces of the mountain in a dramatic experience, but who also spend a life in the service of these forces. The encounter, which may either happen suddenly or may be sought after, is a kind of shamanistic experience that is the foundation of the person's relationship with a particular spirit (or several spirits), and the beginning of a life as a religious specialist that knows how to deal with spirits. Scholars, therefore, often refer to these persons as shamans, yet in recent years Japanese terms such as *miko*, *fugeki*/*fusha* (shaman), or *gyōja* (ascetic) came increasingly to be preferred. Among the people, however, they are known by local terms like *itako*, *kamisama*, *nakama*, *yuta*, and many others.[8]

In consideration of what has been said so far about mountains as being the abode of spirits and spirit forces, it can be expected that the *fugeki* would have a particularly close relationship with them. In fact, for many of them the world of the mountains is the source and reservoir of the forces supporting their activities. Once the source has been

[8] Under the influence of Eliade's (1961) work *Shamanism* the term *shaman* had been used uncritically by Japanese scholars for many years to refer to Japanese phenomena. In recent years, however, scholars increasingly began to feel that the Japanese phenomena differed too much from what Eliade considered to be true shamanism. They came to think that Japanese vernacular terms better reflect the indigenous situation because in the majority of cases Japanese "shamans" experience some kind of possession, while experiences of journeying to the otherworld are very rare. For a brief discussion of the problem see Bouchy 2000: 208–211, or 2001:88–90.

tapped and a relationship established it is often necessary for the *fugeki* to regularly return to the source in order to deepen the relationship.

There are two questions I wish to address here: first, how does the *fugeki* enter into a relationship with the spirit world of the mountain, and second, what role does the spirit world of the mountain play in the life and activities of the *fugeki*? I will introduce several types of *fugeki*, and try to show how each type answers the two questions in its own characteristic manner, but the examples introduced will not cover all types of *fugeki* to be found in Japan.

One of the popular sutras whose content but not its exact words are known by many is the *Urabonkyō*, a short text that tells the story of Mokuren, the famous disciple of the Buddha who had magical powers matched by nobody else. The story is about how Mokuren, after he had discovered that his mother had fallen into the deepest of hells, saved her from her torments. The sutra says that the event happened around the fifteenth day of the seventh month. This is the time when people today celebrate Bon and welcome the spirits of their dead relatives at their homes. Because Mokuren called forth his mother's spirit he resembles in this aspect the *itako*, the blind woman who, in some areas of northern Japan, specializes in calling forth the spirit of a dead person and has it speak to its family through her mouth. The ritual performed to call the spirit is known as *kuchiyose*. Depending on the amount of time that has passed since the person, whose spirit is to be called, has died, there are two forms of *kuchiyose*. A rite that is held shortly after a person has died, or at the most within one year after death, is called *shinkuchi* (new calling), while any rite performed at a later time is called *furukuchi* (old calling). There are several characteristic differences between the two rites, but here I wish to draw attention only to a feature that relates to the spirit world of the mountains.[9] One of the items the *itako* asks the family to prepare for the ceremony is a basket filled with three *shō* (5.4 liters) of polished rice. She herself readies two twigs, one of peach and the other of willow, and sticks them into the heap of rice. The arrangement is then put next to the table that serves as an altar during the ceremony. Together with the twigs the heap of rice, called *yamatade* becomes the road by which the spirit

[9] A more detailed description of these rites is given in Knecht 1997.

arrives to address its family. The heap of rice is nothing else than a small mountain that serves as *yorishiro*, a place prepared for a spirit to arrive and settle in this world. It is the same arrangement as the one consisting of a shrine in the mountains and another in the village. There the kami that arrived by the way of the mountain shrine is worshipped in the village, but here, the spirit that arrived by the way of the twigs and the mountain of rice speaks through the mouth of the *itako*.

It struck me how at the *kuchiyose* I could attend the *itako* insisted that the two twigs had to be put up in certain cardinal directions. It was only a good while later that I learned about the reason for this. As another *itako* explained to me it had to do with Mokuren and his attempt to free his mother's spirit from hell. When Mokuren consulted with the Buddha about what he should do, the Buddha instructed him to go to the mountain Dandoku (Sanskr. Dantaloka) and collect what he needed from the mountain's four cardinal directions (Knecht 1993). In popular tradition Mount Dandoku is a source of spiritual power because different bodhisattvas, such as Kannon live on it, and because the Buddha once had undergone ascetic practices there. We might conclude, therefore, that things found on that mountain as the ones Mokuren once collected are imbued with a special potential that can become active again today in a rite like the *kuchiyose* where the *itako* imitates that mountain, and by doing so is able to call forth the spirit of a dead person, as Mokuren had called the spirit of his mother.

A *shinkuchi* requires a lengthy introduction until the spirit comes forth, and then the ritual usually takes several hours. It also has to be performed in the house where the person whose spirit is called had lived. A *furukuchi*, on the other hand, is much shorter, and in most cases is held in the house of the *itako*. On Mount Osore it is usually an affair of only a few minutes. The reason why, in the latter rite, the spirits arrive without delay is that these older spirits are believed to be already somewhat settled and can easily be contacted. On Mount Osore

it is said, however, that they arrive within an instant because they live already right there in the vicinity of the temple, i.e., in the mountain.[10]

It seems to me that a mountain is ritually important for the *itako* in two ways: first as a metaphor. In this case the *yamatade* used in a *shinkuchi* is the mountain that serves as the road by which the spirit arrives. Second, the mountain is important for her as the abode of the spirits, as, for example, in the case of Mount Osore. But in the life of the *itako* themselves, mountains do not figure as a source of their power as a medium. An *itako* does not encounter her guardian spirit during ascetic practice in the mountains, nor does she need to undergo such practices during her later career. In this she differs substantially from other religious practitioners for whom the mountains are not only the initial but the continuous source of spiritual power. One of them, and probably the most famous is E no ubasoku, or En no Gyōja as he is more often called.

A story of the *Nihon ryōiki*, a collection of Buddhist legends compiled in the ninth century, says that E no ubasoku was a man who "excelled in learning and attained ultimate knowledge." But his ambition went beyond knowledge, he wanted to attain great magic power. Therefore, "in his late forties he went to live in a cave, wore clothing made of vines, drank the dewdrops on pine needles, bathed in pure spring water to rinse away the filth of the world of desire, and learned the formula of the Peacock to attain extraordinary power. Thus he could employ spirits and kami at his command" (Nakamura 1973: 140–141). The short section quoted mentions several practices characteristic of the adherents of *Shugendō*, a religion focused on mountains. *Shugendō* involves austere ascetic practices in the mountains, including the practice of standing under waterfalls, with the purpose to gain power over the kami and spirits. *Shugendō* as a religion came into being when the ascetics, the *yamabushi*, training at particular mountains, such as Ōmine in Yamato, began to organize themselves into groups. This was also the time when they began to see in En no Gyōja their great ancestor and model, although he belonged to an earlier period. Today, the followers of *Shugendō*, still dedicate themselves at set periods during the year to

[10] There are reports (quoted in Ivy 1995: 164–165) by a guard of the temple of Mount Osore in which the guard claims to have overheard conversations of spirits (ghosts) in the mountain behind the temple.

ascetic exercises in the mountains that are the centers of their religion. Although these exercises may not be as demanding anymore as they once used to be, such experiences as the traversing of the steep mountains from Ōmine to Kumano are still excruciating enough. In these exercises the practitioner passes not only through all the sections of the otherworld and becomes imbued with its magical power, he also experiences death to his old self and rebirth to a new existence as a person that from there on participates in the powers of the mountain, i.e., of the spirit forces dwelling there and with whom he came in intimate contact.[11] Nevertheless, a *yamabushi* is not simply the same as a shaman. Quite often he may, however, be married to a shaman or may tie up with one for the purpose of performing certain rituals such as divination, healing, or exorcism. In these cases the *yamabushi* has a spirit reveal itself by possessing his partner, the medium, and speaking its mind through that person's mouth. The medium does not need to be a recognized shaman but is probably a person who has experience in ascetic practices.

Mount Ontake, a volcano in the Kiso region of the Japanese Alps, is nationally famous as a sacred mountain that attracts great numbers of pilgrims every year. Many, if not most of the pilgrims belong to religious confraternities (*kō*) whose members share faith in the sacredness of the mountain. The ash-covered area at the mountain's top represents, like Mount Osore, an image of hell. This suggests, together with the many stone memorials for deceased ascetic leaders of the confraternities alongside the routes of ascent, that the area is believed to be populated by spirits. When pilgrims come to the mountain it happens quite often that some of them fall into a trance, and that such a spirit speaks through them, but often the trance is induced in a ritual setting, the *ozatate* ("setting up of a venerable seat"), where at least two persons if not three cooperate. One person, the *nakaza* ("seat in between"), sits with his back towards one of the memorials and holds a wooden stick with large streamers of white paper hanging from its top. The person facing the *nakaza* is the *maeza* ("seat in front"), a *yamabushi* who calls forth the spirit and then engages in a conversation with it. Since the words of the spirit are not easily understood, a third person may attend and

[11] For descriptions of these practices by non-Japanese participants see Earhart 1970: 111–146, and Blacker 1975: 208–234.

interpret the utterings of the spirit. The same ritual can also be held in the sanctuary of the confraternity in the lowlands. There, the *nakaza* sits with the back towards one of the sacred images. In the latter situations the link with the mountain is not demonstrated directly but since the spirits addressed are the same as those encountered in the ritual on the mountain the link with it seems to be taken for granted. Different from the believers of other groups of *Shugendō* who conceive of their sacred mountain as a source of spiritual power that transforms them into a new being, the members of the confraternities of Mount Ontake further believe the mountain to be the world where the spirits of their deceased leaders dwell, and from where they can be called forth into a believer and asked for guidance. Such guidance can be had when the spirits possess a *nakaza* in order to speak to members of the confraternity.[12]

The *nakaza* in an *ozatate* is usually a *gyōja*, i.e., a person with a history of *gyō*, ascetic practice. While such practices prepare the person to become the temporary vessel for any spirit the *maeza* decides to call forth, they do not result in establishing a durable relationship between the *nakaza* and a particular spirit as permanent protector and guide. There are, however, other *gyōja* who at one point in their life encounter a divine spirit and enter into a lifelong relationship with that spirit. This is the type of *gyōja* that comes under the category of *fugeki* or *fusha* ("shaman"). For them, the encounter with the divine, which often takes place during ascetic practice on a mountain, signifies a decisive turning point in their life and the beginning of a relationship in which the divine spirit, the kami, takes the lead. It appears that when they reflect on the course their lives have taken, active *fugeki* sometimes discover the first hints of their calling in early childhood. Already as a child one may have felt unusually attracted to a particular kami, another could exactly foretell coming events, and still another may have fallen victim to a mysterious sickness. Although people might have noticed such signs early and suggested that the person should begin seriously serving the kami, the person usually goes through a long period of excruciating doubts and pains before finally resolving to accept the

[12] For an eye witness report about the activities of the Ontake confraternities and the atmosphere during pilgrimage on the mountain see Blacker 1975: 279–297.

calling and become a *fugeki.* A section from the reflections of a *fugeki* from Aomori Prefecture reported by Ikegami Yoshimasa (1999: 81–82) may conveniently serve as an illustration.

This woman had been miraculously healed when she was two years old by water her father had received from a shrine. At thirty she developed severe heart troubles and was told to consult with a *gyōja* of a particular shrine. This man told her that once she had been saved by the deity Amaterasu Ōmikami and would not be able to find cure for her present state lest she became a *kamisama*, i.e., a *fugeki*. But she still could not make up her mind.

"In Showa 42 [1967], my heart condition worsened again and I was told by my mother 'Go to the mountain.' I went to Nyūnai with the intention of doing *gyō* there for one week. When I went to the hall there, the *sensei* [the spiritual master who became her mentor] told me: 'Tomorrow morning you will be cured again.' The next morning at about four o'clock, a beautiful woman appeared clad in a fine dress and with the sun behind her. She said: 'I am Amaterasu Ōmikami,' and handed me a roll. Then another *kami*, riding a white horse, appeared and said: 'I am the god Hachiman.' After that the mountain deity wearing high clogs appeared, and I watched many *kami* dancing a *kagura.* From that day on I was able to venerate others. [I had reached a state where] the answer to whatever I was asked about emerged in my mind. The following morning at four o'clock, a *kami* who was an old man appeared and taught me the art of divination with candles. This was the father of the *sensei* of Nyūnai who after his death had become a *kami*. From the next day on I was asked to take my mentor's place when customers came to ask for counsel. I examined about fifty people and in each case my judgment was to the point. My mentor said: All customers went home praising you. You have received a wonderful power. After that my mentor's daughter taught me how to beat the drum and recite the *norito* [ritual invocations]. The following year I received a certificate from the Mizuhokyō in Hirosaki."

Several features appearing in the above narrative are quite typical for this kind of *fugeki.* There is a long period of incubation until the person finally cannot avoid making a decision any longer. That is the time to enter the mountain (Nyūnai in the narrative), where in the course of ascetic practices a divine spirit would reveal itself as the protector of the *fugeki*. In the narrative several divine spirits reveal themselves to the woman in a vision after a very short period in the

mountain. However, quite often a person has to undergo severe practices such as fasting or standing under cold waterfalls repeatedly and for a long period of time until finally a divine spirit reveals itself through the mouth of the person who had fallen into a state of trance, or in a vision.

In the narrative Amaterasu Ōmikami appears as if she had been waiting for the right moment to reveal herself to the woman that she had saved from death already many years earlier. However, the ordinary case seems to be that a person finally sees no other way out of an unfortunate situation than to go to the mountain and positively seek that the divine spirit who is trying to announce itself through the person's misfortune finally reveals itself. When this happens the spirit becomes the partner and protector of the *fugeki*. By revealing itself to the seeker, the divine spirit legitimizes that person as *fugeki* and establishes an enduring relationship with it that can be of one of two kinds: either a master-disciple relationship or a relationship of spouses.[13] Although the establishment of such a relationship results in profound and definite changes in the life of the *fugeki*, it is necessary that the *fugeki* revives and confirms the relationship time and again by repeating the practices in the mountain where the first encounter with the spirit took place. To return to the mountain means nothing else for the *fugeki* than to demonstrate and re-experience his or her being one with the deity whose material manifestation the mountain and its features, especially waterfalls, are.[14]

In Japan mountains are admired for their majesty and beauty as elsewhere, but in the religious imagination of the population there is often more to them than what directly hits the eye. Many are considered to be sacred and some have become centers for pilgrimages. They are sacred because they are an image of the otherworld (be that hell or paradise), because they are the abode of *kami* and spirits of the dead, and because they are nothing less than the body of a *kami*. While people in their ordinary daily lives and activities keep this world at a distance as best as they can, there are times when a positive relationship

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[13] Anne Bouchy (2000: 214–219; 2001: 93–97) analyzes in detail these relationships and their implications for the lives of the *fugeki*.

[14] In Bouchy's (1992) sensitive account of the life of Nakai Shigeno, a *fugeki* of Osaka, one can sense how deep and essential the relationship with the mountain and its deity is for both the *fugeki*'s self-understanding and her activities.

with them is sought for, be it to celebrate a village deity during a *matsuri* (festival) or to invite the spirit of a dead relative to learn about its state and feelings. Outside of such ritualized and public occasions for the establishing of contact with the spirit world of the mountain, the *fugeki* enter into a highly personalized relationship with the spirits of the mountain which then enables them to safely call upon the spirits at any time when there is need for such a call. In Japan's popular religion, *fugeki*, i.e. persons who can deal with the otherworld and its denizens, play an important role. Very often their role is related to or nourished by the mysterious power attributed to mountains, but the types of *fugeki* are as various as their relationship with the world of the mountains.

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VOL.10. NOS. 1-2. SHAMAN SPRING/AUTUMN 2002

Trances of Initiation, Incorporation and Movement: Three Different Typologies of the Shamanic Trance

DIANA RIBOLI ATHENS

The common definition of a shamanic trance does not in fact represent one sole phenomenon. Only the physical and exterior manifestations of trances experienced by shamans have traits in common, but their meanings are very different. The author presents some reflections on three different typologies of trance, with detailed examples from research carried out by the latter from 1990 and 1996 into the Chepang in Southern-Central Nepal.

In their various forms and aspects, trances and other states of altered consciousness, have for some time been recognised as one of the salient features of the various forms of shamanism the world over alongside a further series of phenomena more generally associated with possession in the various meanings of the term and in different geographical areas of the planet.

The medico-psychiatric interpretations and others which have multiplied over the years, often do not give enough importance to the socio-cultural context surrounding altered states of consciousness. Over the years shamans have been described in a wide variety of manners: from impostor (Diderot et al. 1751–1765), to hysterical and mad (Bogoraz 1910: v. 22, 1–2; Ksenofontov 1929), to being defined as patients who have been cured by their shamanic powers (Anokhin 1929: 268), and to assuming the role of psychoanalyst and psychotherapist (Lévi-Strauss 1949: 5–27).

The list of definitions could go on at length, giving us cause to reflect on the fact that no other religious specialist in any other religion

in the world has been described with such a surprisingly vast number of definitions and respective interpretations.

It would perhaps be opportune to conclude that the difference lies in the fact that shamanism, or rather the vast range of manifestations which this conventional term has been used to describe which would in itself merit further study[1], as a religion generally lacking in external manifestations and materials in common with other religions, had the power, and in part still does, to provoke such profound disconcertment in external observers.

The absence of temples, sacred writings, hierarchy and the absolute "individualist nature" of the shaman, in his solitude in relation to the supernatural world all certainly pose problems of interpretation and primarily indicate the need to abandon many of those parameters used in and familiar from other contexts.

After several years spent studying the form of shamanism practised by the Chepang in Southern-Central Nepal, I would like to add my consensus to the many who have confirmed the perfectly normal psycho-mental state of the shaman and to those who have attempted to abandon the medico-physical interpretations of altered states of consciousness. All the shamans I met are perfectly normal people, probably even stronger and more determined than others, and are particularly sensitive.

The *pande*—the name given to Chepang shamans—cannot by any means be classed as hysterical, or mentally disturbed, nor could they be considered to be former patients who have been cured by their shamanic powers for the simple reason that they have never been ill, at least not in the western sense of the word.

In past research there has clearly been a certain tendency to adopt medico-psychiatric terminology to describe and interpret various aspects of shamanism.

Paradoxically, a series of religious groups generally known as shamanist in which the therapeutic element is well known as being one of

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[1] Mihály Hoppál has also examined this topic. In one of his recent works we note: "Though we used the expression shaman-*ism* in the title, more and more researchers are convinced that there is no such thing as a general manifestation which could be covered by this expression, only regional variations in the manifestations of shaman-*ism*... In English the word shamanhood was proposed." (2000: 89)

the central activities, has in turn been transformed in to some form of pathological condition. Moreover, the definition of the shaman as a person who is cured of his or her condition by their own shamanic powers is again a return to medical interpretations where shamanism is transformed from pathological condition to cure and the shaman remains a patient apparently in continuous danger of suffering a relapse.

The confusion created in past research and the excessive tendency to apply medical terminology to shamanism derive in the main from the observation of altered states of consciousness or trances experienced by the shamans.

In my opinion, it would be seriously wrong to extrapolate the trance from the socio-cultural context in which it functions, also because it is only by observing the context that one can distinguish between various types of trance and altered states of consciousness.

These two generalised expressions denote elements and phenomena quite different from each other. Particular mention should be made here to the studies carried out by Luc De Heusch (1971) and Gilbert Rouget (1980). The works of these two scholars principally highlight the differences between different types of trance, in particular the difference between shamanic trances and trances of possession. A specific distinction is made within the ecstatic religions in which shamanism was usually indiscriminately grouped together with cults of possession such as the African Voodoo cult and its various ramifications, mainly in the Caribbean and on the American continent.

The most important difference lies in the fact that the shamanic trance is a trance consciously managed by the shaman who plays an active role in his relationships with the world of the spirits, while in the trance of possession, as is the case with the Voodoo, the individual has a passive role. The shamanic trance involves active participation while the trance of possession involves passivity.

An important element is the role played by the supernatural beings and divinities. In cults or phenomena of possession the individual is apparently not held to be responsible for the fact that certain supernatural beings take possession of their body, while, generally speaking, it is the shaman who decides which divinities and spirits they will call on to visit. For this reason, in important religions such as Voodoo, the subjects

would appear not to have the option of choice; it is the divinity that decides which individual they will possess.

In Bénin, where Voodoo is the official religion, followers are initiated by one particular divinity and will only ever be possessed by this same divinity for the rest of their life.

The Brazilian *candomblé* is slightly different. Individuals are initiated by one divinity but may also be possessed by other supernatural beings. In any case, it is the divinity that plays the active role.

Shamans almost always have decisive powers. According to the different situations that they are required to resolve, they decide which divinity to invite and which divinity they will allow to possess them. This difference is generally taken to be the case but, as is well known, shamans may also, especially during initiation, be possessed by supernatural beings that are neither welcome nor have been solicited. In this case their trance presents similarities with trances of possession.

In any case it is the shaman, or expert shaman who controls the situation, they are never totally overtaken by the possession, which, if nothing else, they can always regulate the duration of.

Generally speaking, phenomena of possession usually require the presence of some form of control person to help the possessed come out from altered states of consciousness considered to be uncontrollable, whilst in shamanism the shaman themselves must be able to manage their own trances and relationships with the supernatural world.

As previously mentioned, in certain cases it would not be right to make a clear distinction between shamanic trances and trances of possession, particularly in the case of neophyte shamans, when they are called up by the divinities to take up the profession.

For example, the following was noted in the Nepal Magars:

"Les Magars disent que les chamanes sont choisis par les esprits. De cette élection présumée à la cérémonie de consécration, plusieurs étapes sont distinguées par les chamanes eux-mêmes. Tel qu'ils racontent, tout déboute par une transe qu'ils sont dans l'incapacité de contrôler, et par laquelle leur ancêtre chaman manifeste son désir de renaître." (De Sales 1991: 99–100)

In the period which generally precedes social recognition of the shaman and in particular when the candidate is called to the profession by the spirits, it would appear that the neophyte has no power to refuse

and that even certain aspects of their personality are affected by what is believed to be a greater power which makes the subject act according to its own will.

This is evident in many of the accounts from Siberia to South America. The neophyte falls prey to uncontrollable trembling, becomes dangerous to him/herself and society, is possessed by different supernatural beings, acts in an anti-social fashion and may even fall into a deep catalepsy interpreted as being a form of death before the rebirth as a new individual.

In the course of this process, evident negation of the will of the subject in question leads to many of his/her states being compared to those of a person undergoing possession. The neophyte shaman is believed to be at the mercy of the supernatural spirits, he or she is not really ill but is possessed by superior beings, which leads to a crisis situation.

The encounter with the divine world is traumatic, in this phase, altered states of consciousness experienced by the neophyte are neither sought after nor controlled by the person in question.

These trances could be defined as trances of initiation, and are real forms of possession that are believed to be caused by different supernatural beings. This lack of control presents a certain risk for the community at large, highlighted by the anti-social behaviour of many neophyte shamans.

Given the fact that the distinction between trances of possession and shamanic trances is not always clear, I believe further investigation of the altered states of consciousness experienced by shamans is vital. It would be wrong to consider the shamanic trance a unique phenomenon.

Shamanism is an extremely complex and articulate religion which is controlled by the individual without the aid of dogma or other religious experts. In the course of a session, the shaman has to deal with a complex series of different situations and the altered states of consciousness experienced during the former clearly have different meanings.

Generally speaking, there is no corresponding term in local languages for what we would call a trance or altered state of consciousness, which is generally characterised by physical manifestations, mainly trembling.

Roberte Hamayon emphasised that there is no equivalent term in the different Siberian languages for the trance, only terms with other meanings linked to the system of representations (1990: 33).

There are no terms in Nepali or Chepang that define the trance as we generally define it. There are, however, two terms in Nepali which are used to describe two manifestations common to all shamanic trances: *kāmnu* and *phalāknu*. The first term is used to define the diffuse trembling that affects the shaman in the course of the trance, and the second term is used to indicate the form of broken and convulsive speech of the shaman, which is usually noted in the course of altered states of consciousness. Both manifestations, *kāmnu* and *phalāknu*, can be noted in all sessions and are repeated in similar manner each time the shaman enters into trance, which, as we have already seen, there is no term for in local languages.

It is evident that it would not be possible to have one term to indicate conditions that are actually quite different from each other, in which the only common elements are the external manifestations, mainly physical. It is a given fact that the various types of trances experienced by the shaman have completely different meanings.

At this point I suggest that the following initial distinctions within what has been defined as the shamanic trance be made: initiatory trance, incorporatory or extrasensory trance and trance of movement.

As we have already noted, initiatory trances are also the trances that are often difficult to distinguish from those defined as trances of possession, principally because of the supposed suppression of the will and ability of the neophyte by supernatural beings.

I should like to recount a case that I witnessed in September 1994 in the Chepang village of Mashine, Central-Southern Nepal, during the celebration of an important annual festival called the Chhonam.

During Chhonam, which is always celebrated by one or more *pande* at their own inhabitations, offerings of the first products of the new harvest are made to the divinities and ancestors. This day is retained to be particularly propitious and many patients gather at the houses of the shamans with their offerings in the hope of a cure for their condition. Chhonam is also an occasion on which the neophyte *pande* within the group are recognised within the community.

The period corresponding to the calling up to the profession by the spirits is not usually particularly traumatic for the Chepang[2]. Initiation usually takes place in the course of a series of dreams in which the supernatural beings communicate their choice to the neophyte and impart instruction.

Though there appears to be no human form of instruction, once instruction has been completed, the neophyte must be recognised as a *pande* by the community to which he or she belongs and for the first time, he or she is called upon to play the drum in public and prove his or her knowledge. This takes place during Chhonam in the presence of expert *pande* in a position to control situations construed to be dangerous.

The Chhonam at Mashine was celebrated by three *pande*: two men and a very old woman. Three *cēla*, candidate *pande*, were presented to the public. The first two young men played the drum, sang and were possessed by certain auxiliary spirits, thus proving that they had good control over their relationships with the supernatural world and that they were able enter into and come out of trances at will.

For the third *cēla* events were to turn out very differently. Babulal Prajā, as the neophyte was called, was around twenty years old and began his demonstration exactly as the previous two had. He put on the ritual necklaces, played the drum and began to chant a series of invocations to call on his auxiliary spirits. A few minutes later, however, Babulal began to tremble and shake uncontrollably (Fig. 1). His face was transfigured, tears pouring down it, into a mask of hatred and pain. From his position seated cross-legged on the ground, he stretched out his legs until his feet were on top of the burning coals of the nearby fire. A few minutes later he jumped up, eyes staring wide open, and, uttering inarticulate and guttural sounds, launched himself at the onlookers who, now terrified, had previously been peacefully observing the events (Fig. 2). All those present who were near the little door of the hut ran off shouting with fear. The two expert *pande* managed to stop Babulal before he managed to cause any damage and, in the course of a few minutes, managed, with the use of chants, invocations and threats smacking clearly of exorcism, to bring the situation back

[2] It should be mentioned that there are various exceptions to this rule, particularly in the case in which neophytes are kidnapped by the spirits. For more on this topic see Riboli (2000).

under their control and brought the *cēla*, obviously still not sufficiently expert, out of the dangerous situation.

The name of the being which had possessed the young *cēla* was never revealed to me, as the very mention of its name could have constituted a call for its presence.

Babulal was not fully consecrated as a *pande* to all effects and had to wait for the next Chhonam to present himself to the community.

In the days following the Chhonam I spoke to the *cēla*, who said that all of a sudden, during the trance, he felt a presence inside him which:

"...was clutching on to my back and squeezing my soul out of my body..."[3]

According to the young man, the act of putting his feet into the fire was an extreme attempt, which failed, to control and chase off the undesired being. Babulal said he could recall nothing of what happened afterwards as the supernatural being had overcome him.

It is obvious from this short account that Babulal's trance was in fact a trance of possession from which he only managed to exit thanks to the prompt intervention of the expert *pande*.

Initiatory trances are considered to be very dangerous by the community at large, especially because the neophytes may not have acquired the required knowledge to be able to exert control over the situation.

Let us now look at the other two types of trance: the incorporatory or extrasensory trance and the trances of movement.

During the extrasensory trance the shaman hosts divinities, supernatural beings, sometimes spirits of the deceased or ancestors in his or her body, thus providing the means for the latter to communicate with the world of humans. These entities, generally invoked by the shaman by means of chants and preliminary invocations, leave their usual residences in the celestial spheres or the sphere of the underworld to come to the world of humans. In order to communicate with mankind they have to have some means to communicate with humans. In this case, the shaman, in a certain sense, "lends" his or her voice and body to the supernatural beings, though he or she always exerts a certain control over the situation.

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[3] Taken from an interview with Babulal Prajā, Mashine, September 1994.

In the course of the trance of movement, it is the soul of the shaman which travels *in spiritu* to the Heavens or Underworld or even sometimes to somewhere on the earth, for example, in search of a person or object which has been lost.

I find it extremely indicative that both extrasensory trance and trance of movement involve some form of travel.

The dimension of the journey is fundamental to shamanism. As we know, Eliade based much of his famous work (1951) on the ecstatic journey taken by the shaman to other cosmic zones. However, this is only one of the aspects of travel and therefore does not always apply or cannot always be applied to all sessions.

In fact, it is not just the journey taken by the soul of the religious expert which distinguishes what we have called shamanism, but the concept of travel as such in a much wider sense. Within the framework of a session each trance represents a journey. In extrasensory trances it is the supernatural beings that travel to the earth to communicate with the world of humans whilst in trances of movement it is the soul of the shaman that travels to the lands normally inhabited by the divinities and ancestors.

Supernatural beings also perform some form of travel to the world of humans in the course of trances of possession, but this is never experienced by humans who have no ability to control the trance.

In simple trances of possession such as those in religions like the Voodoo religion, the dimension of travel is unambiguous while this is not the case for shamanism. In the former, it is only supernatural beings that travel whereas in the latter it is also the souls of the shamans that have this faculty. Moreover, as we have already mentioned, there is a further difference in that in any case shamans can exert control over situations, which also applies to the journeys and is certainly superior to that of the merely possessed.

The dimension of travel is also important for initiatory trances, which are not easy to distinguish from trances of possession. As we well know, in the course of the calling up of neophytes to the profession by the spirits, the soul of the neophyte may be kidnapped, which in itself represents its first journey into realms out with that of the human. This form of travel imposed by the divinities and superior beings marks the beginning of the shamanic profession.

Both extrasensory trances and trances of movement are used by expert shamans. The passage from one type of trance into another in the course of a session can take place very suddenly or may take longer according to the situation in hand.

In the Chepang *pande* this passage is usually recognisable and corresponds to the phase in which the *pande* close their eyes and interrupt invocations for a few seconds, sometimes accompanied by the beating of the drum.

This moment of silence is immediately recognised by onlookers as the moment in which the soul of the *pande* abandons the earth for other cosmic zones and corresponds to the dimension of a real journey. A handful of minutes can correspond to extremely long and dangerous journeys, as is the case in the dimension of dreams, which the *pande* themselves often compare their trances to. It is a well-known fact that long and complicated dreams, which would appear to have lasted for hours, can actually take place in short periods of sleep.

These moments are critical and extremely dangerous. Onlookers observe the trance in absolute silence and with great apprehension. The passages and gates of access to other cosmic zones are narrow, extremely difficult and full of danger. According to the Chepang *pande* one of most dangerous things is to meet the soul of another shaman on the same path. The passages are narrow and the weaker shaman must let the more powerful one pass. Not to do so would require them to fight to the death.

Finally, the *pande* arrive at their destination and there must entertain, negotiate or even battle with the divinities and supernatural spirits involved in the session.

Let us now move on to a brief analysis of a funeral ceremony held by an old and expert Chepang *pande* called Narcing Prajā to illustrate and highlight the different forms and significances of shamanic trances.

For the Chepang, the *pande* are the only religious experts in the group and are called upon to carry out almost all the functions, even that of psychopomp. This is quite different from the rest of Nepal where, for most other ethnic groups, shamans are often accompanied in their functions by Brahmins or Lamas according to whether the group is Hindu or Buddhist.

This description is for the moment the only description available of a Chepang funeral, during which the soul of the *pande* must travel together with the soul of the deceased to the land of the ancestors. The path is difficult and full of danger, the *pande* must be able to avoid obstacles and continuously reassure the soul of the deceased, which is terrified and wants to return to the world of humans. However, the *pande* are well aware that if this should happen, the soul would transform into a dangerous demon, which would bring various disasters and calamities to bear on its family and therein to the community at large.

Funerals are therefore considered to be the most difficult ceremonies to celebrate and can only be held by those *pande* considered particularly expert and powerful.

One of the grandchildren of the old *pande* Narcing died a few hours after birth in the village of Moshine in April 1995. Generally speaking, funeral ceremonies for newborns are not particularly complex but in this case, the grandfather of the child realised that the soul of his granddaughter was angry because it had only been able to live in the world of humans for a few hours and could easily have transformed itself into a demon. Narcing was visibly affected by the death in the family and, as he was worried about what would happen, he decided to accompany the soul of the girl to the world of the ancestors from which there is no return, apart from that conceded to the *pande*.

The session was held in the hut of the ancient *pande* (Fig. 3) and began with the preparation of dishes with offerings for the supernatural beings and the soul of the newborn child. Before starting out on the journey, the spirits of the deceased are fed to build up their strength. The spirits of deceased adults are offered dishes which had been their favourite when alive, but small children and babies still not weaned off their mothers milk are offered an egg.

After the offerings had been prepared, Narcing put on the ritual necklaces, concentrated in silence, took up the drum and started the invocations to call up certain auxiliary spirits, in particular the soul of his drum. For the Chepang the drum—or *ring*—has its own personality and name which is kept secret by the *pande* and is usually identified with the figure of a hunter. The souls of the *pande* and the *ring* take to the paths of the Heavens and Underworld together and are indispensable for each other.

After the first chants the first supernatural beings began to arrive in the hut, attracted by both the calls and the smell of food. Each time a new being arrived, Narcing's body was affected by jerks and trembling which caused the bandolier of bells worn by the *pande* to sound. The first incorporatory trances, which are always the first to start a session, took place in this first phase.

Finally, the soul of the drum arrived: Narcing's body shook violently and the *pande* began to talk to the new arrival, other supernatural beings and to the soul of his granddaughter in an attempt to convince her to leave:

Soul of the drum, I am looking after some people, as I have always done.
O Soul, take care of these people who have turned to me for help, as I have always done.
(to the supernatural beings) *I am the young man, I have come to this place,*
I am the one who lives in these days, I have come down here.
I am putting you into the places where I usually put you:
in the area of the sacrifice, where the blood of animals is exchanged for the souls of humans.
Listen, drum, listen...
(to the dead child) *What I did yesterday for the ancestors, I am doing for you today,*
(to the drum) *I am talking about yesterday's ancestors,*
Queen of qualities, Guru of qualities,
I call upon you, I call upon you.
(to the dead child) *Grandchild, you have died as was your destiny,*
the destiny given to you by the stars and planets:
your destiny has come to pass.
I am the pande,
You, grandchild of the pande, are dead.
O drum, push aside the dry trees in the pātāl,[4]
surround the area from where the sun rises to that where it sets,
and all the space between;
be careful, this girl could become a demon,
she could take her mother, her parents, her sisters, her brothers or anyone else.
(to the girl) *You cannot stay in the breast of your mother, in the breast of your*

[4] Nepali word for the Underworld.

father, in the breast of your relatives,
you cannot stay.
You, dead soul, could still come back to see your parents!
(to the drum) *Be careful, she must not turn back.*
Underneath here there is a place where I usually play: I will surround this place.
I protect the right and left of this place.
(to the drum) *Look down there! Look down there!*
(to the drum and girl) *Let us go! Let us go to the place where all dead souls are kept!*
...

The journey was about to begin. During this dialogue with the supernatural beings, the spirit of his granddaughter and the soul of the drum, Narcing stopped chanting several times and was affected by extremely violent and deep trances, a clear sign that his body was being possessed by the different protagonists, the soul of the *ring*, that of his granddaughter and the beings and that they were conversing with him, responding to his advice, suggestions and orders, thus giving way to the incorporatory trance in the course of which everything takes place on the earth.

It was now time to set off on the extremely dangerous journey to the realm of the Underworld where the more deserving ancestors lived in an idyllic place surrounded by forests, rivers and game. As we have already mentioned, to reach this area the soul of the *pande*, drum and that of the unwilling child had to overcome all sorts of dangerous obstacles, amongst which eighty-four tongues of fire and an unsafe narrow bridge over boiling black waters in which they were on no account to fall.

The *pande* closed his eyes and started to sweat and tremble, at times clasping the frame of his drum tightly in search of some form of support (Fig. 4). The onlookers fell silent and worried and observed every little movement of Narcing, the only human to be able to go to the land of no return.

The external and physical manifestations of Narcing's deep trance were almost the same as the previous ones but their significance was now different, this was now a trance of movement, indicating the journey carried out by the *pande*. A few minutes later, though this obviously corresponded to much longer in shamanic terms, the three souls finally

arrived at the land of the ancestors. The ancestors were waiting for them at the threshold, somewhat diffident and not very friendly. They were not sure who the girl was and were anxious to partake of the offerings of food, which this time were not for them. Narcing had to beg them more than once and almost had to threaten to send the soul of the drum to kill them if they did not do what they were supposed to.

Visibly tired now, the old *pande* once again took up the chanting, affected by trembling all the while and all the onlookers could hear what was happening in the Underworld:

Tek Bahadur and Dhori Samdi[5]*, this child is dead.*
Dhori Aita, Bokhta[6] *...*
I push the family of the deceased.
No, do not throw wood and stones...
let us play in the place where the ancestors used to play.
(to the drum) *Guru of quality, Queen of quality,*
listen, listen.
Sanjia Kumari and Dhori Banji[7]
listen, listen...
Aita Ram[8]*, Dhori Samdi,*
listen, listen...
You listen too, little dead soul.
Buddhi Maya[9]*, Dhori Aita*
listen...
(the invocation to the ancestors is repeated again)
I am saying your names,
you want to have food here,
but I only have food for the dead girl baby.
Do not show your courage or I will send a flash of lightning!
In the same way in which I nail a piece of iron to a piece of wood,

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[5] This is when the soul of the *pande* encounters those of his ancestors who are the same as those of the little girl. Tek Bahadur is the *pande*'s father-in-law, Dhori Samdi one of his sisters.

[6] One of the daughters and the mother-in-law of the *pande*.

[7] The paternal grandmother and another grand-daughter of the *pande* who died when she was young.

[8] Paternal grand-father of the deceased.

[9] Perhaps an aunt of the deceased on her mother's side.

I am now nailing you here.
I could send the soul of the drum,
who could kill you, beware!
You who have died before us cannot eat now.
Once a year, during Chhonam, you receive food,
on this day you will receive food and clothes.
Aita Ram, Dhori Samdi,
you cannot eat now:
this is the food for a little baby girl,
how could you eat this?
Do not fight with me.
None of you can eat now.
Do not make me send lightning
to the right and left of you.
Without pity for the dead baby girl,
she would die.
She is also your grandchild...
there is not enough food.
Be satisfied...
You can call on those of your children who are still alive, your grand-children,
Do not call them!
You, all of you, must remain in your place down here,
she will not be fed together with you.
(to the mother of the child) *For the foetus of other children to develop,*
for there to be no risk of death for other children.
Sunal Āmā[10]*, yesterday you gave birth to a girl baby,*
like a wild potato in the forest ;
the child grew like a wild potato,
it grew like a domestic potato.
(to the drum) *Look kindly around you, all around.*
Let us go into the dead room,
look carefully.
Let us go into the dead room,
look carefully.
Let us go into the dead room, look carefully.
You who have died could become one who has woken from sleep:
you could return to see your mother.
(to the drum) *Look! Look! Look!*

---

[10] Sunal Āmā, or mother Sunal, is used by the Chepang to indicate the uterus.

the mother could have a pain in her chest, as though she was being eaten by something!
(to the child) *Eat, eat...*
I have pushed you, I have pushed you forever into the place where dead people play.

Narcing remained a short while longer in the realm of the Underworld to "kill" the uterus of the mother of the little girl, who he had understood would be in great danger if she were to become pregnant again[11] and then started off on the return journey to the earth.

The funeral was concluded with other incorporatory trances, during which the supernatural beings and the soul of the drum took their leave of the world of humans.

In the days following the session, Narcing was absolutely exhausted and had a high temperature as is usually the case after particularly taxing ceremonies, but his health improved rapidly and the old *pande* was back to normal in about a week.

Funeral ceremonies are probably one of the best illustrations of the important differences which must be made between shamanic trances. The trances cannot, as we have seen, be interpreted as one phenomenon as this would constitute a serious underestimation of this religion where the delicate and intricate equilibriums are controlled by one single individual in his or her relationship with the worlds of the supernatural and the divinities.

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Fig. 1. The young *cēla* Babulal Prajā, suddenly possessed by a hostile being. Photo: Diana Riboli, 1994.

Fig. 2. Babulal threatens the onlookers, unable to control the supernatural being which has possessed him. Photo: Diana Riboli, 1994.

Fig. 3. Funeral celebrated by the *pande* Narcing. In the background is the mother of the little girl who died. Photo: Diana Riboli, 1995.

Fig. 4. The *pande* Narcing, clasping firmly onto his drum, while accompanying the soul of the dead child into the Underworld and into the care of the souls of her family ancestors. Photo: Diana Riboli, 1995.

A Bibliographical Review on the Occasion of the 40th "Birthday" of *Nishanology*

GIOVANNI STARY VENICE

In a paper presented at the 32nd Permanent International Altaistic Conference[1], I first used the term "nishanology" to indicate a very unexpected development in the field of Manchu shamanistic studies. In fact, when M.P. Volkova (1961) published a Manchu manuscript with a shamanic-epic tale entitled *Nišan saman-i bithe*, written down in 1913 on the request of A.V. Grebenshchikov[2] by the Manchu Dekdengge in Vladivostok, nobody could imagine that this work would not only give new impulse to researches on Manchu shamanism but contribute to the revival of Manchu studies on a world-wide level.[3] Quite uniquely, the manuscript—written in such a little known and rarely studied language such as Manchu—has been translated till now (2001) already into eleven languages. Furthermore, the manuscript involved also many other aspects beyond pure shamanism, such as literature and poetry, linguistics, folklore studies, philosophy, etc. It is interesting to note that shamanistic (i. e. religious) studies, which obviously rank first, are immediately followed by researches on literature and poetry: Volkova's publication is therefore considered not only a path-breaking work in the field of Manchu shamanistic studies, but also the "inspirator" for researches devoted to Manchu autochthonous literature. The following bibliography, which does not pretend to be complete, is the best piece of evidence of it.

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[1] See Stary 1990.

[2] On A.V. Grebenshchikov and the material he collected, see Walravens 1983; Pan [Pang] 1991 (Chinese translation: 1992); 1998, 2000.

[3] See Stary 1999.

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News and Notes

CONFERENCE ON MUSICAL ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE MANCHU-TUNGUZ PEOPLES, YAKUTSK, AUGUST 17–23, 2000

Precisely eight years after the conference "Shamanism as a Religion" which brought about a turning point in Siberian shamanism research (Hoppál 1993), Yakutsk again became the venue of an important conference. Researchers and performers of the musical folklore of the small nationalities of North East Siberia—people involved in the perpetuation of this tradition came to the conference from the far away tundra—gathered in a group numbering almost eighty. Some American scholars were also present at the conference, as was a Hungarian who was given a hearty welcome by the organizers: the Ministry of Culture of the Sakha Republic, the local UNESCO committee and the Museum of Music and Folklore. To commemorate the conference, a CD was also published featuring details of recordings from the Even, Evenki, Negidal, Orok, Ulcha, Nanay and Udehe ethnic groups, collected by Yuri Sheikin in the course of numerous collecting tours from the mid-1960's onwards. The participants were given a volume containing the lectures or their abstracts, rendered particularly valuable by the glossary at the end (Sheikin [ed.] 2000). This terminology list of 281 items explains briefly the specialist terms used in the folk music of the Eastern Siberian Manchu-Tunguz peoples. The list was compiled by Yuri Sheikin, who also completed it with a most useful bibliography.

The three day conference was opened by cultural minister of the Sakha Republic, A.S. Borisov. The first lecture was delivered by Yuri Sheikin in which he described the results of historical comparative research of the musical (intonation) culture of the Manchu-Tunguz peoples. He distinguishes three clearly separate styles or areas which are: 1) Central Siberia, 2) South East Siberia and the valley of the Amur and Sakhalin, 3) Manchuria. The musical material of shamanic

rituals plays an important part in the musical culture of each of the three areas.

It was a general tendency, that most speakers mentioned the influence of shamanic songs and melodies on the musical style of the ethnic group in question. We may cite as an example the talk given by Tatiana Sem on the ritual songs of Nanay shamans or Tatiana Bulgakova who discovered songs among the traditional folk music of the Nanay which serve the express purpose of communication with spirits—these are the genres which we may call rite songs.

Galina Varlarmova is a writer of Evenki origin who follows in the wake of her shamanic ancestors and often now performs with her drum as a perpetuator of the shamanic traditions. Her lecture was about the shamanic research of her own dynasty as well as about the role of dreams in keeping contact with the helping spirits. Nadezhda Duvan examined the personality formation of Ulcha shamans as reflected in various social tasks and expectations (fortune telling, healing, securing good luck for a journey, etc.). An interesting lecture was given by Nikolai Dunkai about a shamanic play (*Mogushi*), while Valery Vasil'ev attempted to interpret shamanic drums as lunar calendars (this is indicated by the 12 resonating ridges on the side of the drum) which contain in an encoded fashion the mythological theme of the eternal circulation and rebirth of life and death.

One of the interesting linguistic codes of Yakut shaman mythology was addressed in a talk given by Yekaterina Romanova who explained the cultural meanings of bird symbolism and bird language. Data on the special language use of shamans were quoted by Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, specialist on Yakut shamanism who was unfortunately unable to participate at the conference, which is why we only quote the summary of her paper on the impact of the Tunguz influence on Sakha shamanic culture.

"Particularly interesting and understudied is the phenomenon of language transfers during shamanic séances, when, for example, Sakha shamans chanted and sang in Tungusic languages. A twentieth century example is the famed and respected Konstantin Chirkov, who had Tungusic helper spirit, although his everyday knowledge of Even was inconsiderable." (Sheikin [ed.] 2000: 10)

Another American anthropologist, Marilyn Walker gave a talk with the title "The spiritual function of language". Unfortunately, a superficial and error-ridden translation prevented local Russian colleagues from appreciating the message of the paper. Walker discussed shamanic language as communication on the physical, symbolic and subtle planes and addressed the spiritual function of language, a topic that has received little attention in the ethnographic literature. In her opinion "new paradigms are emerging in the academic study of shamanism and of language. By considering the metaphysics of language and the reality of the shamanic experience, we address and may begin to understand the spiritual function of language. These new models acknowledge the subtle realms, not as imaginary or illusory, but as identifiable, accessible and describable." (quotation from her paper)[1]

The relationship between music and shamanism among Manchu-Tunguz peoples can be seen both in terms of ritual, and in other performing arts, especially live storytelling. At this conference we heard ample evidence, both in the papers and in performances, for the many ways that music contributes to the spiritual function of telling epics, tales, and poetry.

The connection can be seen immediately in the Tunguz word for a magic tale or epic, *nimngan* (Evenki) *nimanku* (Udehe/Nanay) with other variations in related languages. The word is directly related to one of the terms for a shaman's ceremonial activity. Tellers are understood to have a special talent for connecting with the spirit world, as do shamans. Singing and playing musical instruments is clearly the most effective way of expressing the parts of life that go beyond words, and of calling spirits. In turn, the texts themselves are prime carriers of shamanic imagery.

In her tour of the fascinating Museum of Music and Folklore (one of the organizations that sponsored this superb conference), director Aiza P. Reshetnikova pointed out that in Sakha epics different singing styles accompany the appearance of each major character. Singing is a means of communication between clans. In her conference paper she went on

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[1] Marilyn Walker's paper ("The Language of Shamans and the Metaphysics of Language: Emerging Paradigms in Shamanic Studies") was published in *Shaman* 9/1: 35–59 in 2001.

to point out that in contrast with this "horizontal" form of communication, in Evenki epics (as in the storytelling traditions of the Amur region) music allows communication "vertically"—between human beings and spirits and deities. Both of these forms of communication give strong signals to listeners as to what is really happening in a story on the spiritual plane.

One of the best things about the conference was the frequency of performances by Even, Evenki, Udehe, Ulcha, Nanay, and Korean musicians. Listeners could actually experience the live musical forms and instruments being discussed. The delightful personalities and traditional clothing of the performers brought the academic papers to life. In addition to songs and instrumental music we heard stories in traditional performance style within the conference, at concerts, in schools, and also under the open air at the Evenki center.

Many of the performers appeared in two hats—also presenting academic papers. One that struck me particularly was that of Valentina Enokhova who discussed Evenki musical instruments. Herself a nomadic reindeer herder, she explained the way children are trained to recognize sounds of reindeer and their bells as an essential way of mapping directions and distances, thus organizing the space in which they live and work. Musical sound orients a person in an ever-changing landscape, just as it helps a shaman to find the way in the worlds of spirit.

The Even and Evenki people have retained their traditions along with their lifestyle to a greater degree than many other Siberian peoples, and there appears to be a wealth of story and music still to be recorded. Although actively engaged in this work themselves, they welcome outside assistance, especially urgent after the flooding that destroyed so many communities along the Lena River in May 2001. Connections can be made through the conference organizers (mincoolrsy@mail.ru).

Scholar and performer Chan Park added an important link between Manchu-Tunguz and Korean cultures through the tradition of P'ansori, a sung story with strong shamanic roots. She spoke of the ways that spirituality wanes as secularity waxes, which can be seen when music and story which formerly fulfilled a spiritual function turned into simple entertainment—a trend which can certainly be seen in the west as well as in Asia.

As always at conferences some of the most wonderful moments happened outside of the organized sessions. One of my favorite memories of this one is of an evening visit with Chan Park and the Udehe, Ulcha and Nanay performers in which stories of bears, tigers, spiritual traditions and historical military exploits were exchanged and the cultural and even genetic links between these peoples were felt deeply on the personal level. As Chan puts it, "There's a lot more to history than what you can read in books." This added element comes to life when people meet and make friends.

Thanks to all the organizers for making these meetings possible, and especially to Yuri Sheikin whose breadth of scholarship and enthusiasm for both his subject and his many friends pervaded the whole experience. Throughout our days in the Sakha Republic the hospitality was warm, transportation timely, housing comfortable, conference papers interesting and friendship memorable.

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Kira van Deusen/Vancouver Mihály Hoppál/Budapest

Minutes of the General Assembly of the ISSR, Held at Viljandi Cultural College, Viljandi, Estonia, August 16, 2001

Following the final morning session of the conference, which concluded with papers on shamanism in China, Malaysia, Kazakhstan and "Addressing spirits by singing—the Estonian way", the meeting of the General Assembly took place. Dr. Peter Knecht, chair of the meeting,

invited Dr. Mihály Hoppál to give the Presidential Address. He began by saying that the rain at the beginning of our conference showered a blessing upon us, as it would in Mongolia. After thanking our Estonian colleagues and organizers, Art Leete and Anzori Barkalaja, of the Viljandi Cultural College, Dr. Hoppál noted the passing of Vladimir Nikolaevich Basilov (1937–1998), pre-eminent authority on Central Asian shamanism, and Leonid Pavlovich Potapov (1905–2000), a great scholar of Altaic shamanism. Both were from the grand old generation of Russian scholars and both made significant contributions to the ethnography of shamanism in the Russian sphere of influence.

History of the ISSR: Dr. Hoppál reviewed the history of the society, starting with a small meeting which established the society in Zagreb in 1989. The first official conference was in Seoul in 1991, followed by Budapest in 1993, and Nara, Japan in 1995 (one of the founders, Kim Taegon, died just before that meeting). In 1997 ISSR met in Chantilly, France and 1999 in Ulaan Baator, Mongolia. Following this conference in Viljandi, Estonia in 2001, the next meeting will be in Beijing, China in 2003, which invitation was voted upon unanimously by the General Assembly here. The presidential report also outlined events which occurred in the last two years including the establishment of new institutions and societies, among them the Society of Shamanistic Research in Japan, the Society for Shamanistic Research in Korea which has 100 members, and a new Study Center for Shamanistic Research in China. This latter institution will focus on local variants of shamanism among different ethnic groups in China. Dr. Hoppál remarked that the term "shamanhood" may be a more accurate term to use in discussing these various ethnic entities; there is a shift in paradigms rising from new approaches to the study of shamanism. We are becoming more inter-disciplinary and authors are coming from different fields making our dialogue more fruitful. Dr. Hoppál noted that especially scholars coming from North America are more practice-oriented and it is important to include these new points of view and new scholarship. He sees a shift here in the emergence of new scholars who have a view from within their own ethnic groups, and is hopeful that scholars from South America will join us as well. To really understand the word of the spirits and the Gods, a local person is needed. Young scholars will give new insights and open new understanding. Dr. Hoppál said that,

moreover, we are generally becoming more aware of ecological and social issues; we should continue with historical and ethnological studies, but also listen to new approaches and like shamans, keep a balance in our work.

Publications: Shaman journal is still active and we should encourage more university libraries to subscribe. The Hungarian Academic Press was sold to a Dutch publisher. *Bibliotheca Shamanistica* will be publishing (September 2001) Volume IX: Juha Pentikäinen (ed.) *Shamanhood: Symbolism and Epic.* The interest of this series is in manuscripts written in English based on field materials; scholars are encouraged to apply.

Special Award: A special award has been established for those scholars whose work has created a legacy of fine data collection together with theoretical understanding. The honorand of this award is Prof. Dr. Ulla Johansen, a native of Estonia who is professor at the Institut für Völkerkunde der Universität in Köln. She was honored for her work in Tuva, her tremendous knowledge, and her great contribution in working with young scholars. She has a forthcoming book on Tuva.

Elections: Mihály Hoppál was re-elected as President of the society, and Bai Gengsheng was elected as Vice-President. He will be responsible for organizing the ISSR conference in 2003 in Beijing, China. Both were elected unanimously. Dr. Hoppál thanked him in advance for taking on this burden and commented that now China will have not only the Olympics, but a Shamanism Conference also.

Report of the Organizing Committee: Dr. Art Leete expressed his pleasure that we had the conference in Estonia and noted that the conference got attention in the media with a headline news article and photograph (which included our honorand, Professor Ulla Johansen). He plans to publish a book based on the reports of the conference, with a publication date at the beginning of 2002.

The meeting was concluded with thanks from Dr. Peter Knecht to Dr. Art Leete and his colleagues for a successful conference and to Dr. Mihály Hoppál for all his efforts.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE, MASS. EVA JANE NEUMANN FRIDMAN