

SHAMAN

Journal of the International Society
for Shamanistic Research

SHAMAN

Volume 2 Numbers 1 & 2 Spring/Autumn 1994
Second Edition, Revised and Expanded 2007

Front and back covers: Bears, elks, reindeer and human figures on a rock carving near the town of Alta in the county of Finnmark in northern Norway. After a photograph taken by Juha Pentikäinen, University of Helsinki, Finland, and used here with his kind permission.

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First edition published 1994. Second edition, revised and expanded 2007

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Printed in Hungary

ISSN 1216-7827

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Transcending Bodily and Territorial Boundaries. Reconceptualizing Shamanism as a Form of Religion*

VEIKKO ANTONEN

TURKU

The author argues that the cognitive semantic study of words denoting 'sacred' in their prehistoric contexts can offer new insights into the analysis of the religious element in shamanism in general and the local representations of shamanic traditions in particular. In the article, the issue of sacrality is not theorized and looked at from the conjectural religious or theological contents ascribed to the notion in major world religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Instead, a closer attention is paid to the linguistic, folkloristic and ethnographic data in which vernacular terms for 'sacred' appear. With the aim of explaining why the notion exists in the first place and of disclosing the system of logic that has governed the formation of conceptual content of the notion over time, also in non-religious contexts, the article introduces cognitive science of religion, which has established itself as a new sub-field in religious studies. Along with the semantic analysis of the term pyhä denoting 'sacred' in the Finnish language, it is posited that a cognitive framework provides a set of powerful explanatory tools by which shamanism as a form of religion can be reconceptualized. The fundamental cognitive mechanisms that have shaped the formation of the domain of the sacred as well as mental imagery and ritual mastery of spirit helpers in shamanic practices are based on the categorization skills of human beings. One of the elementary categorical distinctions around which shamanic performances revolve, concerns the transcendence of a category boundary that sets the interior of a territory apart from the exterior and the internal of the human body apart from the external. In the article a category-theoretical approach to the issue of sacrality is introduced as a means to understand fundamental knowledge structures in the indigenous worldview in which shamanism as a form of religion evolved.

* This is an update of the article that was published originally in *Shaman* 2(2): 1–9 (1994) with the title “Transcending Bodily and Territorial Boundaries. Interpreting Shamanism as a Form of Religion.”

In What Sense Is Shamanism a Form of Religion?

Shamanism is a prehistoric cultural phenomenon which can be found in certain fringe areas of the world in its traditional forms. In northern Siberia, Central and Southeast Asia as well as in North and South America, shamanism is still a living reality in the lives of millions of people. It has survived alongside the modernization of Hindu, Buddhist and Shinto, Christian and Islamic religious traditions mostly as a marginal institution. One finds active shamans, both male and female, in the villages, where the political, religious, health-care and development programs of the ruling elites have affected merely the semblance of social and cultural integration to the administrative centers. However, shamanism has not survived as an irrational remnant of the past, but as a form of folk religion still providing—largely in rural areas—both a worldview and a ritual method for healing. Basic social values are expressed and renewed in shamanism, even as meaningful relationships are established between man, society and nature through the mediation of the spirit world.¹

In an attempt to explore the religious element in shamanic performances, let me first of all clarify what I mean by the term ‘religious’. In using the notion of ‘religion’ and the attribute ‘religious’, I am not referring to any existing organized religion and its presumed influence on shamanic beliefs and practices in specific cultural contexts. Instead, I am employing the terms in the sense that they are used in the academic study of religion, e.g. in cultural anthropology and the history of religions (or religious studies). In spite of the fact that ‘religion’ as a conceptual entity is a Western folk category, it can be used universally to refer to various forms of human thought and behaviour involving some verbal or non-verbal interaction with superhuman or non-human agents.²

¹ See e.g. Hultkrantz 1978; Siikala 1978; “Introduction” in Balzer 1997: xiii–xxxii, 2002.

² This is a slight modification of the definition given by Hans H. Penner (1989: 7–8). In his book *Conceptualizing Religion*, Benson Saler writes that “To say that religion is one of a number of analytical categories for comprehending culture or the human condition does not commit us to the notion that religion is a human universal. It may well be the case that elements that we conventionally think of as ‘religious’ occur in all human societies. Whether or not, however, we want to call some aggregation of such elements ‘religion’ is another matter.” (Salter 2000: 257) For religion as a Western folk category, see Saler 2000: 7–8.

To say that shamanism is a religion, thus, is not to say that it is religion in the sense that Judaism, Christianity or Islam are. The religious element in shamanism will become clear through the analogy of music. A particular piece of music will be classified as being in the “ethnic,” “folk,” “rock,” “jazz” or “classical” genre according to its place of origin, tone and rhythm, melodic structure, instrumentation and style. We are all agreed that not all forms of sonic expressions fall into the category of music, also for reasons other than taste. The boundary that sets one form of music apart from another, or from noise, is extremely fuzzy across and within all genres and styles. Music involves an act of interpretation that is always culture- and context-specific. It is not a single element, such as a set of sounds that makes something a member in the category of music, but a set of interrelated patterns of sounds with a specific tone, tempo and rhythm having their origin in specific cultural traditions. This analogy may help us to understand not only the diversity, plurality and multiplicity of functions of musical traditions and styles, but—regardless of the form they might have taken in human history—religious traditions, institutions and representations, including styles of being religious. We have primitive and archaic, or primal and tribal religions in the same way as we have popular and historic, traditional, modern and post-modern, organized and non-organized religions, religious styles and forms of spiritualities. As is the case with music, religion and spirituality are extremely fuzzy at their boundaries as conceptual entities. No clear line can be drawn between religion and non-religion. Although gods, spirits and other super-human agents are used as markers which set religion apart from non-religion, there are ‘sacred’ elements and discourses beyond the domain of religion which deserve to be looked at by scholars of religious studies both for the reason of the cultural phenomena themselves, but also for methodological reasons to develop new interpretive and explanatory strategies in the study of religion.³

Recently, representatives of the cognitive science of religion have introduced a new level of reduction, the evolutionary evolved architecture of the human mind. Scholars in this new field of research argue that human beings have a natural propensity to entertain religious ideas. According to scholars, the human mind is equipped with fun-

³ See Knott 2005: 33–34, 91–93.

damental cognitive mechanisms that become operative when people process, codify, transmit and socio-politically organize both religious and non-religious knowledge available to them in their environment in the midst of their everyday social interactions. In the theory put forth by the American anthropologist Stewart Guthrie, human propensity to religion is explained by a common perceptual strategy in which characteristics of living things (e.g. sentience and spontaneous motion) are attributed to inanimate things and events. According to Guthrie, animism (making alive) and anthropomorphism (making human) are the paramount cognitive properties which have special significance in explaining recurrent features in religious representations in cultures the world over. By tendency to anthropomorphize, Guthrie refers to human mental capacities such as linguistic and symbolic communication skills which are attributed to non-human things, objects, events and animals.⁴ Biological evolution has equipped human beings with a special kind of mental architecture that constrains the formation of religious ideas. Guthrie argues that the human mind is hard-wired to detect humanlike agents. While Guthrie considers agency detection an intuitive property of humans, the French anthropologist and cognitive scholar Pascal Boyer, on the other hand, has focused his attention on recurrent features in religious representations which run counter to our intuitive assumptions (Boyer 2001: 65, 73). Drawing from the work of cognitive psychologists on ontological distinctions, Boyer introduces the notion of counter-intuitiveness as a technical term to refer to the class of phenomena that contradict some of the information that intuitive ontological categories provide. He refers to massive amounts of evidence of counter-intuitive representations in world's mythologies, fantastic tales, anecdotes, cartoons, religion and science-fiction. The dominant characteristic in genre-specific representations of gods, humans and animals, as well as invisible, humanlike agents such as ghosts, is their counter-intuitiveness: super-human agents violate the physical, biological and psychological properties which we humans intuitively ascribe to ourselves as bodily persons. Gods, for instance, are thought to possess the humanlike mind—but are not constrained by other biological, physical, physiological, or psychological properties peculiar to us ordinary human beings. Gods are offered food in sacri-

⁴ See Guthrie 1995: 197–204.

ficial rituals, but still they do not grow, get old and die. Dead beings or ghosts, on the other hand, do not need to be bothered by solid objects (Boyer 1994: 100–102). Once we have ontological categories of persons, plants, animals and artefacts as well as a set of assumptions and inferences on properties according to which members in specific ontological categories are expected to behave, the human mind is capable of making up hybrid forms of combinations in which these ontological assumptions and expectations are violated (Boyer 2001: 63–71). Boyer has coined the term ‘cognitive optimum’ to explain why certain kinds of religious or magical ideas are successful for transmission. For cognitively optimum ideas to transmit, they need to show both intuitive, i.e. prototypical, properties as well as counter-intuitive, i.e. non-prototypical, properties in a certain balance.⁵

Theories by Guthrie and Boyer help to explain why certain kinds of religious ideas and phenomena are recurrent and why they are successful for transmission. This concerns also shamanism. Those shamans who are reported to have an ability to fly and occupy two separate spaces far apart from each other simultaneously or make a journey and enter the abode of the deceased in the underworld or metamorphose themselves into wolves, for example, employ the innate human capacity for cognitively optimum religious representations. Even though it is intuitive to attribute humanlike properties to stones, rocks, rivers or mountains, it is counter-intuitive to believe that they have same biological, psychological and physiological properties as human beings and are capable of performing similar kind of intentional actions. Intuitiveness and counter-intuitiveness are both natural properties of human beings. As cognitive agents, humans are predisposed to the conceptual organisation not only of visions, sounds, smells, tastes, objects, events, but also of notions of unseen agents and entities; and, moreover, of the properties of things and objects on the basis of which they are set apart from other similar things and objects. Whether these abstractions are labelled religious, sacred, or just in some way different, they are nevertheless integral elements of human cognition.

⁵ Boyer 1994, 2001; see also Pyysiäinen 2001: 19–23, 2004: 42–52.

Rethinking the Notion of the ‘Sacred’ in Shamanism

A human tendency to sacralize, i.e. to set apart and mark off spaces, places, times, persons, things, objects as ‘sacred’ by various strategies and forms of sacralization and ritualization is so conspicuous a feature in the religious history of humankind that the logic behind the widespread use of the notion demands further attention. Many cognitive scholars—along with more social-scientific-oriented scholars in religious studies—have pointed their critical finger towards the religionizing tendencies of phenomenologists of religion when employing the sacred as a scholarly category within the hermeneutical tradition.⁶ Russell McCutcheon and Stewart Guthrie have expressed overt suspicion over the analytical potential of the concept of the sacred. They posit that the sacred as a scholarly concept is “ill-defined” (McCutcheon 2001: 181) and “inaccessible to the intellect and to analysis” (Guthrie 1996: 128). If the notion of the sacred is used only descriptively as a headline category for the religious, I agree with the criticism. However, if the interest of knowledge is shifted to the analysis of the normative character of linguistic/cultural categories on the basis of which members in local communities set bounds to their social life, create a sense of identity as a spatially distinct social group, and generate and represent the narrative and moral dimension of their history, then the sacred as an analytical focus may increase significantly our knowledge of cultural factors that ‘make religion possible.’⁷

My interest arises from ethnographic data on ‘folk religion’ among hunting and fishing cultures in the Circumpolar North as well as among agricultural societies in Europe, where the use of the word and the concept of ‘sacred’ has been widespread.⁸ It is not the content that biblical theologians ascribe to the notion that matters, but rather the empirical, comparative and systematic analysis of vernacular words denoting the

⁶ See e.g. Lawson and McCauley 1993.

⁷ My approach leans heavily on the work of ethnographers, historians of religions, sociologists and anthropologists of religion who have drawn their inspiration from W. Robertson Smith, Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss. See Comstock 1981; Paden 1991, 1992, 1996; Smith 2004. In the matter of theory, I have found Mary Douglas’s *Purity and Danger* (1989), George Lakoff’s cognitive semantics (1987). Kim Knott’s spatial analysis (Knott 2005) and recent work on the cognitive science of religion, including my own (see Boyer 2001; Guthrie 1995; Pyysiäinen 2001; Pyysiäinen and Anttonen 2002) particularly helpful.

⁸ See Anttonen 1996a, 1996b, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2002.

‘sacred’ in the contexts where they appear. The term ‘sacred’, which appears as an adjective in world languages,⁹ is a category with a more universal meaning than is attributed to it in Christianity or any other so-called ‘higher’ religion. Christianity has turned the concept into a noun and made it a predicate of the absolute, a distinct, absolute realm of God. The program that the famous German Protestant theologian Rudolf Otto, as well as scholars such as Gerardus van der Leeuw (1986) and Mircea Eliade (1959), created in the 20th century, has had a strong impact on the study of sacredness (or Holiness), but their approaches are open to the criticisms of essentialism and colonialism and are thus limited for cross-cultural research. Otto coined the attribute *numinous* (from *numen* ‘God’ in Latin) to refer to the experience of the extramundane (*Überweltlich*) as the primary concept in the domain of religion. He emphasized the *a priori* quality of the ‘wholly other’¹⁰ which can be conceived only through its two distinctive emotional schematizations, *mysterium tremendum* and *mysterium fascinans*. In his book *Shamanism. Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* the Romanian historian of religion, Mircea Eliade, adapted the method of phenomenological reduction by disregarding the contextual analysis of observations of those ethnographers who had gained first-hand information on shamans and shamanic rituals in the field in remote village communities in Siberia. For instance, in explicating the nature of guardian spirits and mythical animal helpers, Eliade deduced various properties of observable human behavior in order to postulate the sacred structures of the cosmos. According to Eliade, guardian spirits and mythical animal helpers are not exclusive characteristics of shamanism since “everywhere in the cosmos archaic man recognizes a source of the magico-religious sacred, that any fragment of the cosmos can give rise to hierophany, in accordance with the dialectic of the sacred” (Eliade 1964: 107). Even though Eliade read historical sources on the level of an individual, he was more interested in pan-human religious characteristics as evidence of the existence of the Sacred as an *a priori* ontological realm. In his academic work, there was no place for an individual with a distinctive cultural heritage, personal and social history and subjective meanings. Eliade valued only a detached, paradigmatic religious individual, with

⁹ See e.g. Colpe 2005; Benveniste 1973: 452–456.

¹⁰ See Otto 1958: 42–49, 57–59.

the capacity to transcend history and cosmicize the social world with symbols in which certain non-temporal patterns of universal structures and archetypes recur and repeat themselves. At the center of his evaluative view of the religious history of humankind was the notion of “beginnings,” which he conceptualized as a non-temporal element that represents an archaic stage of culture to which a religious individual continuously desires to return. Eliade held the view that nostalgia for the sacred time of the gods *in illo tempore* forms the psychological motivation for religion (Eliade 1975: 172).

The Evidence of *Pyhä*-Initial Toponyms

A feature which is typical of Finnish place-names is the abundance of names beginning with the qualifier *pyhä*-, i.e. ‘sacred’. The register of toponyms maintained by the National Land Survey of Finland includes well over 200 hundred such names. The term ‘*pyhä*’ was used in the vernacular as an adjective to mark off prominent and exceptional natural places such as lakes, rivers, rapids, ponds, larger hills, capes, bays and fells as outer borders which separated the wilderness areas (Finnish *eränkävintialue*) of distinct population groups from each other. Any analysis of the factors underlying these *pyhä* forms to designate features of the terrain cannot start from the *a priori* assumption that they are based on religious considerations. Onomastics provide a perspective which is independent of any ecclesiastical tradition. Approaching the logic of the *pyhä*-initial place-names in the frame of reference of the archaeology of religion, attention needs to be paid to two fundamental aspects which contributed to *pyhä*-naming: the need to organize and articulate one’s environment, and the need to mediate the social and cultural information contained in the place-names, such as beliefs and behavioural norms. The information contained in place-names thus concerns equally both human economic activities and shared rules related to the preservation of social values. The regularity and expansivity of the use of the term *pyhä* in place-names in the Baltic-Finnic linguistic and cultural area reflects the social importance of spatial divisions and boundaries for different settlements and communities.

One of the leading scholars of Finnish medieval history, Seppo Suvanto has linked *pyhä*-initial toponyms with the spread in Finland of a specific boundary making and boundary marking institution,

starting from the cognate forms in Estonian and the Scandinavian languages, *püha* and *helg*, *helga* (> *helig* < **hailaga*-) respectively. The form *püha* was used in Estonia in names referring to boundary places already before the 13th century, as was the form *helga* in Scandinavia. Suvanto thus concludes that the qualifier *pyhä* was applied in the same context as soon as it became customary to mark land ownership by boundary markers: “Thus boundary place-names which include *pyhä* as one part may in fact constitute the very oldest boundary indicators.” (Suvanto 1972: 39) *Pyhä* was used as an adjective in the vernacular to gloss territorial boundaries at topographically anomalous sites in the wilderness. It became customary to mark value-laden sites at crossings of waterways and intersections of spatial divisions, and as such in territorial transition areas, in which specific behavioural norms needed to be observed. For the members of hunting and fishing communities these sites provided a conceptual domain by which lines of demarcation could be drawn between the interior and exterior of the area of economic exploitation. As an appellative designation for a site, the word *pyhä* also demarcated situations and events for ritual behaviour. Assigning *pyhä* names to distinct topographical locations is based on the vernacular discourse of values in which conceptual divisions needs to be made between the area which belongs to one’s own sphere of activity and that which is outside it. At the same time, it also demarcates events and situations in specific locations, in which rituals are performed at the boundary points of temporal categories during the annual economic cycle. The qualifier *pyhä* signified the norms and sanctions of a local community and regulation of behaviour at these significant locations in order to acquire and maintain specific social values. The adjective *pyhä* was used of sites and places which the linguistic community wanted to demarcate from the rest of the environment as ‘separate’, ‘marked’, ‘designated’, ‘prohibited’, ‘dangerous’.

At the time Suvanto published his study, he did not have access to more recent work carried out by linguists on the history of the word *pyhä*. In the early 1980s, the Finnish philologist Jorma Koivulehto showed that the adjective *pyhä* is a Germanic loanword. The source adjective in Proto-Germanic is **wītha-*, from the root **wīk-* ‘separation; cutting’. Koivulehto has reconstructed the Early Proto-Finnic form as **püšä* (Koivulehto 1981). *Pyhä* became introduced as an adjective to mark territorial divisions during the Bronze Age (1800–500 B.C.E.)

and was established as a toponym during the Iron Age (c. 500–1200 A.D.). The Finnish archaeologist Jussi-Pekka Taavitsainen has suggested that the word *pyhä* was borrowed from Proto-Germanic to refer to ‘Lapp cairns’ as boundary markers of the settlement. The word indicated whose land was in question. Taavitsainen has observed that place-names occurring in the vicinity of the cairns include names containing the forms *pyhä*, *hiisi* and *lappi*, the meaning of which all belong to the same semantic field (Taavitsainen 2003).

Preliminary research findings concerning Lapp cairns situated in Central Finland nevertheless leave unanswered the question of the relationship between the cairns and *pyhä* toponyms. Throughout the Baltic-Finnic area, such names are typically assigned to features in the terrain which stand out in some way topographically from their surroundings; this seems to justify the conclusion that the Lapp cairns, built at locations which offered a broad vantage point over their surroundings, formed part of the culture of boundary marking by the wilderness hunting community. Taavitsainen, however, rightly points out that more archeological evidence is needed before a definitive answer can be given to the question of the chronological connection between the cairns and the assigning of *pyhä* names. In addition, we need to understand the possible significance of the cairns as the site of funerary rites for the dead. The social function of these rituals in the wilderness culture differed from that in the agrarian culture; they not only expressed the relationship between the individual and his ancestors as guardians of customs and social order, as suggested by Uno Harva (1948: 511–512) in his *Suomalaisten muinaisusko*, but also served to ensure success in hunting and to protect territorial boundaries in the wilderness. Taavitsainen in fact asks whether the burial rites connected with the cairns served to mark these territorial boundaries in the wilderness and their social control. The cairns which have so far been studied nevertheless do not offer sufficient grounds for any firm conclusions. The use of *pyhä* toponyms for the boundaries of hunting territories in the wilderness—in such forms as *pyhålahti*, *pyhäkoski* or *pyhäsalmi*—chronologically precedes the institution of the Lapp cairns.

Religion and the Logic of Boundary Making

The adjective *pyhä* had a religious referent only to the extent that the category ‘religion’ could be equated with the categories of ‘the social’ and ‘the territorial’. According to the methodologies of both Émile Durkheim and Arnold van Gennep ‘religion’ as a category can be used in connection with popular traditions of hunting and agricultural societies when used comparatively. According to this comparative methodology, linguistic expressions in vernacular, oral narratives in folklore and other forms of cultural representation forming the nucleus of performances conceptualized as ‘religious’ are part and parcel of the overall social and spatial categories by which the members of ethnic communities comprehend and communicate the structures of meaning of their life-worlds. As Arnold van Gennep has emphasized, spatial boundaries are not only legal and economic in nature, but also magico-religious. The boundaries marked by natural features such as rocks, trees, rivers and lakes or by natural objects such as stakes, portals or upright rocks are known by local people through collective tradition: as van Gennep writes “the inhabitants and their neighbours know well within what territorial limits their rights and prerogatives extend” (van Gennep 1960: 15). The boundary points cannot be crossed or passed without the risk of supernatural dangers and sanctions. The boundary point is most often accompanied with interdictions, behavioural norms, rules of avoidance and prohibitions. Cultural contingent, socially prescribed rituals are considered the only proper ways to deal with the crossing of such boundaries (van Gennep 1960: 15–17).

The majority of Finnish place-names beginning with *pyhä* are the product of concepts guiding the categorization of space and the customary law tradition by which groups of settlers sought either to separate themselves from one another or to mark off their territory from the shared inner domain or the outer domain. In place-names *pyhä* signified the outer border of the inhabited area. As a temporal category *pyhä* was used to denote times that were on the border and that ‘fell between’ temporal categories. It thus became a basic term in the reckoning of time according to the lunar calendar. Among the Baltic Finns it was used to mark off times into periods by virtue of its meaning of prohibition and non-violation. *Pyhä* meant forbidden, something to be avoided, dangerous, so that the behavioural norms prescribed by society had to be observed during the time marked off as sacred. In addi-

tion to territorial and temporal borders, the notion of *pyhä* was used as an adjective to mark off an object, a phenomenon, a time, an animal or a person that was to be avoided and held as forbidden because of its dangerousness or impurity, indeed to separate it from the sphere of everyday social life.

Shamans as Technicians of the Sacred

Mircea Eliade conceptualized shamanic practice as a technique of ecstasy (Eliade 1964: 4). Åke Hultkrantz sees shamans as social functionaries who attain ecstasy with the help of guardian spirits in order to “create a rapport with the supernatural world” (Hultkrantz 1978: 30, 1993: 6). In terms of role theory, Anna-Leena Siikala defines shamans as “creators of interaction between this world and the other world through the ecstatic role-taking technique” (Siikala 1978: 28–30). The problem with all of these approaches is that notions of “the supernatural” or the “other world” of ethnographic texts are taken as ‘theologically’ given with little or no attempt to analyze the semantic contents of native categories.¹¹ In myths and epic narratives the other world is spatially grounded. The supernatural world of gods and spirits is a discursive creation, which is being produced by the natural human propensity to conceptualize relations between persons, objects, things, events and artefacts in spatial metaphors. These “otherworldly” places are situated in deserts, forests, lakes, or are placed in some vertical relation to trees, mountains and celestial bodies, the location of which are “beyond” or “beneath” spatial and territorial boundaries of human habitation. By distinguishing inhabited from uninhabited areas, discourse on agents and spiritual entities is created in the very same process of making a difference. Folklore texts provide any number of examples of this, as do the canonized texts of the world’s major religions.¹²

In her article on holy places of the northern Khanty, Anna-Leena Siikala discusses the issue of marking spatial boundaries among the Khanty in reference to their sacred places. She provides accurate first-hand description of the classificatory role of the notion of sacred as

¹¹ See a good criticism of Eliade and Hultkrantz in Porterfield 1987: 721–723.

¹² See Tarkka 1994: 292–296.

a categorical constraint according to which men and women adjust their behaviour (Siikala and Ulyashev 2003). From the methodological standpoint, I find Richard Noll’s (1985: 444) analysis of shamanic technique as mental imagery cultivation fruitful, which can be developed further within the cognitive framework of my argument and applied to explain the details in ethnographic accounts like that of Siikala.

According to Noll (1985: 447), “the essence of shamanism” is vision cultivation: the shaman’s goal is mental imagery, and the induction of an altered state of consciousness is a means to that end. To reach a state of visual cultivation, the shaman must detach himself or herself from bodily consciousness. In a state of mental imagery, the “non-bodily awareness” of the shaman is shifted onto the “bodies” of theriomorphic spirits which, according to the shamanic system of beliefs, occupy every bounded entity. What the shaman does in mental imagery cultivation is that he or she removes the cognitive boundaries by which “his social world is put together” and “falls” or “ascends” into the extra-terrestrial and extra-bodily world whence the power of all bounded entities and categories originates, and whence it can be brought back in full force to “earth.”

The line of argument developed in this article brings the cognitive semantic analysis of the words for ‘sacred’ together with conceptualisation of sociocultural practices in societies and their environments which gave rise also to forms of shamanic ritual behaviour. Control over the metaphysical forces and dangers associated with boundary-situations was the privilege of the shaman who, by virtue of his psychic capability and initiation to the profession, was able to transcend those boundaries which held the social world of his community together, for restoring the lost ‘soul’ and strength. Shamanic trance and soul-journeys, in the form of helping spirits or power animals, are means of crossing the cognitive boundary lines which set the world of gods, spirits and animals apart from the sphere of everyday social activities. The ability of shamans to transcend the culture-specific categorizations of body and space is what marks off shamans from their fellow citizens.

In the ethnographic literature on shamanism, we find that the places which shamans employ to exit and then re-enter the profane world of men are holes and openings in the ground, cracks between rocks, and caves, that is to say, the topographically anomalous sites of the terrain. These anomalous sites are analogous to the “boundaries” located in

uninhabited forest areas which, in Finnish prehistoric tradition, were designated as *pyhä*. Noll's theory of mental imagery cultivation could beneficially be extended to cognitive semantic analysis of spatial categories and the metaphoric use of topographically anomalous sites in the terrain which, in shamanic "mental imagery cultivation" were associated with the openings of the human body.

The theoretical thrust of my argument, thus, is that vernacular terms denoting the sacred in indigenous cultures provide important tools for understanding systems of shamanic belief and practice and the role that territorial and bodily boundaries play in holding the integrity of community members of shamanic societies together. From the perspective presented above, the function of the shamanic institution is co-extensive with content given to the notion of religion in cultural anthropology and religious studies.

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Language, Symbol and Dance: An Analysis of Historicity in Movement and Meaning

To the memory of Géza Róheim (1891–1953),
Vilmos Diószegi (1923–1972) and György Martin (1932–1983)*

LÁSZLÓ KÜRTI

BUDAPEST

This article describes the existence of shamanism in Hungarian society. I argue that seemingly unrelated complexes (the horse and riding, dance and movement, and the usage of the drum or its substitute the sieve) provide a key to an understanding of the historic and ethnographic presence of a shamanic world-view in Hungarian culture. Previous models have argued either for the Slavic aspects of Hungarian folk religion or, on the contrary, for a “paganistic” Siberian heritage remaining unchanged throughout the centuries. On the contrary, this analysis is conducted in light of recent writings about shamanism, related folkloristic, symbolic and linguistic materials in a variety of societies including Hungary. I conclude by discussing the implications that shamanistic studies may have for theorizing past and present religious practices in different cultures.

In 1921 heated debates ensued between the “Europeanizers” and the “Asian gravity” (referred to also as the “Turanian hypothesis”) schools in Hungarian scholarship, the former asserting a predominantly European

* There is justification why I feel that this essay should serve the memories of these scholars, beside the fact that I personally feel identification with every one of them for various reasons ranging from background, locality, education, professional marginalization, disciplinary interests, intellectual spirit, quest for information, emigration, and crossing, as well as challenging, various boundaries. While they [i. e. Roheim and Martin] could not know one another, and worked, often, in hostile surrounding and in isolation, their scholarship and breath of knowledge deserves special attention. Even if in life they could not, through this article they are united spiritually, a small feat I hope would not be regarded by any of them as over-ambitious or disrespectful.

cultural heritage, the latter arguing that Hungarian language, folklore and peasant culture owes much to its Asian antecedents. At that time, György Király, a historian of literature, expressed his doubts concerning the origin of the Hungarian shaman (*táltos*) and whether such specialist should even be considered direct descendant of Asiatic shamans (1921: 46–53). Géza Róheim, the prominent Hungarian ethnologist and (later) a psychoanalyst living in the United States, summarized Hungarian peasant beliefs and folk religion in his classic “Hungarian Folk Beliefs and Folk Traditions” (*Magyar néphit és népszokások*), with a fact-of-the-matter statement: “All in all, we can state without exaggeration that Hungarian folk belief is Slavic folk belief.” (1925: 335)

This statement provided food for thought to Hungarian ethnographers and folklorists, who have been intent in proving Róheim either wholly wrong or just. For example, eminent folklorists, such as Voigt (1976), Jung (1981) and Korompay (1989), all agree with the aforementioned statement of Róheim and have been critical of the Asiatic and Finno-Ugric shamanic heritage. At the same time, Diószegi (1958b, 1962, 1983), Hoppál (1984, 1989, 1992), and Goodman (1980) argue for the Asiatic (Finno-Ugric and ancient Turkic) heritage while arguing, both explicitly and implicitly, against the specific statement of Róheim and his followers. Neither the Hungarian researchers nor the American scholar realised the relevance of Róheim’s previous statement in the same book, where he also wrote: “If we were to analyze Hungarian folk religion we will recognize that, while the Finno-Ugric stratum is not present in it, the Turkish-Tatar is present only in shamanism and, much more removed, in animism.” (1924: 334) While analyzing the interrelationships between Hungarian medieval history and mythology and its Siberian parallels, Róheim also detailed this specific connection (1984: 171–228). Thus, based on passages taken out of their context, the fate of continuity of rivalry between two schools of thought in Hungarian scholarship was sealed.

Definitions notwithstanding, shamans, witches, prophets, and sorcerers are religious specialists whose powers enable them to cross standardized boundaries while challenging established values.¹ It is beyond the scope of this paper to rekindle arguments for or against the shamanistic theory of Hungarian religious pre-history, rather I want to

¹ For a collection of classic anthropological and cross-cultural treatment on shamanistic research see the articles in Lessa and Vogt (1965).

emphasize those elements in Hungarian folklore which could well be related to a historically produced belief system fusing with or predating Balkan, Slavic, Germanic and Christian elements.²

By so doing, my aim is to argue that an understanding of Hungarian folkloric materials must involve an interrogation from different disciplinary angles in order to reveal the contribution, or the critique, of reflexive and critical, interpretive approaches. In vogue today in the humanities and the social sciences, this debate has escalated since, at least, Clifford Geertz’s (1973) study *The Interpretations of Culture*. Furthermore, by relying on such a tactic, seeking both the utility as well as the hiatuses of competing approaches, I also espouse a view, already existing in social sciences, and introduced by Max Weber—neglected all too often by many in pursuit of fashionable or more up-to-date theories but which still rings true today—that: “Religious or magical behavior or thinking must not be set apart from the range of everyday purposive conduct.” (1965: 1)³ This is also in line with my argument concerning language, meaning and action which is based on the idea, paraphrased from the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, who wrote in his book *On Certainty*, that “our talk gets its meaning from the rest of our proceedings.” With this in mind, I aim to explain those activities, whether economic, linguistic and folkloric, which are fundamentally interconnected with present and historic mentalities. By so doing, I wish to provide meaning to those elements of everyday activities and religious/symbolic order through which individuals in culture have conducted their affairs and through which people have explained and made sense of their worlds.⁴

² It was the Hungarian folklorists János Jankó (1900) and Gyula Sebestyén (1900) who proposed first the direct link between the *táltos* belief and Asiatic shamanism. Detailed knowledge of shamanism was introduced into Hungarian scholarly pursuit by Aladár Bán (1908) based largely on the 1892 materials of the Russian scholar V. M. Mikhaïlowski. For the development of interest in shamanism by the pioneers of Hungarian ethnography see Kósa (1989).

³ Max Weber continues that this is particularly so “(because) . . . even the ends of religious and magical acts are predominantly economic” (1965: 1). As far as the economic argument is concerned it may be well the case for the early history of shamanism since the profession itself was overwhelmingly connected to large-scale, transhumant herding.

⁴ This is not a novel idea, however; the Hungarian ethnographer Gábor Lükő (1942) already called for an analysis of peasant culture in a similar fashion.

In addition, I am also concerned with wedding folk dance scholarship, hampered as it has been for decades by functionalist and formalist analyses of dance, with concerns of religious and symbolic investigations⁵ Aside from traditional accounts on shamanism, recent cross-cultural analyses call attention to the fact that many heretofore unnoticed aspects of dances, games, songs, movements, gestures, and body postures may be related to the craft of shamanizing (Goodman 1988; Mastromattei 1989; Žornickaja 1978). In light of these arguments, I want to propose that there are rarely studied aspects of Hungarian culture which, when juxtaposed against one another, will become explainable and meaningful. In brief, my thesis is that there is an etymological and symbolic connection between the sieve, the horse, and dance performance practices in Hungarian peasant culture, which, when analyzed as interrelated aspects of the same belief system, may provide valuable information as to their meaning, origin and function. Dances and performative elements should not, and need not, be looked at in isolation, separated from meaning (of which they receive their content from) and symbol (of that which they stand for) (See Amoss 1978; Kürti 1989; Ness 1992; Williams 1979).

Hungarian Shamanism: History vs. Ethnography

Whatever the similarities or differences are between Hungarian beliefs and Asiatic shamanism, in Hungarian culture there was and has been only beliefs concerning *táltoses* (or *tátus* or *tátos*).⁶ A specialist born with distinguishing marks, such as superfluous bones and hair, he—for, while witches are mostly female, *táltoses* are generally male—is able to turn into a stallion or bull in order to fight with others for health, fortune, and good weather (Kálmány 1917; Szűcs 1951, 1975; Róheim 1984). Thus, he or she must be born as a shaman, a profession through calling which is evidenced in the following folksong as well:

⁵ For the state of folk dance research in Hungary see Martin (1977a) and Felföldi (1993).

⁶ According to Benkő (1967–1984. III: 832), the word *táltos* is Finno-Ugric connected to Khanty and Mansi concepts of ‘magic’ and ‘powerfulness’. More Turkic interpretations for the origin, however, have been offered by others recently.

*Eb-anyátul lettél,
Kökényfán termettél,
Tátos Luca-napján,
Éjjélben termettél!*

Of a bitch-mother,
Born on a blue-berry tree,
On the day of shaman’s Lucia,
You were born at midnight. (*my translation*, Dömötör 1974: 157)

An additional specialty of this hero with supernatural powers is the ability to find hidden treasures. Today, however, traits of such belief are rare and mostly found in linguistic and etymological analyses, folkloric tales, legends and practices of magical kind (Bihari 1980; Büky 1989; Hoppál 1989; Klaniczay 1983; Kríza 1989).⁷ In particular, the *táltos* in Hungarian popular fairy-tales is also a horse—first a ragged, sick-looking one, later transforming into a miraculous steed by eating burning embers (Banó 1988: 66–67; Erdész 1988: 98–100; Kríza 1989: 97–103). The connection between the *táltoses* and “miraculous coachmen” (*tudós kocsis*) and their horses—many with extraterrestrial qualities—needs to be further researched to reach to those hidden elements which may give us more clues as to the relationship between the magic horse and the shamanic belief system.⁸ However, it is quite clear from the available evidence that shamanic elements survived in the profession of working with horses such as herding and especially among coachmen who exhibited a secret knowledge of talking and commanding their steed (Ferenczi 1984).⁹

Most difficult to decipher from ethnohistory, however, is the art of shamanizing. As we know from the pioneering ethnographic works on shamanism (Uno Harva, Maria A. Czaplicka, Mircea Eliade, Vilmos Diószegi) classic Eurasian—and some American Indian—shamanic

⁷ The first English language treatments on Hungarian “shamanism” and *táltos* beliefs are Róheim 1951; Diószegi 1958; Balázs 1963; and Fazekas 1967.

⁸ Matolcsy’s analysis (1976: 191–223) of an archeological burial site reveals the possible connection between the Hungarian *táltos* and his horse; see also Gunda 1963; and László 1945.

⁹ There are other names, such as *tudós* (‘prophet’, ‘the knowledgeable one’), *javas* (‘diviner’), and *néző* (‘seer’) which have also been collected in Hungary.

performance was accompanied by singing, dancing and drumming, an amalgam which served the underlying political and religious symbolism.¹⁰ In Hungarian prehistory, *táltoses* most probably performed with small hand-held drums; however, by the time we are provided with the first descriptions about the activities of shamans and witches—in the written witch-trials of the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries—the drumming aspects was already obsolete¹¹. One possible explanation for this is the church’s ideology in forcing the *táltoses* out of their jobs; we can only guess their fate as many wandered aimlessly (this is in fact a consistent *topos* in Hungarian fairy tales!); others were simply abandoned by their community or were killed; others, facing such overt hostility, had simply given up their profession.¹²

It needs to be mentioned here that Hungarian shamanism during the period between the Conquest of the Carpathian Basin (896 A. D.) and the late Middle Ages, had to be an alternative form of religion existing side-by-side with other religions such as Islamic, Christian, and Hebrew *in addition* to popular forms of religious beliefs. However, rather than claiming the vanishing of this culture, we should pay attention to the many elements of this religious worldview and practices which were elevated and fused into the more profane folkloric and linguistic aspects of everyday popular culture (Büky 1992; Pais 1975; Vargyas 1977). Such cases abound in other parts of the world where traditional practitioners met similar fate as major world religions won over local customs and beliefs subsuming or eliminating them completely while, at the same time, this cross-fertilization resulted in new religions, political and belief systems.¹³

¹⁰ Studies on drums are numerous; see for example Strömback 1956 and the studies in Diószegi 1968 and Diószegi and Hoppál 1978.

¹¹ Dümmerth attempts to connect shamanism to the period of Conquest of the Carpathian Basin—with shamanistic theory and ritual totemism, i.e. myth in a common animal totemic ancestor of the dynasty of Árpád—to prove the sacredness of inheritance of kingship for the first kings of the Árpád dynasty; see Dümmerth 1977: 86–88.

¹² For the complexity of tribal prehistory and religious cultural intermingling see Kristó 1985 and Szegfű 1985. Recent discussions concerning Hungarian folklore scholarship and ancient history are Kelemen 1978; and Voigt 1977.

¹³ Perhaps the best illustration for this comes from Evans-Pritchard’s classic study on Azande witchcraft (1976). Before colonial rule witchcraft accusation was, at a final stage, decided by a princely, or provincial, court by using poison oracle, a

In Hungarian scholarship it has been long established that the magical use of the drum (*dob*) was lost quite early.¹⁴ It was replaced by other musical instruments, including the larger cattle-type of drums introduced mainly by Turkish musicians during the Ottoman invasion in the sixteenth century. In a curious seventeenth century poem “The Hungarian Mars, or the Memory of the Dangerous Event that Occurred on the Field of Mohács” (*Magyar Márs avagy Mohács Mezején Történt Veszedelmek Emlékezete, Bécs 1663*), the author László Listi mentions the captain of the Hungarian forces, Pál Kinizsi, including a reference to his magical drum:

judicial practice followed by compensations and fees. Once colonial judicial system was established, based on the British Common Law, recognition of the reality of witchcraft and acceptance of poison oracles by the princes’ court became meaningless for people simply could go to the colonial administration for filing charges. See also Balzer’s analyses of Siberian shamanism and its connection to Christianity, as well as communism’ influence on native religious practices (1983, 1987, 1994); Davidson’s discussion of incorporation of ancient beliefs and folklore into Christianity in Northern Europe (1993); and Samuel’s study on the amalgam of strands of Indian Buddhism and the indigenous spirit cults of Tibet (1993).

¹⁴ The Hungarian noun *dob* (drum) is phonetically identical with the verb *dob* (to throw), though the Hungarian Etymological Lexicon argues that there is no connection between the two (Benkő 1967–1987. I: 650). However, in more archaic usage the verb also meant ‘to give, to place, or even to give birth’ (literally ‘to drum up’ something). In a collection of a western Hungarian speech dialect, the following expression has been recorded: *Ne add el a lovadat, dob am még ecs csikót neked*—which may be easily rendered as follows: “Don’t sell your horse, she will throw/give/(drum up?) for you another foal” (Ábrahám 1991: 54). It would make sense to argue that there is a meaning-extension connection between the noun and the verb. For the magical usage of the drum is to invoke, to cast a spell, tell fortune, asking for plenty and luck. The act of drumming, and thus the instrument used, then, is to try to influence the powers to receive something back in exchange hence the possibility of connected sound, wishing and meaning. For a semantic and content analysis of the verb *dob*; see Kelemen 1985.

Kinisi Pál dobja
 nevezteték bika,
 Midőn török hallotta;
 Hunyadi zászlóját,
 s bárcsak karnétáját,
 Ellenség sajdította,
 Csak futásra indult,
 s többé meg se fordult,
 Mindenét hátra hagyta.

The drum of Pál Kinisi,
 named as bull,
 When heard by the Turks,
 And when they saw,
 The flag of Hunyadi,
 And his horn,
 They could only run,
 Never turning back,
 Leaving all their possessions behind. (*my translation*, Komáromy 1891: 356)

From classic works on shamanism we are informed that drums often take up the qualities of the shaman's spirit helpers and animals, this source also suggests that special drums may had ritualistic functions and were held in high esteem.

It deserves mention, however, that the only musical instrument in Hungarian peasant culture resembling that of the drum—both in its function and in sound—is the *ütőgardon* (hit-bass) utilized by the Hungarians called *csángós* of the Gyimes region and a few other isolated communities in Transylvania, Romania (Dincsér 1943; Pávai 1993). Whether the violin and the hit-bass orchestra is any indication of the survival of the Hungarian dance practice with shamanic origin or not must be elicited through cross-cultural research; however, it must be emphasized that this type of musical accompaniment is unique in Hungarian culture and should be analyzed accordingly.¹⁵

¹⁵ It needs to be mentioned, however, that small drums have been used throughout the Hungarian countryside. Specifically by the “deputy-mayor” (*kisbíró*) who utilized the drum to call attention to himself when announcing the latest news to villagers, a drum-

Throughout the centuries, as the drum was slowly eliminated, its magical role was extended to the sieve (*szita* or the *rosta*), a switch, no doubt, facilitated by the utility of the same utensil for fortune-telling, fertility and ritualistic practices widespread in Europe. Both names of these kitchen utensils are of Slavic origin (Benkő 1967–1984. III: 448, 766–767), an indication of large-scale agriculture and flour production adoption by the Hungarians after their settlements in the Carpathian Basin. Since such utensils were increasingly common in agricultural households, and since they were utilized in relation to bread, their function was elevated beyond the ordinary. In their forms, as well as material and manufacture, however, the *szita* and the *rosta* are similar to the drum.¹⁶ This morphological analogy, as well as the connection to flour (symbol of fertility and plenty as well as the basic source of carbohydrate for Europeans), could have facilitated its elevation into magical and ritual practices. Fortune-telling and sorcery are connected to specific moves known as the “turning-of-the-sieve.”¹⁷ This magical maneuver had been quite standard in European culture, an aspect which should caution anyone to arrive at an easy conclusion concerning the utensil's archaic history. The Hungarian ethnographer, Béla Gunda (1989: 27), for example, have argued recently that the “origin of the knowledge of sieve-turning and sieve-throwing is in Western Europe,” a point of contention which places him with those of the Westernizers wishing to see a one-sided picture (i.e. Hungarians borrowed everything from the West or their immediate neighbors).

However, while it may be evident that “sieve-turning” is more “European” than Asiatic (See Diószegi and Tárkány Szűcs 1981: 373), there is an etymological connection here to dancing which may push this analy-

ming-practice still in existence in a few Hungarian village communes in Transylvania. It was also used as a device for alarm—similarly to church-bells and rattlers (*kereplő*). In a 1793 description the presence of thieves was signaled by drumming: “the herdsman drummed at both times to warn people, who got up on their horses chasing the thieves” (*A pásztor jelentésére mind a két ízben a lárma dobbal híriül adatott ugyan a lakosoknak, hogy tüstént lóra ülvé, káruk után lássanak*; quoted in Trócsányi 1958: 136.

¹⁶ In an ethnohistorical document of the mid-nineteenth century, the *rosta* appears to be a special type of hand-held drum with metal cymbals attached to it. This was used by a gypsy band and maybe an extremely rare instance of such instrumental usage (Pávai 1993: 76–77).

¹⁷ Sebald argues for a possible connection between western European witch practices and shamanism (1984).

sis beyond the simple culture-contact or cultural borrowing hypothesis. For in Hungarian “turning of the sieve” is expressed as *rostaforogás*, *rostavetés*, or *szítálás*. The native concepts of *forogás* and *vetés* relate to “turning” and “throwing” respectively. The former is a constant in native Hungarian dance terminology—for example, *forogás*, *forogós* and *fordulás* all express “turning” and “whirling” motions. The latter verb, *vetés*—more familiar to contemporary Hungarian readers with reference to *vetni* i.e. ‘to sow (seeds)’—connotes ‘throwing’ as in the side-to-side movement of the women in front of their partner in couples’ dances such as those of *vetéllős* and *átvetős*.¹⁸

It must be stressed here that all of these terms are of Finno-Ugric origin, a language family-tree to which Hungarian, and other Siberian tribal languages (most closely the Khanty and Mansi) are related. This is also the case with most of the words used in dance terminology describing movements, styles, rhythm, and body parts utilized.¹⁹ Thus, it must be emphasized that what we are dealing with here is a common practice of utilization of words and concepts for movements and activities which are united in the minds of individuals, who think of them as *similar* or identical. That way the original meaning may be extended to other areas in which resemblance is found.

The preponderance of these words and their meanings in seemingly unconnected areas are not, I argue, by chance or coincidence. This, as I hope will be clear later, is one of the underlying theses of this essay: seemingly unconnected elements in language, material culture and folkloric practices must be seen as parts of the same mental attitude and everyday purposeful proceedings of the people in question (Barth 1961; Godelier 1988). That descriptive terms of dance movements are also utilized for those of economic activities and the supernatural world

¹⁸ Similar scholarly pursuits have been central to other areas such as material culture and clothing; see for example Nagy (1983).

¹⁹ Few scholars ventured into investigating the archaic nature of the language of dance in Hungarian society. In fact, there were only two pioneers: Marián Prikkel Réthei (1924) and György Martin (1984). Their analyses, while useful and wide ranging, do not do justice to the richness and historical debt of the material in question for most of their argument center around the origin of certain dance names and dance music since the sixteenth century. Studies of Hungarian dance language, especially its relation to Uralic, Altaic and (possible) paleo-Siberian languages—for example, in similar veins to the analyses of Pusztay (1990) and Hajdú (1977)—are yet to be made.

should caution the researcher that these very movements themselves are ordinary; on the contrary, they are endowed with unique qualities which set them aside from customary motions. Similarly, corresponding expressions and language use must also be outside the ordinary sphere of speaking and perception. As it will be shown later, specific turning, whirling and stomping motions are anchored in a systemic fashion to values and attitudes of a religious world-view bridging the hiatus between the supernatural and the mundane, and acts and matters that are possible to those paradoxical, and seemingly impossible. Moreover, it is the juxtaposition of the present and the absent (both the past and the future), the “once” and “how it was” to the “present” and “how it is”—or, with the words of Maurice Bloch (1989) “the past and the present in the present”—which is also part of this exercise of historicity to reveal hidden meanings and interconnectedness.

Horsing Around

Since it is fairly established and accepted by Hungarian scholars that the *szita* (sieve) is a symbolic representation of the drum (Hoppál 1984: 437–438), we need to establish the connection between the *szita* and the horse as well as dancing. Horse was an important riding and draught animal of Hungarians since their prehistory well into the post-Conquest period (since 896 A.D.).²⁰ At least since Claude Lévi-Strauss we are aware of the aphorism that “animals are good to think with,” and with that in mind, it is worthwhile to note in passing the ways in which the horse was elevated into stereotypical consciousness (“we are a nation of horsemen”) and even the arts: from the paintings of Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka, to

²⁰ See the argument concerning the Finno-Ugric origin of the horse and horse-keeping vocabulary of ancient Hungarians by István Zichy (1923: 25); and for a recent summary Bartha 1988: 98–107; Matolcsy 1982; Tókei 1983, and U. Kőhalmi 1972. There are, among other things, the myths of the *fehér ló* (the white steed)—the horse which was a symbolic gift of exchange between the Hungarian chiefs and the hosts at the time of the Conquest—as well as the “mare’s milk bath” of the heroes of fairy tales (see Banó 1988: 67; Kristó 1980: 203; Nagy 1988: 159), which are still largely unexplored themes in Hungarian folk belief.

popular literature of Zsigmond Móricz, filmic representations of Zoltán Huszárik, to the avant-garde poetry of Lajos Kassák.²¹

In folklore and ethnography, however, the horse has been polarized somewhat between the idealistic and the more mundane forms of representations. It is either shown as a beast of burden, strictly in roles of production of farming economy, or, on the contrary, it is relegated to the level of fairy tales and mythology. Our task is to bridge this separation by revealing those intersections where the horse, its qualities and symbolic significance, is utilized. To make the connection between the horse, sieve and the drum is, of course, not difficult since the pioneers of Géza Róheim and Sándor Solymossy already called attention to their interconnectedness. Géza Róheim, who tried to explain the phenomenon of shamanism based on psychoanalytic principles, argued that the shaman (*táltos*) has a spirit helper in the form of the horse (1925: 10–11). Solymossy, who laid down the foundation for scholarly research on shamanism in Hungary, connected the Hungarian *táltos* to the horse on the one hand, and the shaman's drum to the *szita* on the other (Solymossy 1943: 355–356). According to the collection of superstitions, by Ákos Szendrey and Zsigmond Szendrey, among the *csángós* of Moldavia, the practice of fortune telling with a sieve and acorns is called “*dobolás*” and the sieve is called simply *dob* (drum);

Te dob, mondd meg az igazat, ke vaj eszverontalak, vaj ezek elszertülnek!

I ask you drum for the truth; if not, I will either break you into pieces, or these (corn) must go everywhere.²²

Nevertheless, it was Géza Róheim and, following him, Vilmos Diószegi who, to my knowledge, first made the connection between the drum–sieve–horse complex (Róheim 1984: 178–180, 196–197; Diószegi 1983: 69–73). More recent analyses of fairy-tales offer ample

²¹ For a semiotic textual analysis of Kassák's poem, “The horse dies, the birds fly away.” (*A ló meghal a madarak kirepülnek*), see Csúri 1979; compare this also to László Nagy's “The Horses' Farewell” (Görömbei 1993). A host of other Hungarian writers and poets—among them János Arany, Endre Ady, Attila József and Ferenc Juhász—have been connected one way or another to the tradition of peasant folklore and, thus, to shamanic *táltos* poetry.

²² See Fazekas and Székely 1990: 41; cf. also Róheim 1984: 179.

evidences to the existence of the Hungarian *táltos* and his spirit helper, one of which could have been the horse, hence its name in popular consciousness as *táltosló*.²³

The connection between the sieve–drum and the horse is provided by additional information overlooked by these illustrious figures. Without exception this kitchen utensil for sifting flour is made out of wire. However, finer and more special sieves have been made earlier with strong horse-hair.²⁴ This material connection and, with it the movement of circling or circularness, is further reinforced in the following folksong as well:

*Azért, hogy a szita, rosta kerek, –
Én vagyok a híres magyar gyerek.
Ha kantáros lovon járok,
Akkor szeretnek a lányok.*

The sieve and sifter are both round,
I am the real famous Hungarian lad,
When I ride on my bridled horse,
Girls fall in love with me. (*my translation*, Solymossy 1941: 43)

Love magic and horse-back riding form an essential part of the “drumming-sifting” magic as is evidenced in this song. In Szatmár county, a folk riddle proposes the same connection: *Nekem olyan kis lovam van, a'mék minden házba benyerít. A talány megfejtése: dob.* “I have a horse which neighs at every window. What is it? Answer: A drum.” (quoted by Diószegi 1958: 182)

As shown earlier, *vet* and *forog* were two verbs relating to the sieve *as well as* dancing movements. The movement of sifting the flour, known as *szitálás*, has also more than one meaning and, not surprisingly, it is used to describe dance movements. Perhaps, then, it is no coincidence

²³ See Kovács 1984: 24. Analyses about animals, especially the horse, their role and symbolism, are yet to be made; for an initial attempts see Gunda 1963; Hajdú 1992; Kálmán 1938; and Lükő 1965.

²⁴ That this is a culturally specific and significant example may be seen in the fact that in other cultures different materials are used to make sieves. For example, among the nomadic, transhumant pastoralist Basseri of South Persia, large sieves are made of “perforated sheets of guts” (Barth 1961: 92).

that horses tied to the manger are also said to exhibit a movement described as *szítál*, a repetitive side-to-side swinging which, according to horsemen, is a sign of nervousness or excitement. For example, in the bachelor's dance of the Kalotaszeg region of Transylvania, a figure known to the dance researchers by the more familiar term as the "Charleston step" referred to by the performers as "sifting" (*szítál*). In another community, Kárásztelek (Salaj County, Transylvania, Romania), a particular figure in the couples' dance is also known by this term. Consisting of side-to-side movements, the woman steps always opposite of her partner before they begin to turn, a movement clearly resembling those of the arms used during sifting flour in a sieve. Thus, these semantic and verbal transposition of meaning to the horse, the sieve and dance provide a useful framework within which we may interrogate the cognitive interrelationship between religious concepts and dance performance.²⁵

Interesting as well is the way in which Hungarians describe the movements of both sifting with the sieve and body slapping during dance. For when using the *szita*, the corresponding verb is not only "shaking" (or, in Hungarian, *rázzák*) but "hitting," "beating," and "slapping" (in Hungarian these terms are: *pofozzák*, *verik*). In a proverb from Kibéd (Transylvania, Romania), it is women who literally "dance" with the sieve—a connection between gender and the act of fortune telling as well as dancing:

²⁵ The various movements of the *szítálás* may be understood better if we mention that in Hungarian it is explained also with the specific *jobbra-balra* (right-left) and more general *ide-oda* (here-there) expressions. Today, these two verbal utterances are much more commonly utilized in everyday parlance. In one dance call the *szítálás* appears as a analogy to *riszál*, 'swaying of the hips':

*Ha úgy tudnál szítálni,
Mint a farod riszálni.
Többet érnél anyádnál.
Annál a vén kofánál.*

Only if you could sift,
As you sway your hips,
You could be worth more,
Than your elderly mother. (*my translation*, Olosz 1982: 202)

*Erdőn vágják,
falun szárasszák,
s az asszonyok táncot járnak mellette.
(Szita)*

Made/cut in the woods/forest,
dried in the village,
And women dance with it.

— What is it? The *sieve*. (*my translation*, Ráduly 1990: 183)²⁶

The way of "dancing with the sieve" is similar to the descriptive terms used by Hungarians portraying the masculine style of their dancing; they are hitting, beating and slapping their boots (or legs). The expressions are: *csapásolás*, *verik*, *ütik a csizmát*, and even *pofozzák* or *vágják*, movements introduced above with reference to the sieve. István Mátyás Mundruc, an exceptional dancer from Magyarvista (Viștea, Romania) narrated his art this way: "You have to slap your boots as if you are angry at someone; you have to slap like you would slap your enemy on the face." (Martin 1977b: 368)²⁷ Here we are introduced to a curious yet fundamental aspect of dancing: the fighting characteristics as these descriptive terms reveal. Dancing and fighting are, in fact, closely interrelated both semantically and as accepted behavior of village bachelors.²⁸ In describing the manner of slapping their boots Hungarian men

²⁶ The *szita* also appears in the following dance call:

*Keresztúri szitakéreg,
Ne futkározz, mint a féreg.*

The rim of the sieve from Keresztúr,
Don't run around like an insect. (*my translation*, Olosz 1982: 213)

Although it seems quite unrelated at first, the opening line is followed by a description of "running around" aimlessly, or without meaning, an obvious reference to the circularity of the rim of the sieve. At the same time, insects may also damage wood—like termites or carpenter ants—which may be related to the first line's hint at the danger to the wooden rim of the sieve. Thus, it is evident, that even in seemingly unconnected rhymes there could be deeper associations, allusions, and meaning extensions of various kind.

²⁷ For a history of fighting, slapping and beating (as well as punishment) in Hungarian culture and history see Benkó 1984 and Takács 1985.

²⁸ Throughout history, dancing rituals and festivities were often outlawed by the state and

often refer to this as *ki kell verni a taktust*—or “you have to beat out the rhythm.” But the verb *ver* is not isolated from the rest of the economic and productive activity of Hungarian males (Tálasí 1957: 244–247). This native idiom is also to be found with relation to the first driving out the animals to the pasture at springtime described as *kihajtás* (a term analyzed in-depth later) or *kiverés* (Luby 1938: 11).²⁹

Thus, as these examples disclose, this form of “fighting spirit,” is a characteristic element not only in men’s but in *couples’* dances as well. In fact there is a scholarly terminology—“fighting characteristic” (*küzdő karakterű*)—which refers to specific dances, such as stick dances and other related dance forms, exhibiting symbolic fights (Andrásfalvy 1963; Pesovár 1977).³⁰ In light of what is presented here, such a categorization is, to say the least, tautological. Yet, one question we must address is: what it is about this form of dancing which affords the moves and attitudes with special “angry” and a “fighting” characteristics. In other words, why do Hungarian men exhibit such a “strange” movement patterns which may be only described as “fighting character.” If the argument concerning the connections between the shaman, the drum (sieve) and the horse is sound, then, we must be able to answer this query without difficulty.

As we know from written descriptions, the *táltos* is a person who cannot stay put, he or she must be constantly on the move; for one they are

church, because it frequently erupted, no doubt with the help of consumed alcohol, in fights and violence, a commotion referred to as *dombérozások* (Pesovár 1978: 36–37). Among the *csángó* population of Gyimes region, men of ten fought over who will lead the dance of *kettős jártatós*.

²⁹ Aside from these, *verni* (to beat, to hit, to strike) also has other connotations to dancing and music. In Moldavian Hungarian communities, dances held inside were rationalized as the “house’s floor will be stamped/beat down”—*megverni a földjét* (Hankóczy 1988: 317). Also the playing-style of the musical instrument the *koboz* (folk lute) is described as *verni* (Hankóczy 1988: 321).

³⁰ In Hungarian dance scholarship the only explanation is based on the “outsiders’ point of view;” i.e. the men “appear” to be fighting, or the sticks and the moves of advancing, challenging one another, or moving about each other’s bodies appear to the observer as a pantomimic fight between the dancers. The explanation that twentieth century herdsmen’s stick dances are remnants of sixteenth–seventeenth century sword dances (of which visual and literary evidences do exist), while not entirely without merits, cannot stand up to closer scholarly scrutiny. The reasons are too numerous to deal with here and I cannot do justice to this complex argument in this paper; elsewhere I tried to argue for a more culturally specific and cross-cultural analysis of historic dances (see Kürti 1983a, 1989).

in an eternal quest to regenerate their power (an aspect of their life not well analyzed in the literature). Moreover, they do not seem to get along with people and, especially, their colleagues; in other words they are “incompatible” or “quarrelsome,” *összeférhetetlenek* (Kálmány 1917). They are born fighters; they defend their territory; they punish those mistreating them; and, which is essential to their quest, they must prove their worth to their community as well as to their fellow professionals at regular intervals. *Táltoses* sometimes fight for defending their own herds, sometimes to ward off strange colleagues; another times, to preserve their reputation or save their settlement from foreign intruders.³¹ In historical documents they are also described as fighting vehemently against witches. This is a curious point which may shed some light to the fact that *táltoses* and witches—as well as their corresponding belief systems—had to negotiate their places in society during medieval times which could help the acceleration of fusion of elements between the two religious beliefs (Klaniczay 1983: 128–129; Pócs 1989).

Both the *táltoses*, and their equine alterego, are described in Hungarian texts as viciously fighting, wrestling, biting and hitting one another (Diószegi 1983: 108–122). The most vivid descriptions are bloody-fights of *táltoses* transformed into bulls and stallions, but never into mares or cows (Róheim 1984: 192). During their bouts, they are *vívznak*, *viaskodnak*, *marakodnak*, *megküzdének*, *birkóznak*, *vagdalkóznak*, terms all referring to ‘struggling’, ‘wrestling’, ‘fighting’, and even ‘cutting’ or ‘biting’ one another. Needless to say, etymologically these terms belong to the most archaic (i.e. Finno-Ugric) vocabulary of the Hungarian language. The fighting motif has been suggested as being the single most important element in the Hungarian *táltos* belief originating in the Siberian-Altaic or proto-Turkic shamanic culture, an area separating the Hungarian tradition from the neighboring Slavic and Romanian traditions (Róheim 1984: 203–210).³²

While these examples are few and far between, they nevertheless point to the interrelationship of words, concepts, movements, beliefs and herding activities which could not be disregarded for they cut into the heart of economic activities, religious values and cognition of the

³¹ For a comparative study on fighting in folk literature see Lengyel 1986–87.

³² In fact, Róheim (1984: 192) suggests that the fighting motif may be one of the few elements appropriated from the Hungarian belief system by neighboring Slavs during the thousand year of inter-ethnic co-existence.

people in question. The terms of movements and thinking are connected in a set of mental images which order the words in a useful and systematic way for native speakers.

While I admit that the connection between Hungarian dancing and the *táltos*-belief, especially with it the transformation of the actors into vicious male animals, may be too daring for some to accept, I would like to argue for a slightly more “acceptable” interpretation. It should not be concluded immediately that such historic remnant may have had such an overall influence on Hungarian dance-style. Rather, I wish to interpret the above link as a possible variant in determining some specific movement elements (stomping, fighting characteristic) evolving from the collective mentalities of the groups and individuals who themselves were the carriers and believers of this profession. Many dancers filmed during the first half of the twentieth century in the various parts of Hungary, Transdanubia and the Great Plains region especially, were themselves herdsmen. They could themselves be *táltoses*, or at least believers in such personage; they could—as, in fact we know from the descriptions of Margit Luby and Sándor Szűcs—have seen those fights and persons which they narrated about to the eager researchers. Thus, I view this connection between religious mentality and dance, as producing a set of explanations of the supernatural and related behavioral patterns of conduct, which stood as a model, a standard fixture of ideal attitudes and values to live their lives by and manage their daily economic and distinctive religious affairs. These, then, had been influential in determining movement qualities in dancing, a merger of various elements to create masculine and fighting characteristics.

What must be ascertained below is what are the evidences, if any, that this “fighting characteristic” style of dancing was generated. How, in other words, can this attribute revealed in the movement repertoire of either dancing or in behavioral attitudes of the *táltoses* and related phenomena? Needless to say, this is also procurable from the ethnographic material in the specific “stomping” and “circling” movements.

Movement Symbolism

It is not only the beating and slapping of the legs and boots which are characteristic of Hungarian fighting spirit for there are also a host of words describing the stamping/stomping maneuvers: in fact there are specific dances which have names of *dobogós*, *dübögős*, *darudübögős*, *csüördögölő*, and *toppantós* (all easily rendered as “stomping/stomping” in English). While these may refer to slightly different activities of the feet, one common element is the stomping on the ground by one or both (alternating) feet. For example, in one of the children’s folksongs from Eger, printed in the historic collection of Kabos Kandra, the “stomping” movement has been preserved as follows:

*Ég a gyertya ha meg gyujtják,
Mikor ezt a táncot járják.
Járjad, járjad vig katona
Hadd dobogjon ez a nóta
Állj ki már!*

The candle burns while it’s lit,
Especially when this dance is being performed,
Go on, dance, you happy soldier,
Stomp out this song,
Get up already. (*my emphasis and my translation*, Kandra 1897: 225)

Other examples are numerous. For example, among the *csángó* people of Hétfalu, small Hungarian communes in southern Transylvania, one figure in their well-known mid-winter ritual, the *borica* dance, is called *tombolva* (Könczei 1989: 148, 164).³³ Referring to the stamping and noise-making quality with one’s legs and boots, these connect Hungarian folk dance to a more archaic word for dancing *tombol* or *dombol* (Pesovár 1978: 36).³⁴ While the word *dombol*

³³ While the Transylvanian Hungarian *borica* dance has close parallels with the Romanian *călușari* and the Bulgarian *kukeri* and *rusalia* ritualistic dances, this itself does not prove that actual movements, behavioral attitudes and stylistic characteristic were also borrowed from those dancing rituals (cf. Pócs 1989: 165–169).

³⁴ A nobleman, Ferenc Batthyány writes to his nephew in 1543 scolding him for his excesses while the rest of the country is suffering from the ravages of the occupying

are not widespread today, its related forms, especially, *toporzékol* or *dorbézol*, may be still heard from Hungarian speakers. These, I argue, are not just simply descriptive or onomatopoeic expressions, but terms with extraordinary qualities identifying them as closely related to one another etymologically as well religiously. The origin of this stomping may be found in the noun *dob* and the sounds imitating drumming: for with the drum one is *dobol*, with one's feet one is *dobog*, a change only discernible in the final phoneme. Steps which are made with the specific purpose of duplicating the sound and action of drumming may, thus, receive distinctive connotations in body movements and dancing. This is, in fact, the case with stomping.

Although there are no ethnographic data to prove that Hungarian shamans danced in their ecstasy-like state—a fact easily discernible in North America, Siberia and the Far East—there are, nevertheless, certain beliefs which may serve as a clue to connect present-day terminology with ritualistic movements of the *táltoses*. In classic historical and ethnographic documents the *táltos* survives only by drinking “milk” or milk products, a habit clearly of symbolic significance identifying the religious specialists and, at the same time, separating them from the behavior of ordinary persons.³⁵

Similarly, in contemporary oral accounts, the *táltos* is described as someone who “talks a lot,” “who yells or even speaks loudly,” as well as a person who is always “hungry,” and “eats fast and large amounts of food,” descriptions opposing accepted human norms (Ferenczi 1980–81:

Turkish army: *Tudod, hogy Budán vagyon (török) császár; nem tombolhatunk mostan annyit, mint azelőtt.* “You know that the Turkish emperor holds Buda castle, so we cannot ‘dance’ as we have used to.” (quoted in Takáts n.d.: 172)

³⁵ A curious aspect of the *táltos*-belief is the consumption of milk and milk products. This connection is explored in one children's rhyme about animals in which the “bull” is asking for milk:

*Bölon bika, nagyapó.
Adsz-e tejet, nagyanyó?
Nem adhatok, mert nem jó,
Belehullott a pondró.*

Crying bull, grandpa,
Will you give me milk, grandma?
I cannot for it's no good anymore,
For worms have gotten in it. (Kiss 1891: 17)

316–317). There are even data which may indicate a closer interrelationship between ritualistic movements and dance-like behavior.

As we have seen before, *táltoses* are “quarrelsome” and must be on the “move” at all times. But it is not only wandering from village to village, from settlement to settlement, which sets them apart from commoners, but also their eccentric bodily movements which have been interpreted as “strange,” or out of the ordinary. In one description, for instance, the *táltos* Ferenc Csuba “rolls his eyes in a strange (amazing?) manner” (Szűcs n. d.: 117–124).³⁶ Diószegi reports an oral account from Zselye (historic Moson county) that connects horses and *táltoses* in motion-related etymology:

A Moson megyei Zselyén a jól futó lóra mondták: olyan mint a táltos. A nagyon „sörény” lóra azt mondják Szeremlén: „olyan a mi lovunk mint a táltos, nem néz se eget, se földet, az mén mindennek.”

A good running horse was called *táltos*. A horse which was fast was referred to by the people of Szeremle as “we have a horse, like a *táltos*, he doesn't look to the sky or earth, just goes everywhere (or against anything)”. (*my translation*, Diószegi 1983: 73)

Similarly, such eccentric movement also appears in a study of folk beliefs in a single village, Karancskeszi, northern Hungary, in which the *táltos* is described by one local as follows:

...van a faluban egy asszony...az annyira megy és annak jár a keze, jár a lába, jár neki az, feje, jár neki mindenye, az úgy megyen az úton. És ő is megkapja sokat, hogy mondják neki: – Ollan vagy mint a táltos...Mert nem úgy mégy mint egy szelíd öregasszony, hanem úgy mégy mint egy táltos.

There is a woman in our village . . . she moves so much; her hands and legs move constantly; even her head moves; every part of her body moves, that's how she walks on the street. Many times they tell her: “You are like a *táltos*.” For she does not walk like a quiet old woman, but she moves/walks like a *táltos*. (*my translation*, Fejős 1985: 57)³⁷

³⁶ Eyes are, of course, also connected to witches and the belief in evil eye. For a classic psychoanalytic treatment on the evil eye see Róheim (1952).

³⁷ It should be noted that the verb *jár* has multiple meanings in Hungarian. Among

Thus, it is clear that *táltoses*, powerful and charismatic, do not possess the same kinesthetic qualities as ordinary people do; their gaze, gait and bodily movements distinguish them from the everyday and the usual. Such is indeed the case with *táltoses* who are searching for treasures hidden underground. To be successful in this task, however, they have to perform specific leg movements for it is said that the *táltos* cannot simply take the treasure out of the ground: he/she could only “stomp it out/up” (*dobbanthatja fel*). As Lajos Kálmány noted earlier in this century, in one oral account from the Great Plains: “the *táltos* made one hundred steps west from the well and, stopping for a moment, he made a single ‘stomp’ (*égyet dobbantott*) and said: this is where the money is” (1917: 267). Kálmány also recorded another case from Szentes where, according to locals, the *tátos* slept for three days, then, awoken, he drank milk and then: *A lábával dobbantott, aztán eltűnt. A szomszédunk mindjárt tudta, hogy ott pénz van, ki is ásta; . . . azóta gazdag ember.* “He stomped with his foot, then he disappeared. Our neighbor knew immediately that the money is there; he dug it up and became a rich man ever since.” (*my translation*, Kálmány 1917: 266). In another case, the *táltos*, known by his stage-name as Pista Pénzásó (Steve the Treasure-Digger), always said that people should dig where “he will stomp” for only there will the treasure show itself to the uninitiated (Füvessy 1992: 312–313). This special “stomping” (*dobbantás*) has connections only in Hungarian folk dances, where variations of special “stomping” movements (*tombol*, *dobog*, *düböög*) and others referred to above) have been preserved into the twentieth century. Aside from regional dance variants which are named “stomping,” there are similar movements: for instance, in Kék village in Szabolcs county, where dancers “stomped” (*dobbantottak*) at key moments in the song (Nyárády 1941: 283). Ritual stomping may also be found in the Transylvanian shepherds dance as an organic part of the mid-winter nativity play of *betlehemezés* (Olsvainé 1991: 470–471).

But we may continue this line of reasoning further by arguing that the connection between these words and concepts and the behavior of

other things, it may mean ‘to walk’, ‘to go’, ‘to pass’, ‘to work’, or ‘to move’; moreover, one special meaning it has is ‘to dance’ (Benkő 1967–1984, II: 260–262). Needless to say, it is an archaic word in the Hungarian language. In fact, Hungarians do not “dance” when they dance, they are described with the infinitive *járni*. One special Hungarian dance is also called *jártató*.

the horse is even more striking when it is realized that horses are also known to *dobog* and *tombol*.³⁸ Both of these words, translated either as ‘stamping’ or ‘stomping’, or thus ‘dancing’, could thus be related to ‘drumming’.³⁹ Good riders and horsemen have the skill to make their horse dance as it is evidenced in a “hussar farewell,” a folklorized poetry in which the discharged cavalryman thanks his horse while saying goodbye. The poem, written in a style of a self-educated villager, reads:

*Sarkantyús csizmáját szépen kipuczoja
Úgy tündöklök rajta aczél sarkantyúja
Mellyel ő a lovát tánczolni tanítja.*

Nicely he shines his spurred boots,
So sparkle the steely spurs,

With which he taught his horse how to dance.⁴⁰

(*my translation*, Asztalos 1992: 63)

Heroes of folktales and their magic steed also dance with distinctive actions described as *dobbant* or *toppant*. In a wonderful fairy-tale from Transylvania, the heroic Miklós Kús, son of the king who must counter the black-magic of an old hag in order to find his sweetheart, rides on a talking *táltos*-horse, a pattern of fairy-tales in many cultures. However, in the Hungarian version, before each magic flight, the horse “skips” and “stomps” a number of times and, only by so doing, the horse and rider are able to be airborne (Olosz 1972).⁴¹ At one point both engage

³⁸ That this connection is not so far fetched may be seen in cross-cultural examples, where dancing and horse-back riding are two activities inextricably connected. Frederik Barth reports that among the Basseri tribe of Southern Persia, during the wedding day, women dance to their own singing and men entertain themselves with horse-racing and stick-duel dancing. When the groom’s family takes the bride to the specially erected nuptial tent “Dancing women and galloping men accompany and circle the procession.” (Barth 1961: 140–141)

³⁹ Witches also drum, a point of contention concerning the drumming aspect in Hungarian folk religion; for example, Éva Pócs (1989: 165) argues for a possible Balkanic origin.

⁴⁰ I would like to express my thanks to Enikő Asztalos who provided me with the “hussar poems.”

⁴¹ Actually, the stomping and the jumping occur three times but differently at every occasion: first as *egyed szököm, kettőt dobbantok* “one jump two stomps,” then *kettőt toppantott, egyed szökött* “two stomps, one jump,” and finally *Egyed dobbintott, egy*

in the performance of a *hajdútánc*, a soldier-dance known between the sixteenth–eighteenth centuries:

Az ablak alatt olyan hajdútáncot járatott a lóval, hogy a flaszterdarabokkal a király szobájának az ablakait mind berugatta, s a királyt is szintés de szinte agyonverte.

Once landed under the window of the king, (the hero) performed such a hey-duck-dance that he broke the windows with the pieces of stones kicked up from the courtyard; even the king had a hard time surviving. (*my translation*, Olosz 1972: 58–59)

Horses are also described as *tombolnak* in Margit Luby’s wonderful little study about superstitions in Szatmár county, north-east of Hungary:

Csatlós Jóska felbízta Szántó Bertit, az meg elővette a fekete pálcát, megörgette az ajtófélfákat. Tomboltak rá a lovak, ölték vóna megfele egymást.

József Csatlós egged Herti Szántó on, so the latter picked up his black stick and started to hit the door-posts. The horses went wild and began to stomp, almost killing one another. (*my translation*, Luby 1938: 70)

In this example, “stomping” also refers to a special type of movement and behavior which has to do with a strong and rough manner of dance conduct, mimicking a fight, a stylistic characteristic mentioned above. As argued previously, male dances are often described as exhibiting vigorous beating and slapping of the thighs and boots, movements—as well as on the economic activity—and a fighting spirit which may separate it from the neighboring dance traditions. In fact, István Molnár, a pioneer of Hungarian dance scholarship, separated dance steps into clearly distinguishable categories of which the slapping and the stomping movements were separated from the rest of dance moves—giving that extra quality to dances which later were described as “fighting”

felet ugrott “one stomp, one half-jump,” see Olosz (1972: 53, 54, 55). While I do not intend to go into a detailed content and semiotic analysis of this fairy-tale, I find it revealing that while the power of the hero is increasing, and as he is able to achieve his progression of transformation from copper and silver to gold, the number of stomps and the jumps is decreasing.

or “dueling-like” (Molnár 1947). While his typology has not managed to survive into the later years of more rigorous dance scholarship, it is nevertheless important to emphasize the different meanings accorded to “stomping” motifs setting them apart from the rest of motifs many of which appears to be alike.

Such similar type of fancy foot-work exist elsewhere in the Hungarian dance tradition. For instance in Hunyad county in Transylvania, one native dance is called *lin*, in which the noise-making of the foot is referred to by the locals as *surlás*, translates as ‘scratching’ or ‘scrubbing’ (Szász 1976). In another dance, among the people of the Gyimes valley of the Eastern Carpathians, the repetitive stamping is called *ropogtatás*, which maybe rendered into English as ‘crackling’ (Kallós and Martin 1970). Neither of these, however, engenders the meaning-specific interconnectedness of the “stomping” movement with ritual and belief I am suggesting here.

A further support for the connection between the stomping movements and the *táltos* belief relates to the thunder and wind both of which are described with language-specific term as *tombol*. With this we arrive at an important correlation between the shaman and the wind, an area which has been mentioned by others earlier in this century. In a folk riddle we are asked to identify the wind-as-shaman as follows:

*Egy gyors röptű táltos,
Gyorsan repül, szálldos.
Senki fel nem tartja,
Eljut mindenhova.*

One fast flying shaman,
Flying with speed, airborne,
Nobody is able to stop it,
It could be everywhere. (*my translation*, Enyedi 1988: 80)

Thunder and whirlwind are, of course, related to the supernatural, including European witchcraft.⁴² In the *táltos* belief, however, the whirlwind is

⁴² It is worth mentioning that in the European witch-beliefs female witches perform a “circle” dance during Sabbath. In a 1741 trial, the accused witch confirms this when she admits to go to the Szent Gellért Hill where dancing took place; as she says: “We danced like a whirlwind.” (Szendrey 1986: 160)

said to be caused by angry *táltoses* and their lesser counterparts (i.e. the *garabonciás*, who ride the whirlwind on their own steed, the dragon). The native term for whirlwind is *forgószél*, a descriptive term relating to “turning” and “whirling”—and thus dancing as we saw earlier with reference to the sieve. This special turning motion may also reveal a connection which may further prove my point about the interrelationship of specific movement qualities and shamanism. Whirlwind in Hungary is known either as *szépasszony szele* (Beautiful woman’s or Fairies’ wind) or *tátos-szél* (shaman’s wind) (Kertész 1985: 73). People with strokes are told to be caught (actually “slapped”) by the “beautiful woman’s whirlwind,” which is also known as the “dance of the Beautiful Women” (Kertész 1985: 73).⁴³

But horses are not only connected to folk belief through the above examples, but they may gallop in a special way described as *felvágva* (showy, boasting), a term also used for *táltoses* who hurry in a special swanky manner (Madar 1993: 436). If I am correct in suggesting the link between movement, horses and religious behavior and mentality, then we should also be able to detect the existence of this concept in dancing. In fact, the term *felvágósan* (in a showy, fancy, boasting manner) is also used to describe young men who frolic in a pretentious and flashy manner. As I was able to observe in the Hungarian community of Kalotaszentkirály (Síncaiu, Romania), young bachelors dance continuously in the wedding procession from the house of the bride to the church. This special manner of dancing (*felvágósan*) is distinguished from common style of dancing for in this procession men embrace each other and execute various steps most of which are not found elsewhere. Moreover, the performers form a semi-circle but do not face the direction of the wedding procession but, on the contrary, dance backwards (hence one of the local expressions *curukkolva*, from German *zurück*).

In connection to the term *felvágósan* it must be mentioned that the root *vág* is a distinct verb which may provide a clue for the manifold meanings it is associated with both in economic, productive activity as well as dance (Tálaszi 1957: 245).⁴⁴ For example, in general it

⁴³ Krohn (1908: 180), in his classic study, *A Finnugor népek pogány istentisztelete*, mentions that among the Estonians whirlwinds are described as “old women’s souls.” Clearly, the two religious figures—or possibly even three, the shaman, witch and fairies—had fused already in popular consciousness.

⁴⁴ The verb *vág* is one of the most widely used terms in the Hungarian language. Its manifold non-dance verb variations may be translated into English as: ‘cut, trim,

refers to “cutting,” like cutting fire-wood or cutting hay, but in dancing men utilize this verb to describe various leg movements such as *alávágós* (“cutting under,” a step of continuously changing the weight from one leg to the other); *kivágni* (‘to cut out’, referring to ‘performing in the proper manner’); and, finally, *levágni* (‘to cut down’, or ‘to beat somebody in the dace competition’).⁴⁵ Most conspicuous in this interrelated terminology—which, given the previous argument about the connection for the polysemic “stomping,” is not surprising—is the verbal description of the horse’s galloping gait, *vágta*, which is from the same root (Benkő 1967–1984. III: 1065–1067).⁴⁶ These interconnected movement-nuances, then, are influential cognitive and psychic determinants which may provide the internal organizing power for the characteristic “fighting spirit” noted for Hungarian dances.

As it is clear from these examples, related to horses and their gait are movements and dance steps such as “cutting” or “stomping.” Many folklorists noticed the fact that such rhythmic motifs function as noise-makers. But this noise-making activity, nevertheless, is not arbitrary; on the contrary, it may stand for the reproduction of the sounds of the horse’s hoofs while galloping, a connection hinted at by Róheim (1984: 208) earlier in this century. In fact, and here is the link for my argument, the leg and thigh slapping patterns and the stomping movements so prominent in Hungarian men’s dances, and which may be part of the general “fighting characteristics,” may be looked at as archaic symbolic remnants of

draw, fell, chop, mince, carve, saw, slash, slice, incise, clip, slaughter, stab, butcher, kill, strike, beat, slam, throw, dress up, cast (an insult), peck, knock down, hack, force, fight, push, pass, tell, open, grin, sharp-tongued, whip, drive, anticipate, interrupt and scar’. Related nouns, adverbs and adjectives are equally numerous.

⁴⁵ The profuse utility of the “cutting” verb and the fighting characteristic are in a direct correlation with one another. Dancers challenging each other use the expression “to cut each other down.” A dancer from Kalotaszeg, white talking about competing with others from a neighboring village, expressed this as *Az öreg Kőmösék le akartak vágni*. “The Kőmös men wanted to cut me down.” (quoted in Martin 1977b: 368)

⁴⁶ According to the etymological dictionary’s explanation, the connection between *vágtat* (gallop) and *vág* (cut) is simply an extension of the basic verb describing a particular movement (Benkő 1967–1984. III: 1067). True as it may be, when horses gallop their hoofs “cut” into the ground, but the relationship between dance movements and the horse’s gallop is possible only if we accept my thesis that there is a semantic connection between these two activities *through* the cognitive, belief system which holds them to be connectable!

imitating the sound of the galloping horse. This is, to me, maybe one of the functions of drumming as well: the horse, which is one of the shaman's magical animals and helping spirit entrusted with the flight to the heavens or the netherworld, is personified by the drum. It may be natural, then, that this instrument is endowed with the magical animal characteristics of the horse, including the sounds of its galloping gait.⁴⁷

That slapping of the legs and the imitation of drumming and shamanic performance may be interconnected is evidenced through the following passage from Vilmos Diószegi, who saw this when he described shamanizing among the Samoyed and Ket peoples:

Among the Selkup Samoyeds drumsticks are also utilized (i.e. for shamanizing). When the elder shaman realized that the novice will make a good shaman, he crafted a drumstick, or loaned his own. If the young novice still lacked a shaman's drum, he beat his left leg with the drumstick while singing. Among the Kets, shamans beat their legs too during dancing. (*my translation*, Diószegi 1962: 68)⁴⁸

Thus, the connection between the shaman's performance, with its symbolic movement repertoire of drumming and dancing, and the horse may be clear cut in the case of Siberian material. However, in contemporary ethnographic material this connection is very difficult to reveal for persuasive evidences are scant. Yet, those marginal and minuscule details, as shown above, are present; and, moreover, they

⁴⁷ Another argument could point to the imitation of "thundering"—or its outcome, raining—both in drumming and dancing. For me, this connection is much more difficult to ascertain from the available ethnographic evidence than the one I am proposing. Although in American Indian dances, the connection between drumming and thundering (War, Thunderbird and the fertile rain) is axiomatic; see for example, Sweet (1985: 26–27). Reading classic works on shamanism, Róheim (1984: 205) and Solymossy (1991) for example, one could of course argue for a cosmological/fertility interconnectedness as well. A similar argument is presented by the philosopher of comparative religion, Mircea Eliade (1993: 51), who suggests that some dances may be of mythic origin, i.e. that gods, ancestors or totemic animals created them.

⁴⁸ The original Hungarian reads: "A szamojéd szelkupoknál viszont a bot mellett a dobverő is szokásban volt: amikor az elhívottról teljes bizonyossággal megállapította a sámán, hogy sámán lesz, mindjárt dobverőt rendelt neki, esetleg a sajátját adta kölcsön, hogy avval sámánkodják. *Mivel dobja nem volt, a fiatal a bal lábát verte a dobverővel, úgy énekelte. A ket sámán is lábát verte tánc közben.*" (*my emphasis*, Diószegi 1962: 68)

provide a key to connect seemingly "meaningless" and isolated elements in peasant culture.

Body Symbolism and Meaning

One aspect related to magical powers of witches, sorcerers and shamans has to do with bodily symbolism. As explained earlier, the Hungarian *táltos* is born with distinguishing marks such as six fingers, double-rows of teeth, and hair or *sörte* (bristle). It should be mentioned that the horse's mane is *sörény* (a variant of *sörte*), another etymological/symbolic connection between the human and the supernatural worlds.⁴⁹ Naturally, witches, too, are said to be born with an extra body part such as a small tail. Both religious specialists are described in ethnohistorical documents as having bushy eye-brows, a mark of power enabling the specialist to cast an evil eye (Róheim 1952).

That hands, fingers, eyes and other body parts, are also endowed with special meanings is easily verified from cross-cultural examples (Polhemus 1978). Aside from the leg and thigh slapping and the stomping discussed above, such a cultural "techniques du corps" (à la Marcel Mauss) in Hungary is the preeminence afforded to finger-snapping. Finger-snapping may also be an important element in folk dancing from Spain to the Arabic peninsula. In Hungarian folk dance, however, men are the practitioners of finger-snapping while they dance; the fingers of their free hand follow a repetitive formula as they snap. Nevertheless, during dancing it is impossible to do both: i.e. to slap and to snap with fingers at the same time with the same hand. Therefore these have to alternate: either snapping with fingers, or the dancer slap their thighs or boots. But one of these noise-making accompaniments seems to be required at all the time. This constant accompaniment then—since both function as noise/rhythm makers—may be the most natural "musical instrument" for dancing.⁵⁰ While the thigh and leg slapping patterns may a duplication of the sound

⁴⁹ While there is an unusual similarity between the words *sörény* ('mane') and that of *serény* (*sörény* in different dialect), meaning 'fast', the former is from 'hair' (*szőr*), and the latter is from 'speedy rotation' (Benkő 1967–1984. III: 520–525).

⁵⁰ Elsewhere rhythmic handclapping may be used in tandem with singing as "natural musical instruments," a practice quite common in the cultures of the Middle East; see Barth's (1961: 140) analysis of women's dance among the Basseri tribes of South Persia.

of drumming, the finger-snapping practice may be polysemous; i. e. it also could follow the drumming pattern, but a detailed etymological analysis may reveal even more the hidden spiritual undertones.

The native term for this is not only snapping as it might be expected (which would be *csettintés* or *pattogtatás*) but, also, “whistling” (*füttyögetés*, *fittyent*, or *pittyent* from the root *fütyül*).⁵¹ Whistling (*fütyülés*, *füttyerelés*) in general is a special forced breathing technique of continuous blowing and/or sucking air between the lips and the upper end of the tongue. While such whistling is common in dancing and as mouth-music (Martin 1977a: 360), finger-snapping might be a special device which, aside from keeping the rhythm during dancing, may also have to do with the air and, as we will see later, the human soul as well.⁵²

As a historical curiosity it might be noted that among the Khantys (known also as Ostiaks), a Siberian tribal language related linguistically to Hungarian, sixteenth–seventeenth century sources mention “whistling” as a form of communication with ancestral icons. In fact, István Zichy, relying on Novitskiĭ and Munkácsi, cites shamanic performance during which “whistling” sounds are heard; moreover, in the related Mansi (Vogul) oral poetry “whistling” or “crying” sounds imitate the calls of wild geese (Zichy 1923: 28).⁵³

Cross-cultural investigations inform us that whistling is an important element of shamanic rites and magical performances.⁵⁴ Among the

Huichol, Pomo and the Pima Indians we are told that curing shamanic practices are referred to as “sucking” or “blowing” hence the name “sucking doctor” applied to them at times (Krippner 1988).⁵⁵ Spirit possession is one related aspect of such shamanic performance (Lewis 1988). A host of North West Coast Indian tribes also rely on whistles to enter trance or receive ghosts and spirits who arrive by whistling; and performed “sucking” and “spitting” during shamanic cures. Even among the Khantys, blowing has been a part of curing ceremonies, as the shaman after catching the soul of the sick person would “blow the soul into the right ear of the patient” (Balzer 1987: 1087). Krohn also reports (1908: 153) that the Cheremiss shaman cures by blowing and spitting into a glass of vodka which he later throws behind his back.⁵⁶

A host of Slavic witches and supernatural beings are also known to be powerful “blowers” with capabilities of creating a storm (Pócs 1989: 124–126). Blowing in Hungarian folk medicine—as, for example, “blowing away” various sicknesses such as evil eye, pulled tendon or growths—also exists (Kandra 1897: 349, Pócs 1986: 39, 49–50, 56). I cannot at this point offer more than just a hypothesis that whistling (and blowing) in Eurasian shamanic performances had an important meaning both as a communicative device and, perhaps, as a folk medicinal practice.⁵⁷ Thus, if I am correct, the “whistling” practice of finger-

⁵¹ It must be mentioned that according to Benkő (1967–1984. I: 924–925), the etymological connection between *fütyül* and *fittyent* is only the result of onomatopoeic insignificance. It is obvious, then, that I do not subscribe to this theory as the only possible explanation. For more discussion on finger-snapping see Karácsony (1993) and Martin (1977a).

⁵² The connection is inextricably bound up with the “warning” aspect of finger-snapping, i. e. that it is also a “calling” device.

⁵³ Imitation of animal sounds is, of course, nothing new in shamanistic research. Since Uno Harva and Mircea Eliade many researchers have noted animal sounds during shamanic séances, an explanation arguing for the one special aspect of the shaman’s trade: the knowledge of the secret language of animals. One such important “secret language” belongs to the horses. For example, among the Altai Turkic tribes imitation of the neighing and snorting of the horse is also part of the shaman’s skills; see, Marazzi (1984: 281–282). In her study, Zsornickaja (1993: 81) also mentions that while among the Nenets (north Samoyeds) imitation of bear’s sounds may be heard, among the Ngagasans, the cries of the deer and buck are constants in dances. See also Róheim’s study on the language of the birds (1953).

⁵⁴ In fact, in many American Indian cultures whistling indicates the arrival and reception of spirits (Du Bois 1935).

⁵⁵ Among the Patwin and the Miwok tribes of California the expression *koja-pe* is a ‘sucking-shaman’, and *koj-pa* is ‘to suck for a disease object’ (Gifford 1955; Kroeber 1932). The opposite of blowing is, of course, spitting—or in tribal medical practices even vomiting—which is also present in many folk medicine and superstitions. For example, it is reported for many California Indian tribes such as the Tolowa and Shasta: “In working a cure the shaman went into a trance and danced violently until she vomited up an object (often lizard, produced by sleight of hand) that was said to be the ‘pain’. Sometimes the ‘pain’ was sucked out of the patient . . .” (Gould 1978: 134). Recent analyses suggest that meditative breathing techniques—which are of course structured exercises of inhaling and exhaling air—known in vernacular as “blowing” and “sucking,” such as in tantrism, yoga and Zen (Mastromattei 1989: 228), also change one’s mental state (Doore 1988: 218–219).

⁵⁶ Among the Cheremiss (Mari) people, one special medicine man—or shaman—is known as *süvedese* and blessing is *süvedeme*; both words are from the same root, *süvalam-* ‘to spit’; see Sebeok (1975: 312). One Hungarian term for the long shepherd’s flute is *szültü* or *süvöltő*, which may have its distant relative in the Cheremiss *sijáltös* (Sárosi 1979: 234). This connection, while reaches back to hundreds of years into Finno-Ugric prehistory, should be further analyzed.

⁵⁷ Outside Eurasia, among the Azande for example, the following aphorism exists:

snapping in Hungarian dance may be more than just an onomatopoeic word; for it could be a non-verbal remnant of whistling and/or blowing with shamanic origins. Arguably it is called differently from regular whistling (*fütyülés*, or *fütyerelés*) which is associated with marry-making; and, moreover, the practice of finger-snapping is related to masculine-style dancing which preserved many archaic elements as argued above. As I will show in the next section, it may also be related to notions of soul (*lélek*) and wind (*szél*) which are themselves present in both dancing as well as the *táltos* belief.

Dance and Altered States of Consciousness

Other aspects of Hungarian folklore which may in fact represent fragments of archaic shamanic belief practice of achieving an altered states of consciousness have to do with seemingly unconnected things. As I have argued in a publication earlier, there are dancing rituals in which elements of fertility symbols may be found, an article based on my fieldwork among Hungarians in Transylvania, Romania (Kürti 1987).⁵⁸ Yet, there are even more, isolated instances where distant traditions were preserved in twentieth-century peasant customs.

In traditional peasant society, young girls danced a particular dance form known as *karikázó* or *karéj* (literally ‘circling’, ‘encircling’, ‘round’), a dance of two or three different tempi accompanied acapella (Martin 1979).⁵⁹ Men’s and women’s circle dances themselves are not ritualistic—though as an age-specific behavior they certainly have elements which set it aside from ordinary everyday merry-making and dances. In formal analyses, men’s circle dances have been connected to

“The blower of water does not die,” an obvious reference to the extreme power of witches (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 44). Spittle and “blowing breath” are also part of the Lugbara religious system, especially with regard to sacrifice and purification of the cult of the dead (Middleton 1987: 102–104).

⁵⁸ In this article I have argued, against the assertion of Tekla Dömötör, that the ritual *henderikázás* (couples embracing while rolling down the hill, an obvious fertility movement) may be much more archaic than it was previously believed (Kürti 1987: 391).

⁵⁹ Most of these dances have been analyzed for their formal characteristics, tempi, and step-patterns. I believe that a textual and content analysis of round dance songs may be extremely rewarding for many of these are not the usual dance songs but filled with love-magic, casting a spell, warding off unwanted suitors and bringing fertility.

the eighteenth century military recruiting institution, and the “maiden’s round,” to Lent when orchestral music was forbidden by the church (Pesovár 1978: 30). Another folk explanation of women’s circle dancing asserts that during the Turkish occupation, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, Hungarians were forced to dance quietly (i.e. without orchestrated music) in order to remain hidden from the oppressors’ eyes. While these rigid historical explanations are somewhat simplistic and lack adequate verification, there are more persuasive “hidden” elements which might reveal further information about the past and underlying connotation of this kind of dancing. For instance, according to the people of Szőreg (a village in southern Hungary), witches gather during night at Whitsuntide, and *karikába táncolnak, aki abba a karikába belehág, az ojan bajt kap, amölikbiül nem lehet kigyógyítani* (They dance in a circle which will cause incurable sickness to those who happen to step inside of it).⁶⁰

This—as well as information above with regard to turning the sieve and the whirlwind—indicates that women’s round dance may be endowed with magical meanings beyond the ordinary. Before we venture into analyzing that possible connection, I wish to suggest that turning and whirling motions maybe unusual for either they are performed in a religious context, or by specialists, or even performed stylistically differently from the commonly accepted way of dance performance (i.e. movement could be different, directions changed, energy and speed may be a factor etc). Therefore such kinetic shapes may be endowed with non-human characteristics. Circularness and turning (whirling) are, of course, shapes and forms of a special enclosure with specific symbolic meanings existing in many tribal as well as organized state religions (i.e., the mandala in the Far East and the labyrinth in the Mediterranean). In fact, the drums of shamans, with their iconic paintings, are miniature representations of the worlds envisioned and visualized by their owners (Diószegi 1962a, 1963). Their circular shape as well as magical function is identical with that of the sieve, a reason

⁶⁰ Szendrey 1986: 162. Witches were also described by the Lutheran minister, Péter Bornemissza, as dancing wildly, or as *tombolók*, a word used for the *táltoses* as seen above. This is an excellent example to see how shamanic characteristics may be transferred to witchcraft practices (see Trócsányi 1958: 240). This is further supported by the fact that witches are also *dübögnék* (stomp) to scare people (Fehér 1937: 223).

why the exchanging of the two instruments could take place so easily in the minds of the makers and users.

As with the magical stomping before, I wish to argue that the horse-connection here, too, is available. As we saw earlier, in Hungarian parlance horses not only “dance” and “fight”—activities fused into one another—but described with specific turning and circular movements when it is said that they *kereken megy* (translates as “it goes nicely on a circle,” or “it turns according to command”).⁶¹ In one beautiful fairy-tale the heroine (!) uses a special shamanic-horse with seven legs to travel the worlds in a fragment of a second. Interestingly the horse and the rider must make seven turns, or pirouettes, in water in order to be successful:

Ott meglátta az ezüstszínű forgó tó vizét, abba beléugratott a lovával. Amikor hetet siriült a víz, megrántotta a kantárszárat, a táltos kiugrott a tóból, a másik pillanatban megint a kunyhó előtt voltak.

She noticed the silver lake with the whirling water. After jumping in it with her horse, they turned seven times. Pulling on the bridle they jumped out and in less than a second they were back home in front of their hut. (*my translation*, Voigt 1989: 32)

The special Hungarian word in this tale is *siriül* (turns), an expression which is also used to describe dance movement. What we are dealing with here are four archetypes which coalesce to perform magic: the shamanness (the hero/heroine), the horse (spirit helper), the water (purification) and turning motions (time, transformation). Another example is even more telling to see the connection between dancing and shamanism. According to the ethnographer of the Sárrét region, Sándor Szűcs (1944: 155), the *táltos* Ferenc Csuba said that the hidden treasure may be found where: *hét nagy csődör táncol és kerengel, biztosan a kincset azon a helyen megtalálják* (You will find the treasure where seven stallions dance and whirl.)

⁶¹ The phrase *kereken megy* (goes on a circle) refers to an even galloping-gate. My understanding of this is that there is a full control of the horse by the rider, keeping the horse on an even tempo, with the front and the hind legs rounded at most forming a circle.

The Hungarian words *karéj* or *karikázó*—and rarely as *körtánc* literally ‘circle-dance’—are utilized to describe circle dancing in general.⁶² From the Finno-Ugric *ker-*, this root provides the basis for other related expressions such as: *kerék* (wheel), *kerek* (round, circular), *karika* (circle, round, hoop, ring), *keres* (search), *kerül* (find, get), *kerít* (fence off, to obtain), and *kering* (to circle) (Benkő 1967–1984. II: 465). This etymological exercise is also very important in this analysis for the same root is extended to provide for the words *kerge* or *kergeteg*, expressions used for animals that became unmanageable and “crazy” while turning wildly; moreover, “wild storms” and someone who “lost his/her mind” are also described with a variation of this verb (*megkergült*).⁶³ At this point it becomes more obvious that the etymological meaning-extensions reveal a cognitive map which connects seemingly different words and concepts, but which, when analyzed in tandem and with specific purpose in mind, also identifies common elements in behavior, thinking and related movements. Together the circularity of shape and the whirling motion provide the key for altered states of the human mind.

This special underlying connotation is further revealed when analyzing one particular female circle dance which maybe even more telling of an archaic religious world-view and possible shamanic practice. In northern Hungary, in the community of Nagyréde, the women’s round dance is similar to many of the other women’s rounds: forming a circle, the women hold their hands behind each other’s backs, and while singing acapella, the circle rotates in a slower and a faster part both clockwise and counter-clockwise.⁶⁴ This dance, however, is not only referred to as “round” or “circling” but called by the curious term *szédiülés* (Lugossy 1952: 59; Martin 1979: 165). This can be rendered into English best as ‘dizzying’ or ‘fainting’. The speedy rotation of the circle—no doubt—makes many of the women dancers quite dizzy, an

⁶² The regional variants are considerable though: some of the more specific ones are *lépő, belépő, csillegő, reza, derenka, kocsikala, jércelés, kerekecskésés, sifitelés, hajabuka, hapapaja, lilázás, erdőjárózás, pilikésés, iványozás, hajlikázás* and others (See Martin 1979; Pesovár 1978).

⁶³ The verb *kerget* and its manifold semantic possibilities is analyzed by Kelemen (1985).

⁶⁴ Sometimes the slower and the faster parts possess different names: more specifically, the latter may be described as “whirling,” “running,” and “jumping” etc. (*sergés, sürgés, futó, ugró*).

aspect of dancing present in regular couple dances as well where turning and rotating is an essential element of the dance.⁶⁵ This women's dancing-form of "dizziness," however, may be related to other aspects of Hungarian beliefs though the text of the song does not reveal its underlying connotation. In fact, the words *szédül* and *szél* (wind) are etymologically from the same root, a connection which might shed light to the act of fainting while turning.⁶⁶

In order to further explain this affinity we must find the missing link to answer the question: How does circle dancing results in fainting. This could be elicited through the concept of 'soul' (*lélek*), a term also connected to 'breath', 'breathing', and 'air' (*levegő, lélegzik*). Someone who faints is not only *elszédül* (literally 'taken by the wind' or 'gone with the wind'?) but also expressed as *elvesztette a lélekjelenlétét* (lost the presence of his/her soul).⁶⁷ In a sense, then—whether in the form of imitating animal sounds or similarly to Far Eastern (i.e. yoga, tai chi) meditation/breathing practices—fainting may be interpreted as an initial step toward communicating with one's inner selves as well as the outer "souls."⁶⁸ Thus, turning and whirling results in fainting, which is the direct result of the loss of consciousness, or the leaving of one's soul from one's body.

That this is so, may be further documented by additional ethnographic evidence. Among Hungarians of the Kalotaszeg region where I conducted research, for example, descriptive terms clarify who is a good dancer and who is not: in general, for men, will, power and blood

are mentioned as necessary elements to produce the fighting characteristics needed. In order to dance the proper way the dancer must have "will, power and soul" *akarát és erőt; akarattal és lélekkel kell táncolni* (Kürti 1983b). Someone who dances in the opposite way—weak, missing the beat, lacking energy and spirit—is criticized by the onlookers as "a dancer in whom the soul only enters for sleeping" (*úgy táncol, mint akibe csak háltni jár a lélek*), an expression used in general for those who are not energetic and lively enough.

As we saw above, the practice of finger-snapping already connected Hungarian dancing to the notion of "whistling" and maybe "blowing," themselves related to the concepts of "air" and "breath." Thus, through the "dizzying dance" we are provided with additional information that one could faint when one simply "looses one's soul." There are similar beliefs in Khanty society mentioned earlier, for fainting and death are said to be the result of losing one's "breath soul", or *lil*, a term of common Finno-Ugric origin.⁶⁹

The rotation of the circle, the increasing speed, and the folk etymology suggests that in this case we may be dealing with a historical remnant of a trance-inducing practice of ritualistic and magical (shamanic) origin.⁷⁰ The fact that this dance is connected to women—in fact maidens—may not be simply just a coincidence. On the contrary, it even could provide a clue that female shamans (or *táltoses* in our case) utilized, or preserved, a "dizzying" form of dancing to achieve a state of ecstasy.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Balzer 1987: 1087; Büky 1989: 130; Schmidt 1990: 182; Vértes 1990: 115–116; cf. also Storå 1971: 186–188). It may be of historical interest to note that Géza Róheim did not find these in Hungarian texts: for he notes that there is no evidence for trancing (1984: 192). He did not live to see, of course, the ideas developed by Vilmos Diószegi about the *révülés* and "sleeping" which proves its existence beyond the shadow of a doubt.

⁷⁰ One could cite the tradition of the Mevlevi order of dervishes, also known as the "whirling dervishes," who by constantly rotating counter-clockwise achieve the desired state of communion with God (Allah).

⁷¹ We are informed by Piers Vitebsky, that among the Sora of North India, shamans (*kuran*) visit the world of the dead linked by a huge tree on which the female shaman must clamber. It is not an easy feat; on the contrary, it is a "impossible-balancing path" for there are "dizzying precipices" on the way down which leads to the "murky-sun country, cock-crow-light country" (Vitebsky 1993: 18–19). This could be the type of "dizzying" experience, the ecstatic travel in the netherworld, which achieve the desired altered state of the shaman (see also, Balázs 1963: 57–83 and Schmidt 1990: 189). In tribal India, fainting was achieved through the use of swings (Jones 1968: 335–336).

⁶⁵ For an earlier description see Lugossy's account (1952: 59); for a more thorough treatment, see Martin (1979). Although both Lugossy and Martin list a single song, one could but wonder whether there were any others earlier which could have provided more information concerning the dance, its meaning and relationship to ritualistic behavior.

⁶⁶ According to the Benkő (1967–1984. III: 692): "A 'forog' → 'szédül' jelentésfejlődés természetes." (The connection between the verbs 'turns' and 'faints' is obvious.) If this is so, then, we might equally argue that the connection between the circle dance (the "dizzying") and shamanism is equally self-explanatory!

⁶⁷ It may be a curious "coincidence" that Hungarian folklorists have referred to a specific move in the slow part of the women's circle dances as *lélegző*, breathing (Martin 1979: 85). This points to the part when the circle is decreasing and increasing in diameter as the women take smaller or larger steps.

⁶⁸ In fact, Diószegi mentions the practice of "yawning" (*ásítózás*) and "heat" generation (*melegség*) as two possible sources of shamanic trance preserved in the Hungarian tradition (1962: 93, 1983: 107–108).

While the “dizzying” dance is certainly a rare example in Hungarian culture, by no means this is the only data to prove the connection between turning and fainting in specific, or between shamanic heritage and contemporary culture in general. There is also a children’s game, “Who stole the ax,” which helps to provide further support for my thesis.⁷² In this form of childhood fantasy, there is an appointed “judge” trying to ascertain from suspects who stole the “ax.”⁷³ The children form a circle and upon questioning all try to do their best to deny the act of stealing. At the “judge’s” command all begin to whirl feverishly, turning and turning until someone becomes dizzy and falls to the ground; obviously, this proves the case: he/she is the thief (Képes 1976: 43).⁷⁴

Swings and swinging rhymes were also important in childrens’ game in Hungary. In one such song, the last line ends: *Hajts ki diófa tetejibe* (Drive/fly up to the top of the walnut tree), a closing formula which could again be analyzed in relation to trancing (Kriza et al. 1882: 256; see also the swinging rhymes, many with multiple meanings, in Kiss 1891). Let us recall that the original Greek word for this is *ekstatis* which literally refers to leaving one’s self, or stepping out of one’s regular, normal senses or consciousness.

⁷² Thorough analysis of children’s games are yet to be made by Hungarian scholars using available cross-cultural data and sound analytic techniques; for earlier standard treatments see Lajos (1968) and Hajdú (1971). Géza Róheim was, of course, a scholar who was willing to look at children’s games through the notion of historicity: i.e. as possible repositories of archaic and historic meanings and symbols (1984).

⁷³ In European folklore, including witchcraft, the magical uses of the ax is well known. In the ethnography of Siberian and Finno-Ugric peoples there are plenty of evidences for the use of the ax in religious and burial rituals (Storå 1971: 177–183), curing, and taking an oath; even an ax-dance is described; see Vértes (1990: 162, 256) and Felföldi (1987: 299) both of whom rely on the ethno-historical study of Bernát Munkácsi. This is not to suggest an immediate link between the Hungarian material and its distant relatives. Yet the parallels are striking especially in light of the fact that the “ax game” is not for the *balta* or *szeke*, other words for ax in Hungarian, borrowed from Slavic, but for the *fejsze* which is the archaic Finno-Ugric word for it! In Hungarian culture there are some “unusual” presence of the ax: its use in witchcraft, for example, is well-known (i.e. in relation to whirlwinds); and in the Rábaköz region of western Hungary where the dough for the *perec* (cake) is kneaded together by two men with axes! There are, furthermore, a few evidence for the use of ax in dance among Hungarians and Gypsies in northern Hungary, dances of skill which I have seen on films.

⁷⁴ The original game was collected and described in Kriza, Orbán, Benedek and Sebesi (1882: 254). In this collection there is another game which has the “dizzying” aspect as well (*Egy kis kertet keríttek . . .*) In the classic collection of children’s games and dances of Áron Kiss, there are two more versions of the “ax game” both of which ends with someone falling to the ground, a moment of loosing one’s innocence (1891: 486).

One of the reasons why the “dizzying dance” and the “ax game” are important is that they provide an alternative explanation to a dominant theory supporting the use of hallucinogens. It is quite accepted in shamanistic scholarship that Hungarian *táltoses* achieved trance states by utilizing hallucinogenic substances: in specific, fly agaric, or *bolongomba* (*Amanita muscaria* L.) in Hungarian, a powerful and toxic mushroom used intermittently in various regions of Siberia as well (Hoppál 1984: 432, 1992: 171; Róheim 1984; Serov 1988: 248, Solymossy 1991: 110).⁷⁵ In fact, the practice of drinking milk by Hungarian *táltoses* mentioned earlier is interpreted as the search for a detoxicant to counteract the impact of mushroom poisoning (Czigány 1980: 216). However, in her in-depth analysis Anna-Leena Siikala, the Finnish ethnographer, firmly states that: “The use of hallucinogens and other such intoxicants is not, however, a vital element of trance technique in any part of Siberia” (1992: 340). Agreeing with Siikala, I argue that the claim for a hallucinogenic practice of Hungarian shamans and the detoxicant role of the milk, is wholly unsubstantiated: for one there is no ethnographic evidence that *Amanita muscaria* L. was ever used in Hungary; moreover, the reason for milk drinking by Hungarian *táltoses* may have been interpreted incorrectly from the available ethnohistorical sources, a point which has to be dealt with in detail in a separate study.

While the use of hallucinogens in native folk religions received profuse attention—thanks no doubt to the American youth subculture of the 1960s and the generalizations from classic works on Siberian shamanism—the non-drug induced trance states have been neglected.⁷⁶ It is reported by the American anthropologist Marjorie Balzer (1983: 61, 71) that the use of hallucinogenic drugs (mushroom, herbs) among the Khan-

⁷⁵ Interestingly, Vilmos Diószegi does not argue for the “mushroom-theory” of shamanic trance induction with reference to the Hungarian material. On the contrary, he argues for the “sleep-dream” (*révülés*) connection which may be a result of a special breathing technique (Diószegi 1983: 107–108).

⁷⁶ Classic works on shamanism all purported this image: cf. Eliade (1964). Following this a host of prominent scholars, Michael Harner, Peter Furst, Weston La Barre, and R. Gordon Wasson, also addressed the issue by further supporting this theory. In introductory anthropology textbooks it is still a practice to introduce shamanism though drug use as a specific feature of achieving an altered states of consciousness: see for example the recent comparative reader by Lehmann and Myers (1993).

tys may be only reserved for a few special occasions and at other times music, singing and dancing serve to achieve an altered state of consciousness. As the doctor-turned-anthropologist, Wolfgang Jilek argues:

The capacity of attaining altered states of consciousness is a universal property of the human central nervous system as evidenced by the ubiquitous occurrence of trance phenomena through time and space. However, the prevalence of these phenomena appears to be a function of socio-cultural variables. (1982: 24)

Similarly, cross-cultural examples also warn us that in many cultures shamans are not necessarily trained to use hallucinogens to alter their state of mind.⁷⁷ For as Nanda describes:

Through dance, an individual and a group can *feel* the qualitative shift in the normal pattern of mental functioning through a disturbed sense of time, a loss of control, perceptual distortion, a feeling of rejuvenation, a change in body image, or hypersuggestibility. (1987: 354)

Thus, I must argue with Jilek, Balzer and Nanda, that singing, drumming and dancing could achieve such heightened sense of being; and that by turning around one's axis until losing balance or control dizziness and fainting may be induced.⁷⁸ Or, to further my analysis, I want

⁷⁷ Bäckman and Hultkrantz (1978: 93: 107) report that while among the Lapps drinking lye and aquavit (bitterish alcohol substance), as well as the use of mushroom, were recorded, most of the shamanic trance journeys were through self-transference, i.e. singing, dancing and psychic stress. In southwest China, among the Jingpo people, "the *midui* (shaman) usually falls into trance several times during the annual sacrificial rite with the help of intoxicating wormwood and ginger" (Kun 1988: 126). Kun (1988: 128) also reports that more than two thousand years ago, the historic shamanic séance was accompanied with much wine-drinking.

⁷⁸ During turning the physiological changes in the human body are constants: increasing body temperature and heart beat, sweating, production of adrenaline, blood pressure fluctuation, and the various pressures on the cardiovascular system. It is not clear, however, how long one can stand the rotation before fainting—it is, nevertheless, my hypothesis, that this too can vary. It may be enhanced through cultural training, or may be different for men and women, and, finally, age may be a decisive factor as well. For example, Jilek (1982: 46–48) while analyzing the North West Coast Indian "Spirit Dance," describes twelve conditions observed during trance dancing which are present and influence one's somato-psychological state of being.

to propose, that one of the most "natural" way to achieve an altered states of consciousness may have been breathing exercises (inhaling large amount of oxygen) connected to physical exertion (such as dancing) eventually causing dizziness and fainting which may had been a technique of falling into trance *without* the use of hallucinatory drugs. This technique may had been part of the art of Hungarian *táltoses* who through the "dizzying" dance—the manifold uses of the *ker-* root certainly provides credence to this—may just had preserved to us one of the most archaic and natural form of shamanizing to achieve altered states of consciousness.⁷⁹

Dance Calls

A final aspect of Hungarian dance folklore I wish to address is the use of the exclamatory *huj-huj* (roughly may be rendered in English as "hey-hey"). This piece of evidence is worth adding to the preceding—not only because it confirms my thesis, but also because it enhances the connection of current folklore to a (pre)historic consciousness and distant cultural practice. The earliest written source is the tenth century A.D. description of a Hungarian war-cry by the German Bishop, Liutprand (*vox turpis et diabolica hui-hui* "the ugly and devilish cry of *huj-huj*"). From this it is possible to extrapolate that such shriek could had been utilized by the ancient Hungarians not only as a form of scare-tactics, but also as a call for assistance by a deity or spirits (László 1944; Pais 1957, 1975).⁸⁰ The

⁷⁹ In an interesting ethnohistorical document Dezső Malonyay described the circle dance of Hungarian women at the turn of the century with great deal of romanticism as well as insight: "The circle is closed, the fast rhythmic Hungarian song is heard, eyes are glittering, faces are red, waists are swinging rapidly, skirts are flying, and the circle is progressing faster and faster, the fairy-wheel is rotating speedily . . ." (A kör összezáródik, hangzik a gyorsütemű magyar nóta, kigyúladnak a szemek, kipirul az arc, a derék hevesen rezdülnek, repülnek a rokolyák, s forog a kör, gyorsan, gyorsabban, mind sebesebben forog a tündékaréj . . .) (quoted in Martin 1979: 85)

⁸⁰ At this point one must wonder, in light of what has been said earlier, about the superb skills of shamans in using ventriloquism, singing, dancing, drumming and sleight of hands to be successful and, more specifically, to capture the audience. Cries are present as imitation of wild beasts, domesticated animals, birds, as well as spirits and ancestral voices. For the anthropologist and psychoanalyst Géza Róheim (1953), the hero's ability to talk the language of animals is self-evident. Waldemar Bogoras

etymology of the exclamatory *haj* or *huj* is from *hajt*, literally ‘to drive animals’ (Juhász 1993: 156–160). As for the origin of the exclamation, it may be suggested that the driving of animals (mentioned earlier) could be connected to the actual directing the movements of animals through specific calls which may have derived from the action itself.

In common everyday parlance, *heje-huja* (or its rough equivalent *dínom-dánom*) is often used interchangeably to mean ‘dancing’ or ‘boisterous revelry’. More specifically, Hungarian folklorists noted the remnant of this call in the mid-winter ritual of *regölés*—a practice of good-fortune telling and fertility magic (Diószegi 1983: 123–133, Szomjas-Schiffert 1963: 364). Songs in this ritual are interrupted by constant cries of *Haj-regő rejtem*, a phrase over which much debate has been raged concerning its meaning and function.⁸¹ In the more distant region of Moldavia, Hungarian men travel in groups, their whips crackling, while they reciting long poems of well-wishing lines, a rite known as the *hejgetés* (Diószegi 1983: 70–71). Géza Róheim (1984: 152) also noted the close parallels between the Hungarian *huj-huj* and the Khanty and Mansi ritual cries. These are just a few examples that such an exclamatory syllable may, though not necessarily, be related to fertility and magical rites (Károly 1978: 472–475; Korompay 1989: 31).⁸²

Despite its wide use, Hungarian scholars have been somewhat uneasy concerning the shamanic origin of this exclamation, its history and meaning. The Hungarian linguist, Péter Hajdú (1959–60: 28–29), for example, is more cautious and does not subscribe to the shamanistic theory, and while he accepts Diószegi’s view that in Siberian mate-

(1965: 455–456) provides a fascinating glimpse into the séance of Chukchee shamans, during which the high shrieks and calls—“hysterical shouts” according to Bogoras which often have specific names—imitate sounds of various animal helpers and spirits. Whether the Hungarian *huj-huj* or *ujju-ju* may have had its origin in such practices is anybody’s guess. It certainly does make sense to me, if one is eager to look for answers of origins, to begin here. For the complexity of historical analyses see Kristó 1980, and also Notes 12 and 20.

⁸¹ It was the music historian Benjamin Rajeczky (1976: 236–237), who called attention to the fact that the term and activity of *regölés* had not been confined to Transylvania and Transdanubia as it was previously believed but, on the contrary it was much more widespread in Hungary.

⁸² In Note 72, I mentioned the possible connection to the swinging rhymes to trance states—as these aim at “driving” high into the celestial spheres. At least in one of them, the exclamation *ujju-juh* appears; see Kiss 1891: 56.

rial similar exclamatory sounds have important functions, he does not agree with him and rejects the argument that the Hungarian ones may be related to shamanism. On the contrary, he views the general exclamatory syllables as variants of songs in which *such* “fillers” and “interjections” are used in order to comply with the length of the musical phrases. Since Hungarian shamanic songs from prehistory are yet to be discovered, Hajdú is extrapolating information through his own interpretation through educated assumptions in place of available data. For Hajdú, such exclamations simply serve “to give time for the singer to think about the what he wants to improvise about” (Hajdú 1959–1960: 28). While sound at first, this theory may be ethnocentric in that he identifies practitioners of such songs as simplistic neophytes who do not or could not recall what they sing, and this is the reason why, goes Hajdú’s argument, they have to rely on non-sense syllable to give them extra time to be able to think up something.

Although, I do not deny that “filler” interjections such as *haj*, *hej*, *sej*, or *hopp*—a practice quite common in Hungarian folksongs—may exist as such, the dance calls which I am about to discuss, however, do not prove Hajdú’s theory as the only viable one. For one, there are exclamatory syllables which do not function as “fillers”; for example, in many Manchu shamanic songs, the syllable called “onomatopoeic” are always in the beginning, or placed at the end of the songs. Such syllables occur at regular intervals which certainly cannot be regarded as either accidental or as simply complying with the length of a definite melodic line (Melles 1987: 14–15).⁸³

Moreover, it should be stressed that the practice of shouting the syllable *ujju-ju-ju* is widespread and important in Hungarian dancing, an area wholly missed by scholars, including Hajdú himself. Known simply as *csujogatózás*, *hujjintás*, *hujjogatózás*, or *rikótozás*, although Réthei (1924: 247) also refers to them as *réjják*, such exclamation is easily achieved by high-pitched screaming-like voice by forcing (blowing?) large amounts of air through the vocal cords.⁸⁴ This forced, extremely

⁸³ According to Melles (1987: 87), the meaning of the syllable *ajaj* and *dejanku* is unknown and cannot be deciphered; for her they are “words with magical powers but without meaning.” However, this may well be an ethnocentric interpretation: if it is “magical” it cannot be rendered as “without meaning.”

⁸⁴ Whether the practice of *hujákolás*—calling in mountainous regions in Croatia—belongs to this category I cannot say with certainty (Eperjessy 1988). The fact that in more

harsh, high-pitched-style calling, in fact, may be found in Hungarian men's singing style which exhibits similar features; both of which are completely the opposites of Siberian and Central Asian "throat-singing." The actual call consists of the repetition of *ujju-ju-juju-ju-ju* (seven syllable in all) in rhythmic eights but not in the beginning or within the songs—as is the case of the Siberian examples cited by Péter Hajdú—but *following* them. In fact the calls always provide a closure of the verse or text: if the verse is a couplet than at the end of the second line; if it is four, than at the end of the fourth.⁸⁵

In peasant customs, the *csujogató*s is related to either weddings (hence the name wedding-calls) or to dancing.⁸⁶ I cannot detail the various wedding calls here, but would like to assert that while many may be described as pornographic, this may function as a screen or a coded symbolic language for assuring fertility and a heterosexual code of ethic in small, village communities.⁸⁷ The existence of special dance leader called "hey-lad" (i.e. "caller") in the Rábaköz region in northwestern Hungary may be an organized, or even militarized, version of the once important calling

southerly regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the calling is known as *groktanje* may be an indication that the name originated in the region where Hungarian speakers also live. In the mountain region of Gyimes, the easternmost Transylvania, the same calling is known as *hüdüntés*.

⁸⁵ Réthei (1924) tried to classify dance calls according to the actual calling syllables: in the first, he collected those which he identified simply as non-sense calls to urge dancing (*ujju-ju, ejhaj-sejhaj*, etc.); in the second category, he placed all those which already contained meaningful but fragmentary statements such as "let's go, dance, lad," *uccu rajta, ihaj-tyuhaj sose halunk meg*; and, finally, he listed those which were complete ideas put in a rhymed couplet (*Akinek ma kedve nincs, annak egy csöpp esze sincs.*) Similar attempts have been made recently by others but with no significant result. A thorough analysis of dance calls is yet to be made.

⁸⁶ For examples of these see the early issues of the journal *Ethnographia* (Budapest) and the collection of Emma Lugossy in *Magyar Népzene Tára* "Wedding Music" volume (see Bartók and Kodály 1956); see also Bosnyák 1987; Kallós 1973; Pálffy 1987 and Vasas and Salamon 1986.

⁸⁷ For instance, in the Kalotaszeg region, before the day of the wedding, unmarried youth gather at the house of the young bride bringing green branches. As it darkens, and more and more alcohol is consumed, calls of extremely obscene nature—which are not to be heard at any other time—are shouted by separate groups of men and women. In the same region, during the first milking of the sheep, obscene dance calls are a regular feature of merry-making and celebration of fertility; see Kürti 1987, and Vasas and Salamon 1987.

during dance (Martin 1980: 420). It must be stressed, however, that this specific calling is different from the individualistic and archaic *ujju-ju-ju* syllable which may relate to the magical belief system.

While there is a connection between the two types of calls (in forms and texts), the significant uniting element in both is the syllable *ujju-ju-ju-ju-ju-ju* repeated at the end of each couplet or verse.⁸⁸ Although Hungarian dance calls by their nature are not filled with magic incantations, a few, however, are inscribed with "supernatural" meanings, a warning that a content analysis of these is way overdue. In one, for instance, the connection to whirlwind and the "quarrelsome" quality of the *táltoses* as shown earlier, is expressed in the following way:

*Aki tőlem el nem fér,
vigye el a forgószél!*

If you can't fit from me,
The whirlwind will carry you away. (*my translation*, Enyedi 1988: 166)⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Such a practice may be culture specific and the question whether the Romanian *strigaturi* (dance calls) or their Slavic parallels reveal similarities should be analyzed accordingly.

⁸⁹ When analyzing Siberian shamanic songs, Vilmos Diószegi stated that: "Ezeknek a sámánénekeknek a nyelve nagyon ismerős. Ismerős a magyar mondókákból, népi varázsigékből és népdalokból, ismerős a Kalevalából, a finnek nagy népi eposzából, amelyben lépten-nyomon ráismerünk ezekre a sámánénekekre. S meg kell említenünk, hogy sámánénekek igen erősen hatottak József Attila költészetére is; nem egy költeményében visszhangoznak a valamikori sámánok szavai." (The language of these [Siberian] shamanic songs is very familiar to us. We recognize them in Hungarian riddles, magical incantations, and folk songs; they are known to us from the Finnish great epic, Kalevala. We must mention that shamanic songs had a strong influence on the poetry of Attila József too; in many of his poems words of the archaic shamans resonate.) (Diószegi 1962: 105). We may add, then, that dance calls could be analyzed with this in mind as well. Another dance call: *Szűrőszita, tejeslábas, álljon félre, aki házias* (Those who are married should step a side [for this is the time of] the sieve and the milk-jug, quoted by Solymossy 1941: 47), while quite meaningless at first, could be re-interpreted completely differently in light of this essay's thesis. For the mention of sieve, the milk-jug, the unmarried position, and the acquisition of space point to a secondary meaning which could be related to the *táltos* complex analyzed here. See also earlier notes concerning dance calls and their possible connection to the themes discussed, for example, the sieve and the horse.

That the practice of such calling may be related to the *táltos* belief is further reinforced by the fact that the *huj-huj*—or its variants the *ujju-ju-ju*—does not exist in relation to witchcraft. For in witch-trials and folk-tales with close parallels of European tales, the exclamation seems to be *Hipp-hopp*.⁹⁰ In fairy-tales, moreover, the magic flight takes place at the command of the hero/heroine who yells: “*Hipp-hopp*, let me be somewhere, I want to be.”⁹¹ In contemporary stories about the existence of witches, the exclamation associated with witches seems to be identical.⁹² Similarly, this call may also appear in more entertaining, social dances but without magical elements (Réthei 1924). However, I must stress again, that while the *Hipp-Hopp* may be related to the European witch-belief, and the “hey-lad” dance call to the formally organized circle men’s dances which may had evolved under the influence of specific medieval and renaissance dances, the long shouted ending of dance and wedding calls may be related to the more archaic *huj-huj* (*ujju-ju*), and thus to magical activities, some of which themselves may be of shamanic origin.⁹³ As indicated earlier, shouting and

⁹⁰ The analysis of the linguist Antal Nyíri (1962: 58–59) considers onomatopoeic words including the possible origin for the exclamation *hopp*.

⁹¹ In the description of bewitching practice in the village of Érsekcsanád, witches fly with the *Hipp, hopp* command (Fazekas and Székely 1990: 28). According to Hegyi (1937: 474) witches of Siklód cried out during their dance with the following words: *allárittyen komámasszony*.

⁹² In the comparative study of Éva Pócs, for example, we find witches or fairies with their characteristic cry *Hopp-hopp*: “Egy hódmezővásárhelyi boszorkányt prémes, zöld bársonyszoknyában látnak táncolni a pitvarban és hallják, amint ‘sok hopp-hopp’-ot kiált.” (“In the witch-trial at Hódmezővásárhely, they describe a witch dancing in green-velvet and fury skirt in the court-yard while she cries many ‘Hopp-hopp’.” See Pócs 1989: 148, 168. *My translation*).

⁹³ At the end of my analysis I must argue that in light of what has been presented above, the famous dance song from Körmöcbánya of the early sixteenth century might be looked at differently:

*Szupra agnő, szökj fel kabla,
haza jött férjed, tombj Kató,
a te szép palástodban,
gyöngyös sarudban.
Haja, haja virágom!*

Jump spinster, get up hackney,
Your husband arrived, dance Kate,
In your beautiful mantle,
in your beaded slipper,
Hey-hey, my flower. (*my translation*)

In this interesting song four of the archaic elements discussed in this article are present: woman (*agnő*), the horse (*kabla*), dancing (*tombj*) and dance call syllable (*haja-haja*). It

shrieks during shamanic séances have various functions: calling of deities as well as imitating calls of animals and spirits. That this have been preserved in dances and wedding calls (an aspect of fertility rituals) is, then, no accident in light of my argument concerning the more archaic constitution and nature of Hungarian dance.

Conclusions

In this paper I have interrogated certain selected “archaic elements” in order to connect some seemingly disparate threads of Hungarian folk culture and religious beliefs to a magical and shamanic world-view. Many of the terms, such as ‘archaic’, ‘past’, ‘magical’, ‘shamanism’, and ‘folk culture’, are, by their very nature, problematic to the scholar working in the 1990s and have been rightfully scrutinized recently (Bloch 1989; Fabian 1991; Ginzburg 1989; Roseberry 1989; Shanin 1979, 1990). The notion of what constitute, or what has constituted shamanic religion in the past, has been arguably both redefined and referred as cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary investigations facilitate a more flexible understanding of such practices (Bourdieu 1977; Balzer 1994; Humphrey 1994). This, too, has been my aim with movements, music, verbal and non-verbal expressions and the art of dancing which have been explained previously through morphological and movement analyses as if they can be isolated from the rest of the cultural way of thinking and meaning-producing activities (see Cowan 1990; Kaeppeler 1993; Kürti 1989; Ness 1992; Novack 1990; Williams 1979).

In line with these concerns, shamanic religious world-view has been utilized here rather broadly to denote a religious and magical culture which *may have been* rather than *was* a part of Eurasian culture history for many cultures and societies. It should not, however, be implied that this analysis subscribes to the idea that during the course of *la longue duree* of Hungarian prehistory an overarching shamanic belief system engendered all these elements described. No known society has

is fairly accepted in Hungarian scholarship that this song is a representative sample of the fifteen–sixteenth century “flower-songs” (*virágének*), a genre of European medieval origin (Korompay 1989: 154–155). I am, however, somewhat suspicious about these views accepting uncritically the full-scale adoption of western European courtly songs in the popular and peasant cultures of the East, see also Katona 1970 and Képes 1976.

been strictly shamanic at any given time and not all groups in society adhered to shamanism. In fact, sociologists, anthropologists and historians of religions have described a world in which cultures of religions, whether Islamic, Buddhist and Christian, or small-scale Lamaist, Zoroastrian or animistic, were in a state of flux constantly borrowing from and fusing with one another (Bourdieu 1977; Eliade 1964; Humphrey 1994; Samuel 1993). As it has been presented above, such has been the case with this European material, in which elements of earlier belief system was impregnated with ideas, symbols and visions of later, dominant Christian and various ethnic folk beliefs. For such complex ideational and material experience, in which the twentieth century data were superimposed on to historical experiences while everyday practices were placed side-by-side with other coeval events, an interdisciplinary, analytical approach has been attempted to account for the complexity of the historical, etymological, and ethnographic material.

In conclusion, I have argued that seemingly unconnected and marginal elements in Hungarian peasant culture—the *táltos* belief, the sieve, the horse, and dance behavior—may be understood differently if seen from an interdisciplinary analysis guided by interpretive concerns. I have maintained that scholarly analyses must be a critical re-evaluation of earlier texts in order to reveal those specifics which may provide a better understanding of the interrelated aspects of shamanism with movement, rituals, speech, myth, and magic. Since many of the described activities and folkloric texts bespeak of a culture which already became transformed considerably, one possible way to ascertain their message is by a thorough cross-disciplinary investigation of language, thought, and action which are meaningful and explainable from within the culture's own perspective.

This is the reason why the language of this text is more flexible, pluralistic and has been expressed through “could,” “may,” and “maybe,” to allow space for the intuitive possibilities and perhaps to argue against the grain of hard-core and scientific facts so emblematic in scholarship today. It is obvious, then, that this enterprise involves what recently has been referred to as “interpretive,” reflexive and critical anthropology. Although it is far from the activity of earlier scholars who were keen about reconstructing past life-ways, in a way I attempted to utilize this approach to connect heretofore marginal and isolated elements of Hungarian peasant culture. These texts, beliefs, dance movements and symbols, then, have been utilized for an analysis which highlights the interconnectedness of cultures, the present

with the past and the material with the mental, aspects which must guide anthropological enterprise if it desires to remain true to its cross-cultural vocation to understand—and influence—the human condition, its quest, purpose and changing nature.

Note

This paper is an expanded version of a talk delivered at the International Society for Shamanistic Research meeting, Budapest, July 3–6, 1993. I am indebted to Mihály Hoppál for inviting me to this conference, and Marjorie Balzer for an initial discussion concerning material presented here. Research in Hungary was first conducted in 1984, and then 1985–86, and again in 1992; in Hungarian communities in Romania, I conducted fieldwork in 1986 and in 1993. All of these fieldworks were funded by IREX and Fulbright-Hays. To these agencies I am grateful for their generous support.

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The Creation of Man. A Nepalese Shaman's Recital to Postpone Astrological Crises

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HONOLULU, HI

Shamans remain a key figure of Nepal's religious landscape. In each of the diverse diagnostic, healing, protective, or otherwise interventionary ceremonies that Himalayan shamans perform, they recite previously memorized oral texts. These recitals, the core of shamanic knowledge, explain the situation that is to be treated and detail the methods of its treatment. To provide a concrete example of such a recital, I present the Nepali text used to treat problems of astrological origin, along with its line-by-line English translation, a short introduction, and notes to elucidate its language and context.

Introduction

As a central part of every ceremony, Himalayan shamans recite previously memorized oral texts. These shamans rely upon a very extensive training in oral texts to diagnose and treat afflictions that trouble their clients (Maskarinec 1992). They accomplish their intercession through various rituals, ceremonies that prominently incorporate throughout every stage of activity both long, publicly chanted recitals and short, whispered, secretive formulas (mantras). Both recitals and mantras (Maskarinec 1990) are polished, well-constructed, orally preserved texts, meticulously memorized through years of training. These texts constitute the core of shamanic knowledge. By their accurate recitation, shamans intervene to manipulate and change the world. In learning them, shamans acquire the knowledge necessary for their profession and obtain a thoroughly detailed view of the world and its participants. Pupils carefully learn to perform them correctly, convinced at least initially that the words would lose their efficacy if mistakes were made when saying them (but see note 17 below).

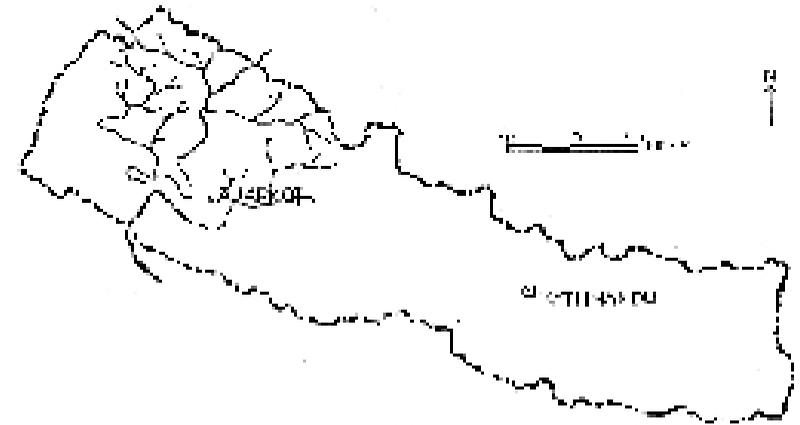
To illustrate concretely such texts, I present here a concise but extremely coherent example, used to begin the treatment of problems that have astrological origins. These afflictions are called *gaudā*, star obstructions, and are moments of extreme crisis. Commonly identified *gaudā* are: The Crisis of Birth (*jaram gaudā*), The Crisis of Death (*maram gaudā*), The Crisis of Childhood (*khadje gaudā*), The Crisis of Planetary Threats (*paṭke gaudā*), The Crisis of Lost Wits (*hiyā gaudā*), The Crisis of Hidden Desires (*chelyā gaudā*), Death at the Head (*śirān kāl*), Excuse at the Feet (*goryān niḥu*), The Messenger of Death (*jama* [Sanskrit *yama*] *dūt*), The Time of Death (*jama kāl*), the Wheel of Time (*kālcakra*), Extreme Obstruction (*hari gaudā*) and the Ax Obstruction (*bancāro gaudā*). The ways that these are treated are clarified by the text itself. The dynamics of treatment are too complex to explore here; for excellent preliminary discussions of this complicated issue, see Desjarlais 1992 and Höfer 1992.



Map 1. Location of Nepal in South Asia

The hills and valleys of Jājarkoṭ District, Western Nepal, create a rugged setting for a vibrant shamanic tradition. The district lies in the foothills of the Himalayas, about 100 air miles west northwest of Kathmandu, as located on *Map 2*. Inhabitants precariously survive through agriculture and animal husbandry. Until 1960, Jājarkoṭ remained an autonomous kingdom within Nepal. An annual tribute of 701 rupees was paid to the king in Kathmandu; local political and legal administration was left entirely to Jājarkoṭ's king, though he applied the national legal code. Since 1960, government administrators have been appointed by

the central authority. The remoteness of the area, however, still leads its inhabitants to discuss "Nepal" as if it were another country, and the traditional balances of and struggles for power between royal cousins, traditional ministers, and vassal chiefs continue despite the presence of the new officials, who in any case are frequently transferred and by whom such a remote posting is seen as close to exile.



Map 2. Nepal, showing the locations of Jājarkoṭ and Kathmandu

Jājarkoṭ maintains a stable ethnic composition, organized within the relatively simple caste structure of traditional Nepal (for more details see Höfer 1979). Inequitable land distribution and an exploitive local aristocracy compound natural problems. In this materially impoverished setting exist two competing forms of systematic spirit possession, *dhāmīs*, whom I have identified as oracles or mediums, and *jhāngarīs*, who are shamans in the precise meanings of that term (Maskarinec 1989). Both practice outside the mainstream of the Hindu religion and social system. That is, shamans and oracles must compete not only with each other for clients, but also with Brahman priests and Jaiśī astrologers of popular Hinduism, and further compete with recently introduced, government-sponsored practitioners of Western-style allopathic medicine.

Despite a low population density of three persons per square mile, the steep landscape and low rainfall produce a consistently inadequate food supply with periodically acute famines, leading to out migration. Infant mortality is high, and the quality of health low. A Dutch survey of leprosy throughout Nepal found the highest incidence of that disease to be in Jājarkoṭ, and estimated that the incidence of tuberculosis is among the highest in Nepal. Cholera, typhoid, and rabies epidemics occur, and other severe diseases like encephalitis, meningitis, and hepatitis are common, though the problems most commonly treated by shamans are distinct from these diseases (Maskarinec 1992).

Within the local social structure, blacksmiths, the group from which most shamans come, figure near the bottom, with little access to local resources and with little power in local politics. Neither do they have a monopoly on the profession of shaman, though the blood sacrifices that must regularly be performed limit the calling to lower castes.

Shamanic reputations ultimately rest on performing miraculous cures, but less astounding reasons for favoring one shaman over another are also common. Besides obvious factors like kinship ties, debt relations, and geographic proximity, shamans are often evaluated by the number and length of the texts they know, their flair in reciting, and the enthusiasm, energy, and aptitude displayed in performance. By all of these criteria, Gumāne Kāmī was among the very best in the region.

The Text

On three different occasions between 1978 and 1989, I recorded this recital from Jhāngarī Gumāne Mohar Kāmī of Syaulā Village, Jājarkoṭ District, Western Nepal. The last was six months before his death, when he was very ill but still determined to teach me what he knew. Without his extraordinary assistance, and that of Yogiswar Kārki of Jājarkoṭ, this paper would have been impossible. Both spent long, unrewarded hours going over this text word for word, helping me understand this—and much other—material. I also wish to acknowledge the kind encouragement that I have received from Andrés Höfer and from John T. Hitchcock, who have both tried to moderate my translating excesses. Any translation must remain problematic; for some of the special problems that arise when working with oral ritual texts, see Höfer 1985. I have tried to allow final editorial decisions to rest, whenever possible,

with the shamans themselves, but, for diverse and complicated reasons, this has not always proved feasible. Mistakes that remain of transcription, translation, and interpretation are, consequently, mine alone.

I have collected versions of this text from eight other shamans of Jājarkoṭ and Rukum Districts, and their material contributes to my understanding of this text. To emphasize consistency in the notes that follow, however, I draw contrasts only with the version of Gumāne's cousin, Jhāngarī Karṇa Vīr Kāmī of Curī Village, another of the leading shamans of the area, whose exemplary cooperation I also wish to acknowledge. Karṇa Vīr's text shares an origin with Gumāne's within the last six generations, giving some sense of how this material may change over time. Mythic permutations, contradictions, and inconsistencies among the wider range of shaman texts are the subject of a much more extensive work in progress. I hope to publish further examples of shaman texts in future issues of this journal.

मनुज्मालाईं सृष्टि गर्नु ।
गौडा टाटा गराउनेको धुर ।

- 1 मेरो महादेउ कहाँ उब्जो, इन्द्र घग्मा ।
मेरो सितायो कहाँ उब्जो, नारामण घग्मा ।
मेरो महादेउ सिरन कहाँ पन्थो, पूर्वा विशा पन्थो,
गोरान कहाँ पन्थो, पश्चिम विशा पन्थो,
- 5 दमाँ हात उत्तर दिशा, सभो हात दक्षिण दिशा,
महादेउ उत्पन्न भया ।

- नारामणजीले मर्जी भयो कि, मेरी सितायो, मेरी पार्वती,
छोरा भयो तिमी, छोरी भयो तिमी,
लैजाऊ चेलीयो, मुन दाइजो, भन्दा भन्दा,
10 लैजाऊ चेलीयो, चाँदी दाइजो, भन्दा भन्दा ।
मुन दाइजो, चाँदी दाइजो हामी लेउनी,
हाँस्रे दयाउन छन, भन्दा पनिन् सिताले ।
तापु तामा लैजाऊ, थोला भरन लैजाऊ चेलीयो,
छोरा भयो तिमी, छोरी भयो तिमी, भन्दा ।
15 हामी लेउनी, हाँस्रे दयाउन छन, भन्दा भनिन् ।

हाती अलग लैजाऊ. घोरा तबेल लैजाऊ बेसीपी,
 छोरा भर्षी तिमी, छोरी भर्षी तिमी, भन्दा ।
 हामी लेउनी, बाबु नारायण, हामी लेउनी, भनिन् ।
 कमा दाह्रां लिच्छमी त, मन, भन्दा भन्दा ।
 20 हामी, बाबु नारायण, मान्दम दाह्रां लेदिऊ.
 पृथ्वी दाह्रां लेदिऊ, पन्चा भनिन् ।
 पृथ्वी दाह्रां प कसरी देऊ तिमीलाई,
 नी जून छन, नी बेल छन,
 मान्दम गल गल भया, मान्दम फल फल भया,
 25 दुह्री गल गल भया, पाटी पल पल भया,
 य कसरी देऊ, मान्दम दाह्रां, नारायणले भन्दा ।
 यो माहु नारायणी, बेल्ले यन कि, नी जूनको एकै जून रफमी,
 नी बेलको एकै बेल राख्मी, भनेर सिताले भनिन् ।
 नी जूनको एकै जून राख्मा, नी बेलको एकै बेल राख्मा,
 30 त्यहाँ जाट पृथ्वी राख्यो,
 अन्तर दुह्री, अन्तर माटी, मान्दम जाभियो ।
 पूर्व दिशा खुले, पश्चिम दिशा खुले,
 उत्तर दिशा खुले, दक्षिण दिशा खुले,
 चारै दिशा खुले, गंगा भागी गया, खोला भया,
 35 मान्दम राख्यो, पृथ्वी जाभियो, सब खुला सुटि भया ।
 महादेउले मर्जी भया कि, सितार पार्वती,
 मान्दम दाह्रां लेऊ, पृथ्वी दाह्रां लेऊ ।
 बिना मन्जुत्मा मान्दम महुनु हुँदैन, भन्दा भनिन् ।
 ली क्वाको मन्जुत्मा गराउन पन्चो त, भन्दा ।
 40 ली जूनको अनाऊ, भनेर,
 हात जोडमा, पात्र जोडमा, शिर जोडमा, भएन ।
 त्यहाँ जाट चाँदीको मन्जुत्मा बनाया,
 हात जोडमा, पात्र जोडमा, शिर जोडमा, भएन ।
 त्यहाँ जाट तापको बनामा ।
 45 यो तापको महा जान्ने होला, महा मुन्ने होला,
 मन्जुत्माको जाट तापको अनाऊ, भनेर उ पनि बोलेन ।
 त्यहाँ जाट पितलको बनाया, बोलेन ।
 गिल्टीको बनामा, बोलेन ।
 त्यहाँ जाट लुवाको बनाऊ, महा बलियो होला,
 50 मान्दम छला भनेर, लुवाको बनाया ।

मापी कौचो वृक्ष चपायो, बाढो पहा कोच्यो,
 मान्दम उजायो, महा दानुवा राख्य भयो ।
 ली यो मन्जुत्मा हुँदैन भनेर फेरी भगवानलाई मालिम भयो ।
 अब श्री खण्डमा जाऊ, पुषा चन्दम ल्याऊ,
 55 नी हार सलो जमाऊ, र मन्जुत्मा बनाऊ ।
 महादेउले सलो अपाउँदा खरानीको डिग्री बनामा ।
 कस राज्यामा, कस रानीका मुन भाल्या मुर्को छन,
 मुर्काको अभेद ल्याऊ, त्यो अभेद
 र त्यो खरानी जुरायो र मन्जुत्मा बनाऊ, भन्दा ।
 60 त्यो कुसुराको अभेद र खरानी जगाया, मन्जुत्मा बनामा ।
 हात जोडमा, पात्र जोडमा, शिर जोडमा, गोडा जोडमा,
 ली नृण सास हाली भनेर
 पूण सास हाल्या, रगत बल छोड्या ।
 ली अब छँटे रातमा, लोज मन्जुत्मा, तेरो भाग भनेर
 65 भाबीले गर्भ दिन कर्म फल लेखे ।
 महादेउले सेला चौउरु गिरानमा हुँक्या,
 काला चौउरु गोप्यानमा हुँक्या,
 बड्ठीझाले सात बबक मादा,
 बोल मन्जुत्मा भने, हाँ हाँ हुँ हुँ गच्यो,
 70 यरे गपार भनेर महादेउले सराप दिमा ।
 हुन मर्न सिताले, ली, मन्जुत्माको मर्ना सराप भयो ।
 ली किन रुन्छथी सितार, महादेउले मर्जी भयो ।
 सिताले भनिन् कि, मन्जुत्माको मर्ना सराप भयो,
 कसरी मान्दम रहने हो, कसरी पृथ्वी खने हो,
 75 मन्जुत्मालाई मर्ने सराप तिमीले किन दियी ।
 सितार पार्वती हामी भन्दा तिमी जान्छा भयो, तिमी मुन्छा भयो,
 तिमो हाथो बुद्धि विचार गरी, हाथो अङ्किल किचार गरी, भन्दा ।
 जेठ मैनामा काङ्गी लगाइदथी,
 अमार मैनामा काङ्गी जाग्दछ,
 80 साउन मैनामा भाल खेल्छ,
 भदी मैनामा डाटे फल हाल्छ,
 असीब मैनामा काङ्गी फल्दछ, काङ्गी रिपी लेऊ,
 पनेर काङ्गी लगाइदथी, भन्दा भन्दा महादेउले ।
 जेठ मैनामा काङ्गी लगाइन्,
 85 अमार मैनामा काङ्गी जाग्थी,

- सउन मैनामा भाल खेल्ने,
भदी मैनामा टाढे फूल हाल्ने,
अमीच मैनामा काङ्गी कल्ने ।
नाठ सिता, श्याम श्यामी, पानी पिसानी,
90 काङ्गी टिपी ल्याऊ, भनेर महादेउले भन्थे ।
सिता पार्वता ठागे गाढी पारिन्,
बोलासं जुलठी घाटीन्, काङ्गीका भालमा गइन् ।
फूल टिपेर सभ लगाइन्,
खिमाँ टिपेर पुजमा हालिन्,
95 अतताल्मा काङ्गी टिपिन्,
आँसी विन्मा काङ्गी टिपिन्,
सातु विन्मा काङ्गी टिपिन्,
पिपाल खासाको भएकी टिपिन्,
पिपाल पूग काङ्गी टिपिन्,
100 षष्प्याँको टिपिन्, लमाइन् ।
ली महादेउ, वाम समामी, पानी पिसानी,
ली, काङ्गी लाठ भनेर महादेउलाई दिइन् ।
हामी काङ्गी खानी ।
तिमीले कुल टिपेर पाप लगायकिछी, गर्भ गर्ल्ने भयो ।
105 खिमाँ टिपेर मुक्कमा हाल्याइछी, बालक भर्ने भयो ।
अतताल्मा काङ्गी टिपेछी, तीन, दुई वर्षी भर्ने भयो ।
सातु विन्मा काङ्गी टिपेछी, तन्नेरी भर्ने भयो ।
पिपाल खासाको काङ्गी टिपेछी, खीतीसं बसीसे भर्ने भयो ।
पिपाल पूग काङ्गी टिपेछी, अदबेशे भर्ने भयो ।
110 षष्प्याँको काङ्गी टिपेछी, सुदो भइ भर्ने भयो ।
बालक भर्ने भयो, गर्भ गर्ल्ने भर्ने भयो ।
तिमीसे मन्जुत्पाको भर्ने सराप आके गरेउ, भनेर महादेउले भन्नु भयो ।
सिता पार्वता रुन भर्ने लाधिन् ।
किन रुन्छथी सिता, मन्जुत्पाको वाए हालीला,
115 ग्रह टाढीला भनेर महादेउको भर्जी भयो ।
कालु जैश्रीलाई राखीला,
दिन लगन हरीला, राती पला हरीला,
ग्रह सिता हरीला, ग्रह लक्षिण हरीला ।
हन्मा बाहुनलाई राखीला,
120 कमा लगाउला, सप्ताह लगाउला,

- रुद्री पाठ गरीला, मन्जुत्पाको ग्रह काटीला ।
नरोऊ सिता, रमा पुराचम भाङ्गरी भिङ्गुतमलाई राखीला,
जुम दूत, जुम काल,
अल्प काल, अल्प षष्प्या टाढीला,
125 दुवा बोवाटा बोप्पा परेको,
मसान साथ लागेको,
सातसतरा पसेर,
अल्प काल, अल्प गीला टाढीला,
मन्जुत्पालाई बुचाउला, भन्थे ।
130 गरीऊ सिता भनेर महादेउले सितालाई सम्झामा ।
सम्झाउँदाखेरीमति ले यसको भोग के दिनु पर्छ,
अब क्माको बाख्छ त ।
हाती आमामी, मन्जुत्पाको सट्टामा जाऊ, मन्जुत्पाले गाली सराप पाउन्मा
भयो,
थिना मन्जुत्पाको मान्दम रह्देन, महादेउले भन्थे ।
135 हात्ती आमाले भने कि, हामी जादीन,
हामी जाउला मन्जुत्पाको सवारी धानीला ।
चोडी आमामी, मन्जुत्पाको सट्टामा जाऊ ।
हामी जादीन, हामी मन्जुत्पाको कमारो हिला भनिन् ।
भैसी आमामी, मन्जुत्पाको सट्टामा जाऊ ।
140 हामी जादीन, हामी माइको भोगमा जाउला भनिन् ।
गाई आमामी, कात्तुकेछुआँ, मन्जुत्पाको सट्टामा जाऊ ।
गाई आमाले भने कि, हामी जादीन,
हाप्रा खोराले मान्दमी पालनन्, पृथ्वी रणनन्,
हाप्रा दुधले अर्मा धार चल्छ,
145 हाप्रा गोबरले मुल ढोका पोत्न हुन्छ, हाप्रा गीतले मुद्धसारमा चल्छ,
हामी मान्दमी पालीला, पृथ्वी र्वाँला, भनिन् ।
जाङ्गी आमामी, मन्जुत्पाको सट्टामा जाऊ, मन्जुत्पाले गाली सराप पाउन्मा
भयो ।
हामी जाउना, जुम दूतमा, जुम कालमा ।
मष्टा भोगमा, अर्मा भोगमा हामी जादीला,
150 मन्जुत्पाको सट्टामा हामी जादीन, भनिन् ।
भेडी आमामी, मन्जुत्पाको सट्टामा जाऊ ।
हामी जाउना, बराहका भोगमा जाउला ।
मुशुर आमामी, मन्जुत्पाको सट्टामा जाऊ ।

- खोल्यता घाघ्रेको भोगमा जाउला, भनिन् ।
 155 त्यहाँ घाट कम राजमा कंस रानीका
 मुन भाले छन, मुन पोथी छन,
 ली, तिनीलाई वेदाङ्कन ल्याउ, भन्दा भन्दा ।
 कंस रानी, तुम्रो मुन भाले कति रुपैया मोल छ ।
 हाम्रा मुन भाले सब रुपैया मोल छ, भनिन् ।
 160 सम रुपैया हाम्रो मोल होइन, हाम्रो मोल चार पैसा हो,
 मन्त्रुत्माले आट्टि दिन्छ भने हामी जान्छौं,
 मुन भाले, मुन पोथीले भन्दा ।
 तुम्रो आट्टु क्यो हो त, सोभो ।
 ली, तुम्रा खुनामा बास माग्छौं,
 165 पोत्ने छौंमा मलीच पार्ने दिन्छ भने जान्छौं,
 भारे भौंको डाल्न दिन्छ भने जान्छौं,
 चुला पारी कुत्कुली खेल्न दिन्छ भने जान्छौं,
 सम्म दोप्यर सम्म नारायणचरमा
 चारो बुझाउन दिन्छ भने जान्छौं,
 170 सम्म दोप्यर हाम्रो भाका भया,
 असकारणले हामी मन्त्रुत्माको सट्टामा अत्य काल, अत्य खड्गा,
 हाम्रो खातले जुम काल जुम त्त हामी बुझाउछौं,
 बुझामा पछि मन्त्रुत्माको ग्रह शान्त,
 गींडा शान्त हामी राउंछौं,
 175 हाम्रो आट्टि दिन्छ भने जान्छौं, भन्दा ।
 तिम्रो आट्टि त्यो सब ल्याऊ, मुन भालपी, तुम्रा खुनामा बास गय्या,
 पोत्ने छौंमा मलीच पार्ने गया, भारे भौंको डाल्न गया,
 चुला पारी कुत्कुली खेल्न गया,
 सम्म दोप्यर सम्म नारायणचरमा चारो बुझाउनु,
 180 तिम्रो आट्टि, तिम्रो फाट्टि भया, मन्त्रुत्माको सट्टामा,
 बंला पनि नभन्दा, कुबेला पनि नभन्दा,
 जेबेला भया पनि तिमी गमा, भनेर
 मुन भाल्या, मुन पोथीलाई भन्दा ॥

The Creation of Man. Recital to Postpone Astrological Crises

- 1 Where did my Mahādeu originate, at Indra's house.
Where did my Sitāyā originate, at Nārāyaṇ's house.
Where was my Mahādeu's head; to the East.
Where were his feet; to the West;
- 5 his right hand to the North, his left hand to the South,
Mahādeu came into being.¹
Nārāyaṇjī declared, "My Sitāyā, my Pārvaṭau,²
you are a son to me, you are a daughter to me.
Take, my descendant, a dowry of gold," he said.
- 10 "Take, my descendant, a dowry of silver," he said.
"A dowry of silver, a dowry of gold, we'll not take,
they're at our mansion," said Sitā.
"Take things of copper, take utensils of bronze, my descendant, you are
a son to me, you are a daughter to me," he said.
- 15 "We'll not take them, they're at our mansion," she said.
"Take a stable of elephants, take a stable of horses, my descendant,
you are a son to me, you are a daughter to me," he said.
"We'll not take them, father Nārāyaṇ, we'll not take them," she said.
"Then what dowry will you take, name it," he said.
- 20 "We, father Nārāyaṇ, will take the dowry of the world,³
we will take the dowry of the earth," she said.
"How can I give you the dowry of the earth,
there are nine moons, there are nine suns,

¹ In most shamanic ceremonies, several texts are performed consecutively. Only the session's first text would be preceded by a formal introduction like the opening six lines of this text. Such beginnings shift the performance out of the confused, deteriorating present age into ideal, mythopoetic, time and space.

² This casual mixing of various names from Hindu sources, here equating Sitā with Pārvaṭī, and Nārāyaṇ with Mahādev, is common throughout Gumāne's texts. It can be found in those of other shamans as well, including those who recite in Kham rather than in Nepali. Case endings here are vocative, unusual enough in Nepali that I have preserved them in my translation.

³ *Māndama*. One of the seven levels of the world through which *jhāgarīs* travel. Ordinarily in the plural: *māndamī*, but here the singular reflects the unsorted, unstable flux of the early world.

the world is soft and fluid, the world is unstable and muddy,⁴
 25 the stones are soft and fluid, the soil is unstable and muddy,
 how can I give away the dowry of the world?" said Nārāyaṇ.
 "My father Nārāyaṇ, what I say is, of the nine moons, leave one moon,
 of the nine suns, leave one sun," said Sitā.
 Of the nine moons he left one moon, of the nine suns he left one sun,⁵

⁴ *Gal gal*. 'Any marshy or swampy place'. In other versions, this condition precedes the arrival of the nine suns and nine moons, which then cause everything to dry up and catch fire. *Thal thal* 'Muddy, semi-solid, unstable'.

⁵ In repertoires of other shamans, this episode becomes a complete recital, used to treat the astrological crises of women. Kaṛṇa Vīr's version, for example, expands this one line concerning reducing the number of suns and moons into an elaborate moral parable regarding the correct behavior of daughters-in-law. At first the world was dark. The first man was alone, and is finally given a bride of heavenly origin. Their son also receives a wife from Indra's heaven, and she seeks a dowry of nine suns, nine moons. After much adventure, she obtains them, but their heat is too much:

With nine moons, nine suns, the night was day, the day was day.
 There was hissing, there was trembling,
 dry trees were torched, green trees were scorched,
 wet season springs dried, dry season springs fried,
 the Sattivatī Gaṅgā could pierce the eye of a needle,
 smaller rivers were drying up.
 The stupid race of man sat in the shade of a lentil bush.
 The land began to burn, the soil began to crack,
 rocky cliffs began to melt.
 "Do something, daughter-in-law,
 do something inauspicious!" he said.
 "What inauspicious thing, father-in-law?" she said.
 "Address your elders abusively!" he said.
 "How can I address my elders abusively?" she said.
 "Say it!" he said, one moon, one sun departed.
 "To a guest arriving at dusk,
 say that there's no place to stay!" he said,
 one moon, one sun departed.
 "Hit a dog sitting in a doorway with a stick, daughter-in-law!"
 one moon, one sun departed.
 "With uncombed hair go in and out of the house!" he said,
 one moon, one sun departed.
 "Comb your hair backwards with a wooden comb,
 daughter-in-law!"
 one moon, one sun departed.
 "Beat together two pots!" he said,
 one moon, one sun departed.
 "Rub your right foot with your left foot, daughter-in-law!"

30 after that the earth was formed,
 to one side⁶ stones, to one side soil, the world was solidified.
 The eastern direction opened, the western direction opened,
 the northern direction opened, the southern direction opened,
 the four directions opened, Mother River⁷ was filled, there were rivers,
 35 the world was formed, the earth was solidified, everything was created.
 Mahādeu declared, "Sitā Pārvatau,
 take the dowry of the world, take the dowry of the earth."
 "Without man,⁸ the world will not survive," she said.
 "Well, what kind of man must I make then," he said.
 40 "Well, make it of gold," so saying,
 he joined hands, joined feet, joined a head, that wasn't it.
 After that he made a man of silver,
 joined hands, joined feet, joined a head, that wasn't it.
 After that he made a man of copper.
 45 "This of copper may know much, may hear much,
 make the race of man of copper," so saying, it also didn't speak.
 After that he made it of brass, it didn't speak.
 After that he made it of nickel,⁹ it didn't speak.
 "Make it of iron, it may be extremely strong,
 50 it may preserve the world," so saying, he made it of iron.

one moon, one sun departed.
 "Spit atop the drying shelf, daughter-in-law!"
 one moon, one sun departed.
 Eight moons departed, eight suns departed,
 one moon remained, one sun remained,
 they rose in the East, they set in the West.
 There was nightfall, dawn was born,
 the land was chilled, the soil was chilled,
 wet season springs bubbled, dry season springs trickled,
 the Sattivatī Gaṅgā began to flow with force.

Villagers recognize all the actions of the daughter-in-law in this passage to be inauspicious.

⁶ *Antara*. 'Different from; separated; lying near'.

⁷ *Gaṅgā*, usually *gaṅgā mātā*, hence my translation.

⁸ *Manjutyā* does not indicate gender, but, as noted in Note 5 above, woman's heavenly origin contrasts with this entirely mundane origin for man.

⁹ *Gilīṭi* = *gilat*. To lengthen this text, Gumāne would repeat the details of each creation attempt.

It chewed the tops of living trees, shattered immovable rocks,
shook the world, was a terrifying demon.¹⁰
“Well, this cannot be man,” so saying, it was again clear to Bhagāvan.¹¹
“Now, go to Śrī Khaṇḍ, bring back white sandalwood,
55 assemble a nine level pyre, and make man.”
Having assembled the pyre, Mahādeu made a ball of ashes.
“In the kingdom of Kaṁsa, the Kaṁsa queen (*rānī*¹²) has an old cock,
a chicken,¹³
bring back that chicken’s filth, mix together that filth
and those ashes and make man,” he said.
60 That chicken’s filth and those ashes he added together, made man.
He joined hands, joined feet, joined a head, joined legs,
“Well, insert life breath,¹⁴” so saying,
he inserted life breath, deposited a bloodline.
“Well, now on the sixth night, look man, your share,” so saying,
65 Bhābi¹⁵ wrote, ‘The day of birth yields karma.’
Mahādeu brushed¹⁶ a white yak tail at the head,
brushed a black yak tail at the feet,
with a powerbolt staff delivering seven blows,
“Speak, man,” he said, “Hā hā hū hū,” it went.

¹⁰ Dānuwā ‘A giant; evil spirit; demon’ < Sanskrit *dānava*.

¹¹ *Mālim* (usually *mālum*) ‘Evident, revealing, known’.

¹² In Karṇa Vīr’s version, and those of other shamans, this is not *rānī* but Ravan, the evil lord of Laṅka who abducts Sitā.

¹³ *Sun bhālyā*. ‘An old cock’. Sun ordinarily means ‘golden’, but Gumāne glossed the meaning here as ‘aged’, in the sense of ‘golden with age’. *Murkā*. ‘A chicken’.

¹⁴ *Pūn sās*. (In other versions, *pūn purus*.) ‘The life force; soul’. Restoring this to a patient is a crucial shamanic activity, and follows this episode as ritual paradigm.

¹⁵ Bhābi. On the sixth night after birth (the *chaiṭh*), Bhābi, Goddess of Fortune, comes to write a child’s fate on its forehead. Parents traditionally leave a light burning all night in the room with the baby so that she makes no mistakes, sometimes supplying a pen and inkpot. Elsewhere in Nepāl, more elaborate rituals are often conducted for this occasion, but these are absent in the villages of Jājarkoṭ. *Jarma din* would be in standard Nepali *janma din*, but Gumāne consistently used this variant.

¹⁶ *Hākyā*. ‘To wave; to brush with’. Since this text does not clarify the direction of brushing, here it means ‘back and forth’. Other texts specify when to brush upward (*jaḡāunu*) or downward (*jhāru*). Different choices of verbs in the texts result in the shaman performing different actions in his rituals.

70 “Go and die,” so saying, Mahādeu gave a curse.¹⁷
Crying and weeping, Sitā said, “Well, man has been cursed to die.”
“Well, why do you weep, Sitā?” declared Mahādeu.
Sitā said, “Man has been cursed to die,
how can the world survive, how can the earth survive,
75 why did you give man the curse of death?”
“Sitā Pārvatau, you know more than we do, you hear more than we do,
think about our idea, think about our plan,¹⁸” he said.
“In the month of Jeth,¹⁹ plant cucumbers,
in the month of Asār, they sprout,
80 in the month of Sāun, their vines climb,

¹⁷ Alternate version of these crucial lines:

तस्मिन् पञ्चुत्वा प्रनामो, मष्टुदेवो ।
मोक्षं मन्त्रुत्वा मन्त्रुत्तमो,
हो मनो लान्को हुं यान् लान्को ।
मस्मिन्नाम मनो शरणं दिम् ।

He made this man, did Mahādev.
Having said, “Speak,”
it went “ha,” it went “hu,” saying,
“Go and die!” he gave a curse.

The variations occurred only six years apart. This is the most extreme case of changing the wording of a text that I have recorded within any shaman’s repertoire. Note, however, that the changes have no effect whatsoever on the sense of the passage, over which Gumāne retains complete control. That is, his eloquent mastery of this material contrasts with the helpless mumbling of the original man, whose inarticulateness so infuriated his creator.

¹⁸ *Akkil* (= *akkal*, from Arabic). ‘Knowledge; plan; thought; care’. Words with Arabic origins entered Nepali following the Mogul invasions of India. They are much more common in vernacular Nepali than in shaman texts. However, Gumāne’s texts show more influence than do many others, probably since he and his immediate predecessors have been serving the Jājarkoṭī royalty, hence words like *marjī*, *dāijo*, *tabela*, etc.

¹⁹ I have transliterated the months in local pronunciation, instead of using ‘standard’ Nepali. Jeth is the second month of the solar year, corresponding to the house of Aries in the Western zodiac (mid-May to mid-June). The Hindu zodiac, however, was not realigned in the last millennium, and so lags one month behind ours; hence, the sign of Jeth is the bull (*vrkṣa*). The other months mentioned here follow in consecutive order. *Kāṅgrī* = *kāṅkri*. Cucumbers, noted Karṇa Vīr, have little value, grow on garbage heaps and have no fixed season, hence provide a harsh metaphor for human life.

in the month of Bhadau, they bloom,²⁰
 in the month of Asauj, they fruit, pick the cucumbers, bring them here,”
 so saying, “plant cucumbers,” said Mahādeu.
 In the month of Jeṭh, she planted cucumbers,
 85 in the month of Asār, they sprouted,
 in the month of Sāun, their vines climbed,
 in the month of Bhadau, they bloomed,
 in the month of Asauj, they fruited.
 “Go Sitau, in sunshine I went, water I spent,²¹
 90 pick the cucumbers, bring them here,” said Mahādeu.
 Sitā Pārvatā put on a skirt, an outer wrap,
 braided her hair into two braids,²² went to the cucumber vines.
 Picking flowers, she put them on her head,
 picking tiny ones,²³ she put them in her mouth,
 95 half ripe cucumbers²⁴ she picked,
 those the size of sickle handles,
 the size of flour lumps,²⁵ she picked,
 cucumbers with a yellow shadow she picked,
 those that were completely yellow she picked,
 100 those that were split open she picked, brought them back.
 “Well, Mahādeu, in sunshine you went, water you spent,
 well, eat cucumbers,” so saying,²⁶ she gave them to Mahādeu.
 “We won’t eat cucumbers.
 Flowers that you picked and put on your head, they are miscarriages²⁷;

²⁰ *Dāṭe phūl*. Flowers that become fruit, as opposed to *kopilā*, flowers that bud but then wither.

²¹ This curiously worded phrase occurs in the life histories (*parelīs*) that local oracles (*dhāmīs*) recite when possessed, the only such overlap that I have found in the oral material of these two distinct ritual specialists.

²² *Dolāme culaṭhī bāṅṅinu*. To weave one’s hair into two braids. Little girls, not adult women, wear their hair this way, making a comment on the immaturity of Sitā’s subsequent actions.

²³ *Chiyā*. ‘The smallest unripe fruit’.

²⁴ *Atartālyā*. ‘Medium size’.

²⁵ *Biryā*. ‘Lump’.

²⁶ When lengthening this recital, Gumāne would have Sitā report at this point everything that she did, step by step.

²⁷ *Garva galne*. ‘A miscarriage’, also called *garva* (*garbha*) *pathan*.

105 tiny ones you picked and put in your mouth, they are infants’ deaths;
 half ripe cucumbers you picked, they are three and two year olds’ deaths;
 those the size of flour lumps you picked; they are adolescents’ deaths;
 those with a yellow shadow you picked, they are adults’ deaths²⁸;
 those that were completely yellow you picked, they are middle aged deaths;
 110 split open ones you picked, they are old ones’ deaths.
 Children will die, there will be miscarriages.
 You have yourself made man’s curse of death,” said Mahādeu.
 Sitā Pārvatā cried and wept.
 “Why do you weep, Sitau, I’ll put up a fence for man,²⁹
 115 I’ll postpone the effects of the planets,³⁰” declared Mahādeu.
 “I’ll put there Kālu Jaiśī,
 he’ll calculate auspicious moments, will calculate the correct time,
 will calculate the foundations of planets,³¹ will calculate the signs of planets.
 I’ll put there Hunyā Bāhun,

²⁸ Literally, those who are “thirty-six, thirty-two” years old.

²⁹ In the following lines, Gumāne includes only the original astrologer, Kālu Jaiśī, the original Brāhman priest, Hunyā Bāhun, and the original shaman, *rammā* Purācan, *jhāngari* Jhīngratam, whereas other shamans often include a longer list of the “eldest” specialists. When I discussed this with him, he proved his familiarity with these other original specialists by quoting (or improvising):

Where did Sāto Gyānī originate, at Maikhārakoṭ.
 Where did Jhīngratam originate, at Tārā Tāl, Tilīgramā.
 Kālu Jaiśī originated, in the West,
 Bhaṛṣā Paṇḍit originated, in the North,
 Ratan Pārkhī originated, in the South,
 Maitu Dhāmī originated, in the North.

However, he insisted that the three individuals originally included in the recital are the only eldest wise (*gyān pardā*) men, and that the others originated later in the world’s history. Astrologers continue to do the calculations for villagers that this text lists. Paṇḍits continue to worship by reading in Sanskrit stories such as the *Śrīsvastāntī Bratakathā*, over periods of seven or twelve days. The text’s succinct portrayals of social roles retain their accuracy.

³⁰ Literally, “I will distance the planets.” This, of course, is exactly what shamans use this recital for, and what it teaches the correct method of doing.

³¹ *Graha silā*. This is possibly an error (but a consistently recurring one, pronounced every time by Gumāne) for *ghar silā*, ‘the foundation stone of a house’, also, ‘the joining of the main pillar to the roof’. The auspicious time for placing the foundation stone is something for which an astrologer is commonly consulted, and *ghar silā* is how it is mentioned in the versions of other shamans.

120 he will read the stories, will read the seven day ritual,
 will do the Rudrī lesson, will diminish the effects of man’s planets.
 Don’t cry, Sitau, I’ll put there *rammā* Purācam, *jhāṅgarī* Jhīṅgratam.³²
 The Messenger of Death, the Time of Death,
 untimely³³ deaths, untimely children’s crises he will postpone,
 125 secretly at Duwā crossroads,³⁴
 causing *masān* (spirits of dead humans) to be with him,
 having passed through the underworld,³⁵
 untimely deaths, untimely star obstructions³⁶ he will postpone,
 he will save man,³⁷ he said.
 130 “Don’t cry, Sitā,” so saying, Mahādeu explained it to Sitā.
 Having explained this, “Well, what kind of sacrifice has to be given,
 now, with what to save him?”³⁸

³² *Rammā* Purācam (also Purācan) *jhāṅgarī* Jhīṅgratam. Gumāne said this was one person. Kaṛṇa Vīr insisted that Purācan was Jhīṅgratam’s father, and was not himself a full shaman, falling victim to the original witches. *Rammā* is Kham for shaman (Walters 1975). It is rarely used in Jājarkoṭ, where the preferred term is *jhāṅgarī*. In standard Nepali this is *jhāṅkri*, but not only is the word not pronounced this way in Jājarkoṭ, this ‘standard’ spelling suggests a different etymology: one who has long hair (< *jhāṅkro*), whereas the local word is derived as: one who drives away bothersome spirits (< *jhāṅnu*). *Jhāṅgarīs* grow no more than their top-knot (*tupī*) long, as do many men; only *dhāmīs* (oracles) never cut their hair. Shamans in Jājarkoṭ regard the standard derivation as a mistaken confusion between shamans and oracles.

³³ *Alpa*. Literally, ‘early’, but by extension, any untimely death.

³⁴ *Duwā dobāta*. A crossroads home to *duwā* (usually pronounced *dhuwā*), one of the classes of minor spirits which shamans manipulate. It is sometimes referred to as the *Burmā Dhuwā*, which is the name of a star obstruction.

³⁵ *Sātsatarā pasera*. Having passed through the seven levels (the “*sātsatera*”) of the underworld. Called by other shamans the “*sātmanjā*.”

³⁶ *Gauḍā*. ‘Star obstructions; astrological positions of acute crisis’. These are the afflictions treated by this recital. Here, the text explicitly affirms that shamans are the appropriate authority for their solution. (A child’s *gauḍā* is called a *khadgā*, to treat which there is a separate recital.)

³⁷ *Bucāulā* (< *bacāunu*). ‘To save’ (future tense).

³⁸ From this point onward, the following alternate ending may be substituted to shorten the text.

“Mother elephant will give an elephant.”

“We don’t eat elephants,” they said.

“We don’t eat cow sacrifices,” they said.

“We don’t eat horse sacrifices,” they said.

“Mother Elephant, go in place of man, man has received an angry curse,
 without man the world cannot survive,” said Mahādeu.
 135 Mother Elephant said, “We will not go,
 we will carry man on his journeys.³⁹”
 “Mother Horse, go in place of man.”
 “We will not go, we will be man’s slave,” she said.
 “Mother Buffalo, go in place of man.”
 140 “We will not go, we will go as sacrifices to the goddess,” she said.
 “Mother Cow, O Black and Brown One, go in place of man.”
 Mother Cow said, “We will not go,
 our sons will raise the world, will protect the earth,
 our milk is an offering to Barmā,⁴⁰

“We, the Kaṛṇsa king, the Kaṛṇsa queen have an old cock, an old hen,
 having brought them, their sacrifice we will eat.”

“I will throw it to the Duwā Dhuwā.

Having postponed the Messenger of Death, the Time of Death,

this is the method for allowing man to survive for a moment.”

Having done it, Mahādeu having taught the technique,

the share of planets and astrological crises is this.

Standardized, alternate endings exist to many texts, and are used, for example, when a different animal (such as a goat rather than a chicken) is offered for sacrifice, to connect one text to another when multiple causes are being treated, and, as in this case, when the shaman’s stamina is fading and he needs to end quickly. Gumāne recited this short version when he was already very ill, weakness and severe coughing fits compelling him to trim everything to essentials. Identifying the sacrifice of choice, and noting its consent are the two points that must not be omitted. Every sacrificial animal must agree to being an offering. This is usually communicated by it trembling (as if possessed) before its death.

The penultimate line concisely summarizes the importance of oral texts to shamans. They anchor the shaman rituals in divine authority, establishing an important continuity between divine activity and the actions of contemporary shamans, affirming that these explicit descriptions of creating life can still be applied to extend someone’s life, even if only, as the text explicitly says, “for a moment.”

³⁹ *Dhānaulā*. ‘To carry, bear’.

⁴⁰ Barmā are spirits of deceased Brāhmins (who receive only pure offerings), and more generally, spirits of any higher caste suicides who at death vowed to return as avenging spirits. There are some spectacular examples in Jājarkoṭ of this class of spirits. The best known in the Jājarkoṭ area is Kamal Jaiśī. He was a Brāhman of Lahā who immolated himself along with a group of friends, after being mistreated by the local ruler, confirming a crisis predicted at his birth. His spirit possesses many oracles (*dhāmīs*) throughout the area and actively rights many abuses of power.

Note

Other than my own work, there have been no detailed studies concerning blacksmith shamans in Far Western Nepal, though for Magars east of Jājarkoṭ, whose shamans are in many ways very similar, a fair amount of recent research has been conducted. The original monograph on Magars was published by John T. Hitchcock in 1966. Hitchcock was also the first to report on shamans of Western Nepal, drawing comparisons between the Nepali complex and the “classical” Central Asiatic tradition of shamanism, comparing in particular the symbolism of ritual flight and travel (1967). Two other articles (1974a, 1976) discuss, though in limited detail, a version of a shaman’s text. His other article on shamans (1974b) describes the performative aspects

[That] consuming the head, I take out to the throat.
 Consuming the throat, I take out to the heart.
 Consuming the heart, I take out to the lungs.
 Consuming the lungs, I take out to the liver.
 Consuming the liver, I take out to the lap.
 Consuming the lap, I transfer to the thighs.
 Consuming the thighs, I transfer to the calves.
 Consuming the calves, I transfer to the nails.
 Consuming the nails, I transfer there!*

**tha* ‘There!’ Deictic adverb, requiring an accompanying gesture pointing away from the patient’s body.

A step-by-step transference is typical for treating astrological problems, but transferring problems from central parts of the body to its periphery is more appropriate when treating physical aches and pains that result from witchcraft. A more typical transference (this one from Karṇa Vīr) moves the astrological threats hovering in the immediate proximity of their victims (literally, directly over their house) to more distant places:

The deadly star obstruction of the house pinnacle,
 was transferred to its foot.
 The deadly star obstruction at the foot,
 was transferred to the doorstep.
 The deadly star obstruction of the doorstep,
 was transferred to the edge of the porch.
 The deadly star obstruction of the edge of the porch,
 the Time of Death, the Messenger of Death,
 was transferred to the Ocean of Tears,
 to the Cremation Ground of the Dead,
 to Riverside Graveyard, to Barmā crossroads.

of ritual, and includes some excellent illustrations of a shaman’s ritual paraphernalia. Of other studies on Magars, those of Michael Oppitz (1982, 1983, 1986, 1988, 1991, 1992) and Anne de Sales (1989, 1991) include the most important accounts of shamanism. Other related studies in Western Nepal include Greve (1981–82), and Michl (1976). David Watter’s article (1975) quotes excerpts from a shamanic recital, and again compares the complex to that of “classical” Central Asiatic shamanism. A dissertation (1991) by Marie Lecomte-Tilouine on Magars of Gulmi District includes important information on *jhākrī* practices, including sample texts. She has also published an article that discusses a shaman recital (1987). A possible complication not yet examined in the literature on Magars is the extensive clandestine Christian missionary work (especially that begun by the Watters team) that has gone on among them since the 1960s. Conversations that I have had with Magar shamans suggest that the resulting conflicts may have an acute and intensifying affect on their practices, an issue I hope to explore in detail elsewhere.

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Volume 52, Numbers 1-2, March 2007
Editor: GÁBOR BARNA

FOUNDED IN 1950

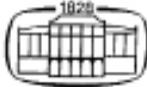
HU ISSN 1216-9803 (print)
HU ISSN 1588-2586 (online)

Publication:
one volume
of two issues annually

2007: Vol. 52

Subscription price per volume:
EUR 260

incl.
FREE ONLINE
access



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A “Classification” of the Sibe Shamans

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Typical of the shamanism practiced among the Sibe people of the Ili valley living in Chabchal Autonomous County in Xinjiang is that they have a number of kinds of shamans not found among the Manchus: the elcin, the deoci and the siyang tung. While the first two can be male or female, only a woman can become a siyang tung. The three groups differ not only in the terms and practices of their apprenticeship, but also in their duties, the prayers they say and the ceremonies they perform in treating illnesses. The paper describes the various aspects of Sibe shamanism on the basis of Sibe-Manchu and Chinese sources, using also some rare Russian data from the last century.

It is a well known fact that the Sibe people were shamanists who looked to the shaman for help in their everyday lives. Nearly all the known sources on Sibe shamanism deal with some shamans or other who can travel to the transcendental world and communicate with all the gods and spirits. To become a “real” shaman, the pupil (*geyen* or *jele* in Sibe) has to undergo an examination, and take part in a consecration rite which involves climbing the “magic ladder” (*cakūran*). On passing the examination, he becomes an *iletu* (i.e. ‘effective, real’) shaman, otherwise he remains a *butu* (i.e. ‘assistant’) shaman. Among the Sibe there are also *hala* (‘family’) shamans—who play a role analogous to that of the Manchu *boigon* shamans—as well as *niru* shamans (‘shaman of the community’). Their duty is to serve the needs of a Sibe clan or a community, which, in the case of the Sibe, often corresponds to a village.¹

On different occasion, especially in treating certain illnesses, the Sibe apply to other, shaman-like experts, who can exorcise evil spirits from the body of the sick. Not much is known about them, and the only

¹ See Krotkov 1912: 121–124; Pang 1992 and Stary 1992.

material we have at the present is a book on Sibe customs *Sibe ukurai an tacin* (Customs of the Sibe People), published in 1989 in Urumqi. According to this source, there are three types of “specialists” the *elcin*, the *siyang tung*, and the *deoci*. It is these practitioners that we shall be discussing in this paper.

The *Elcin*

For the Sibe the *elcin* is a person famous for practicing magic. The *elcin* can be male (*haha elcin*) or female (*hehe elcin*). The *elcin* shamans are best known for treating the pox and for mediating between human beings and the evil spirits that cause the disease. They offer sacrifices to the Goddess of Pox (*mama enduri*). Every year when the epidemics break out, the people go to the *elcin*, who teaches different prayers to the families of the sick, and holds special ceremonies to expel the pox. To become an *elcin*, one must be personally chosen by the old *elcin* from among those who were severely ill with the pox in their childhood, and, in the course of their treatment were chosen by the *elcin* to be his apprentice and pupil. During worship, the *elcin* sings different prayers and songs whose meaning remains a mystery to most of his listeners. These as well as the songs of other shamans have been published in Chinese, and Sibe (Heling et al. 1989 and Tungkeli 1989) and translated into German (Stary 1985).

Several strict rules bind an *elcin* in life and death. He is not allowed to eat meat from the head, legs, or paws of animals. When he dies, his body is not buried in the cemetery and is not accompanied by a shaman. One hundred years to the day that the deceased *elcin* was born, his bones are gathered and burned.

The *Siyang Tung*

The offerings of a *siyang tung* are made to divinities named *Siyang-jia* (from Chinese *xian-jia* ‘ghost, divinity’) and *Hu-jia* (from Chinese *hu-jia* ‘fox’). For this purpose, a small shelf is fixed on the western wall of the storage room, called the *has boo* in Sibe, and a censer with incense is placed on it. This offering is called “the offering to *has boo jaka*,”

i.e., “the offering to the animal of the storage room.” Thus the Taboo of the Fox (*dobi* in Sibe and Manchu) is expressed.²

A *siyang tung* is always a woman who likes to work in the fields, does not speak much, is an introvert, and does not care much about other things. She treats long-lasting illnesses caused by evil spirits, known among the people as “illness brought about by the Spirit of the Fox.”

A *siyang tung* has three ways of diagnosing an illness. The simplest way involves an examination of the patient’s facial features: an old, experienced *siyang tung* can conclude a great deal from the different symptoms. Alternately, she can base her diagnosis on “magic paper” (*fu hoošan*). This is done in the following way. After the “magic paper” is prepared and prayed over, the *siyang tung* goes to a dark place in the house, takes a willow branch and beats the paper with it while chanting a prayer. After ten minutes of this, she puts the paper under a lantern and examines it for traces left by the branch: the illness is diagnosed and the cure prescribed on the bases of what she sees. The third method involves the services of an oracle. Forty-three stones or branches are thrown onto a large table; from the pattern they fall into, the “doctor” can conclude to the nature of the malady. Once she has diagnosed the sickness, the patient is taken to an open place.

The day before the treatment, the *siyang tung* cuts magic paper-figures (*urhu* or *urge*) at her home, and presents them to the sick person. Nobody is allowed to speak as she does so, and none may enter the patient’s house on the third, fifth or seventh day thereafter. A piece of red cloth is attached to the door to warn off would-be visitors. Following the night that the paper figures were made, the *siyang tung* must visit the patient every evening and treat him. After putting the paper figures in the four corners of the room, she says a kind of “report-prayer” (*jakime jarime*). Then she collects them, and takes away the evil spirits in a small square-shaped box (*gaise tucimbi*), prepared for the occasion with a certain number of small banners placed along its four sides and wax candles placed in the middle. The box and a sheep are taken out into an open place outside the village, or to the cemetery; the *siyang tung* is rewarded with the sheep for her labors.

There are variety reasons why someone becomes a *siyang tung*. Many of these women had once been sickly and were cured by a *siyang*

² For the Fox see Uther 1992.

tung; others had been sick with the illness caused by “the animal of the storage-room.”

The *Deoci*

The *deoci* is another type of Sibe shaman, usually male, who “specializes” in exorcising evil spirits from the human body. He treats colds, illnesses caused by evil spirits, and illnesses called *aicire* (i.e. those thought to be connected with the nervous system: cf. Chinese *aiqi* ‘melancholy’). His treatment is called *nimeku deolembi*. In the case of any of the above-mentioned illnesses, first the *siyang tung* is called in. If she says that she cannot treat the disease, then the *deoci* is contacted. He examines the sick person in order to identify the sicknesses, and uses certain methods to exorcise the spirit. These methods are not particularly complicated: after checking the clothes of the sick person, a prayer is said according to certain rules. Then the sick person is beaten with a stick with bells attached to it, while the people around shout loudly. They stop when the sick person becomes exhausted from being beaten and loses consciousness. After the sick person has been beaten several times, he recovers. The reason may be the shock that the beating has been to his nervous system. According to the *deoci*, a person has “ghost-sickness” (*ibagan nimeku*) because spirits and demons have entered his body. When the sick person is trounced with a stick, the demons and spirits are receiving a beating, and lose their ability to cause pain. Accordingly, they leave the body, and the sickness disappears.

According to the Russian scholar N. N. Krotkov, whose article on the shamanism among the Sibe was published in 1912, this sickness is a type of hysteria occurring only among women. Krotkov gives a detailed description of how this “ghost-sickness” is cured and how the evil spirit is expelled from the body. It goes as follows:

After usual prayers and chanting, the shaman orders that a wheel from a carriage be placed in the middle of the yard of the house where the sick woman lives, at a fixed time of night. The relatives of the patient and spectators, who in this case are numerous, stand around the wheel at a certain distance. The sick person is

made to go around the wheel. She is followed by a man called *daoči*³, who is holding a whip. Using phrases learned from the shaman and his own invented words which do not exist in the Manchu vocabulary, the *daoči* improvises poetry incomprehensible to the people. According to the Sibe, its aim is “to shame the woman and humiliate the demons.” The spectators like the words of the *daoči* very much. They eagerly listen to them, and when the *daoči* pauses to take a breath, they pick up where he left off and loudly shout out his last words. After making several circles around the wheel, the *daoči* beats the air with a whip, and the frightened woman starts running. Running into the people, who do not let her get away, she is forced to run around the wheel. When she falls down exhausted, her brothers and relatives lift her up and force her to continue going around. After reciting new verses, the *daoči* raises his whip, and once again the sick woman runs away from him. When she falls down, she is raised up and again forced to go around the wheel. This is repeated several times. If during the first night it is not possible to cure the sick woman from the “devil’s illness,” then the above-described methods of expelling the evil spirit are repeated for several nights. (Krotkov 1912: 131–132)

If after this exorcism there is no improvement, other methods are used. For instance, prayers are recited, magical utensils, called *gaise*, are taken out, the sick person is deliberately frightened at night, and so on. If the *deoci* is treating the sickness in its initial stage, then he prepares paper figures called *urhu* (in Manchu *urge*), like the *siyang tung* does.

As N. N. Krotkov puts it, the *deoci* is usually an assistant or apprentice of the shaman. For his work he is not given anything, and is merely offered a drink of wine. When the *ibagan nimeku* treatment is completed, various flowers are made from colored paper and carried into the field, where they are burnt.

As a rule, only men can become *deoci*. They are mostly people who were once sick with the “ghosts sickness” and then recovered. They are not permitted to eat beef or mutton, nor meat from the head and legs of animals. They must stay away from places where a death is known to have occurred, and from cemeteries.

The above-given classification of the Sibe shamans is the first attempt to clarify the practices and the competence of the different shaman-like “experts” who exorcise evil spirits from the body of sick people.

³ I.e. *deoci*.

Unfortunately, not much is known of the details, further research is imperative.

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The Shamanic Séance in the *Historia Norwegiae*

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The account of a Lappish shamanic séance in the twelfth century Historia Norwegiae is the earliest detailed account of Lappish shamanism, and is important not only for its age, but for its focus upon a specific séance. No full-scale analysis appears to have been produced hitherto, taking account of later records of shamanism among the Lapps and elsewhere, and also of the colouring lent to the account by the author's familiarity with Norse magical practices. It emerges that, although the author appears not to have understood the practice of sending out the free-soul and has received the séance in terms of the activities of the Norse magical spirit the gandr, the account is nonetheless essentially reliable (with careful interpretation), and hints at a richness in the practice of Lappish shamanism lost by the time of the later records.

That Lapps were powerful sorcerers is a commonplace in Old Norse literature. Hence contemporaries would find nothing untoward in the account of a Lappish shamanic séance in the late-twelfth-century *Historia Norwegiae*, yet for us the account stands out as extraordinary, for it is the only genuine account of Lappish shamanism by the Norse, and is indeed the oldest account of Lappish shamanism extant. Moreover, the account has never been thoroughly analysed from a shamanic viewpoint.

We have to wait several centuries before we find further lengthy accounts of Lappish shamanism, written in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Norwegian and Swedish missionaries, who zealously set out in considerable detail the beliefs they were intent on eradicating.¹ These accounts are, however, usually generalised, rather

¹ The relative merit of the various accounts is assessed in Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 39; Skanke, Olsen, Rheen and Lundius are the most valuable. We possess almost no records of the shamanic beliefs and practices of the Lapps of Finland and Russia taken down while shamanism was still practised. Lappish shamanism was moribund

than recounting specific observed séances. By contrast, the *Historia Norwegiae* recounts one particular séance, as observed by some Norwegian merchants.²

Horum itaque intollerabilis perfidia vix cuiquam credibilis videbitur, quantumve diabolicæ superstitionis in magica arte exerceant. Sunt namque quidam ex ipsis, qui quasi prophetæ a stolido vulgo venerantur, quoniam per immundum spiritum, quem *gandum* vocitant, multis multa præsentia ut eveniunt quandoque percunctati prædicent; et de longinquis provinciis res concupiscibiles miro modo sibi alliciunt nec non absconditos thesauros longe remoti mirifice produnt. Quadam vero vice dum christiani causa commercii apud Finnos ad mensam sedissent, illorum hospita subito inclinata exspiravit; unde christianis multum dolentibus non mortuam sed a *gandis* æmulum esse deprædatam, sese illam cito adepturos ipsi Finni nihil contristati respondent. Tunc quidam magus extenso panno, sub³ quo se ad profanas veneficas incantationes præparat, quoddam vasculum ad modum tarantarorum sursum erectis manibus extulit, cetinis atque cervinis formulis cum loris et ondriolis navicula etiam cum remis occupatum, quibus vehiculis per alta nivium et devexa montium vel profunda stagnorum ille diabolicus *gandus* uteretur. Cumque diutissime incantando tali apparatu ibi saltasset, humo tandem prostratus totusque niger ut Æthiops, spumans ora ut puta freneticus, præruptus ventrem vix aliquando cum maximo fremore emisit spiritum. Tum alterum in magica arte peritissimum consuluerunt, quid de utrisque actum sit. Qui simili modo sed non eodem eventu suum implevit officium, namque hospita sana surrexit et defunctum magum tali eventu interisse eis intimavit: *gandum* videlicet ejus in cetinam effigiem immaginatum ostico *gando* in præacutas sudes transformato, dum per quoddam stagnum velocissime prosiliret, malo omine obviasset, quia in stagni ejusdem profundo sudes latitantes exacti ventrem perforabant; quod et in mago domi mortuo apparuit.

Moreover their intolerable paganism, and the amount of devilish superstition they practise in their magic, will seem credible to almost no one. For there are

already in the eighteenth century, and was extinct other than as a folk memory by the early nineteenth century.

² The text is from Storm's edition (Storm 1880: 85–86).

³ Manuscript reading. Storm emends needlessly to *super*.

some of them who are venerated as prophets by the ignorant populace, since by means of an unclean spirit that they call a *gandus* they predict when petitioned many things to many people, as they turn out; and they draw desirable things to themselves from far-off regions in a wondrous way, and amazingly, though themselves far away, they produce hidden treasures. By some chance while some Christians were sitting at the table amongst the Lapps for the sake of trade their hostess suddenly bowed over and died; hence the Christians mourned greatly, but were told by the Lapps, who were not at all distressed, that she was not dead but stolen away by the *gandi* of rivals, and they would soon get her back. Then a magician stretched out a cloth, under which he prepared himself for impious magic incantations, and with arms stretched up lifted a vessel like a tambourine, covered in diagrams of whales and deer with bridles and snowshoes and even a ship with oars, vehicles which that devilish *gandus* uses to go across the depths of snow and slopes of mountains or the deep waters. He chanted a long time and jumped about with this piece of equipment, but then was laid flat on the ground, black all over like an Ethiopian, and foaming from the mouth as if wearing a bit. His stomach was ripped open and with the loudest roaring ever he gave up the ghost. Then they consulted the other one who was versed in magic about what had happened to them both. He performed his job in a similar way but not with the same outcome—for the hostess rose up hale—and indicated that the deceased sorcerer had perished by the following sort of accident:⁴ his *gandus*, transformed into the shape of a water beast,⁵ had by ill-luck struck against an enemy's *gandus* changed into sharpened stakes as it was rushing across a lake, for the stakes lying set up in the depths of that same lake had pierced his stomach, as appeared on the dead magician at home.

⁴ I have translated this sentence to make clear that the shaman, not the hostess, is the subject throughout, which the Latin leaves ambiguous. For the hostess to report what had happened on the spirit journey she would herself have to be a shaman, which neither this text nor Lappish tradition, which scarcely recognises female shamans, suggest.

⁵ The obvious translation, 'whale', is problematic since the setting is a lake; *cetus* can in fact refer to any large water beast. 'Pike' may be intended, as this functioned as a fresh-water equivalent to the whale for shamanic journeys (Haavio 1952: 124–125). If 'whale' is the intended meaning, the writer may either have been influenced by the Norse commonplace that Lapps transformed themselves into whales, or the word *stagnum* could indicate 'fjord' rather than 'lake', a more natural setting for a whale.

The Social Function of the Shaman

Siikala (1978: 321) defines the shaman as an intermediary between this world and the spirit world; he communicates between the two worlds in order to resolve a critical situation, and he manifests the presence of the spirits by means of role-play during trance. The *Historia Norwegiae* account clearly exemplifies this definition.

Hultkrantz (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 15–17) specifies the role of the shaman more precisely. The functions of psychopomp, hunting magician and sacrificial priest (an exceptional role) do not appear in the *Historia Norwegiae*. Two other roles of the shaman are mentioned, but not exemplified in the events described. Foretelling is recognised as a shamanic role in many societies, but amongst the Lapps seems to play a minor role, whereas the description of conditions of distant places is more emphasised, for example by Isaac Olsen (1910: 32).⁶ The emphasis on foretelling in the *Historia Norwegiae* is perhaps influenced by the role of witches in the author's own society; foretelling is recorded as playing a major part in the magic practice known as *seiðr*.⁷ Recovering distant objects is ascribed to Lapp shamans, for example in the popular tale of how a Lapp who, during trance, brought a ring from a person's distant home (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 46). Olaus Magnus (1555: 121) also tells of this skill; it has clearly been a well-known folk-tale motif in Nordic regions since antiquity.

The main part of the *Historia Norwegiae* account exemplifies the shaman's role as *doctor*. In Hultkrantz's categorisation, sickness has two main causes: soul-loss, involving for the shaman a trance journey to the otherworld to retrieve the lost soul, as well as bargaining with the dead who are holding the soul, for example by promising sacrifices; and intrusion of an object or spirit, involving for the shaman the summoning, usually without trance, of his helping spirits who help to remove the intrusion. Whilst the death of the first shaman in the *Historia Norwegiae* account results from a very literal intrusion of an object, in the form of a sharpened stake, this takes place while he is in trance: the activities of both shamans in the account may be classified as dealing with cases of soul-loss.

⁶ See Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 47–49.

⁷ On *seiðr* see Strömbäck 1935.

In addition, the shamanic role of *contender* is illustrated by the *Historia Norwegiae* account, as it involves contention in the spiritual realm between rival shamans (the hostess [or her soul] is stolen away by enemy shaman spirits, and an enemy shaman spirit transforms itself into stakes, clearly with the purpose of injuring whale spirits).

The Séance

The sequence of the Lappish séance is analysed by Bäckman and Hultkrantz (1978: 97–101) on the basis of all the seventeenth to eighteenth-century accounts relating to it, and rather than repeat the stages of this analysis, I give a summary here. There is some variation between accounts, indicating that the details of the séance varied. The following is a composite analysis, and not all the elements were necessarily present in all places and on all occasions.

- (1) The shaman prepared himself for a day beforehand by fasting.
- (2) The drum was brought in through the sacred door of the hut opposite the ordinary entrance.
- (3) The shaman took an intoxicant (lye or brandy).
- (4) He undressed himself and sits naked.
- (5) He beat the drum and started singing.
- (6) He was accompanied by the men and women present, the men in a high and the women in a low voice; the singing (*juoigos*) was mostly inarticulate, but included words referring to the places to be visited by the shaman in trance, or to details of the journey.
- (7) The shaman ran around like a madman, holding glowing embers and cutting himself.
- (8) After the shaman had drummed for at most quarter of an hour, he turned black, walked on his knees with his hands on his hips, sang a *juoigos* in a high voice, and fell down exhausted as if dead.
- (9) The shaman stopped breathing; during the trance, his free-soul wandered from his body. The return of his breathing indicated he was leaving trance. The depth of the trance corresponded to the extent of his freedom in the spirit realms. The trance lasted a half to one hour.
- (10) Destinations of the shaman's soul included:
 - (a) The land of the dead, to retrieve the souls of the sick, or bring back a spirit to guard the reindeer herds.
 - (b) Other supernatural places (*Saiva*), to gather information.

(c) Distant places in this world.

(d) Possibly also heaven.

(11) Accounts vary as to whether trance was entered when the shaman sent out helping spirits to fight; the likelihood is that it was.

(12) The journey of the shaman's free-soul took place in the company of his helping spirits.⁸ The *Saiva leddie* bird guided the shaman's spirit down to the underworld, and sped him back afterwards through mountains and dales. The *Saiva guelie* fish appeared after the shaman sang a *juoigos* for it; its length varied according to the length of the song. The shaman rode on its back to the underworld, and it helped the shaman fight the dead in the attempt to wrest the sick person's soul from them; one account says that the fish was responsible for the actual stealing of the soul, as well as for guarding the shaman throughout the trance (Kildal 1807: 456).

(13) Whilst in trance watchmen were left to guard the shaman's body; these probably consisted of a choir ordered by the shaman. At the beginning of the séance all those present seem to have taken part in the singing, but a special choir was appointed for continuing operations: this is in several accounts said to consist of women or one woman. Singing continued throughout the séance, the purpose being to remind the shaman of his mission. Some sources indicate that the singing was concentrated or confined to the final stages of the trance, and the aim here was to wake the shaman; it seems to have been the particular responsibility of one girl to perform this waking song, and her task involved searching for the shaman's soul, so she must herself have gone into trance. Another shaman was also able to wake a shaman in trance.⁹

(14) As the shaman returned to consciousness, the choir started to sing again, and he rose, put the drum to his ear and beat it slowly; he then stopped and sat thinking, before recounting his journey, and what sacrifice he had had to arrange to secure the soul of the sick person.

(15) He also praised the girl who woke him and sang to her, alluding to his genitals and her sexual qualities.

⁸ When the shaman sent the *Saiva leddie* to the holy mountains for the purpose of calling the anthropomorphic spirits there for consultation, he did so before the séance proper (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 43). The shaman did not fall into a trance, but sang a *juoigos*.

⁹ An assistant with the responsibility of waking (or assisting in the waking of) the shaman is found elsewhere, e.g. among the Yukagir (Jochelson 1926: 196–199), and the Evenki (Anisimov 1963: 102–103).

The *Historia Norwegiae* account follows the above sequence in most of its detail. We are not told of any initial preparation, but the séance seems to have taken place as a matter of urgency, rather than something planned. On the other hand, it is intriguing to find a small gathering in which not one but two shamans are present, as well as one woman whose soul is stolen; it is possible that the Lapps laid on a performance in order to impress the Norsemen, which then went rather wrong. The hostess's role was perhaps meant to be something like that of the women who form the choir or assistants in the later accounts.

The cloth under which the shaman prepared himself is not met with in later accounts of male shamans; however, Leem (1767: 476) notes that the women helpers of the shaman wore a *linned hue*, 'linen hat', on their head, and modern traditions of the shamaness Rijkuo-Maja mention her spreading a veil over her head when shamanising (Lundmark 1987: 160). The nearest shamanic neighbours to the Lapps, the Samoyeds, used a handkerchief to cover their eyes while shamanising, since this was believed to increase spiritual sight (Mikhailowski 1895: 81). The cloth itself may have symbolised the heavens to be traversed, as in shamanic rites noted by Eliade (1972: 261n.). Thus it is probably a genuine feature which later disappeared amongst men.

Conversely, the undressing of the shaman is not mentioned in *Historia Norwegiae*.

The incantations, going on throughout the séance, clearly represent the *juoigos* singing of later accounts (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 101); no accompaniment by a choir, as is usual in later accounts, is mentioned, but was perhaps dispensed with given the urgency of the situation.

The lifting up of the arms before going into trance is mentioned by Leem (1767: 477).

The leaping about is well evidenced in later accounts (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 97).

The description of the shaman's trance given by Graan (written 1672) is particularly close to the *Historia Norwegiae*, for he tells us that the shaman turned black before falling into trance.¹⁰

¹⁰ Graan 1899: 59–60. The possibility must also be borne in mind that Graan may have been aware of the *Historia Norwegiae* account. However, given the lack of breathing that is emphasised in many of the accounts, it seems likely that the Lappish shaman did indeed turn distinctly off-colour during trance.

At this point an interruption occurred, in that the shaman died in dramatic fashion; specific instances of this do not appear to occur in later accounts, though they recognise the possibility that shamanic contests can result in death.

The recounting of what happened on the spirit journey after it is complete is typical in later shamanism (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 102); the second shaman carefully explained what has happened after his return from trance.

Some issues arising from the *Historia Norwegiae* account are more problematical. Difficulties arise from the fact that two shamanic events are intertwined in the sequence of the twelfth-century séance, which the later, perhaps simplified, accounts keep apart: (a) shamanic journeys aimed at retrieving souls taken to the otherworld, which always involve the shaman's own soul in later accounts; (b) the shamanic fights: here, it seems, the shaman went into trance, during which he sent out the helping spirit to fight that of the enemy shaman (his own soul not being involved). Presumably in the *Historia Norwegiae* séance the shaman did send his soul out; the attack on his helping spirit occurred by accident not design.

The author writes of the collapse and death of the shaman without separating them, whereas in fact the shaman must first have collapsed as if lifeless, then sent out his soul, and subsequently have died while in trance as a result of the attack on his helping spirit.

The manner of the stealing of the hostess's soul¹¹ is somewhat unusual in its suddenness, and in the fact that rival shaman spirits (*gandi æmulorum*) were responsible; it is usually the dead or evil spirits that were believed to steal people's souls in later Lapp belief (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 15); however, such activities on the part of rival shamans are met elsewhere, for example among the Evenkis (Anisimov 1963: 107).

The obstacle of the stakes is unusual; no parallel appears to exist in the extant records of Lappish shamanism. However, in the Finnish story of Lemminkäinen's shamanic visit to the feast at Päivölä ('Sunland') three obstacles are set in his way, the last of which is an iron fence (Kuusi et al. 1977: no. 34); this fence is to be compared to the *marylya* fence set up by the Evenki shaman (Anisimov 1963: 107):

¹¹ The text does not talk of her soul, but it is safe to infer that her soul has been stolen, while her body remains behind.

Alien shamans called up their clan shamanistic spirit-helpers and sent them to another clan (hostile to them) to bring to its people disease and death. The spirits sent by the shaman penetrated into the territory of a given clan and began to eat the souls of the people. In order to avoid an unexpected attack by such spirits, each clan shaman fenced in the clan lands with a special mythical fence (*marylya*) consisting of the shaman's spirit-watchmen. To penetrate into the territory of an alien clan, hostile spirits had to force their way through the mobile shamanistic *marylya* surrounding it, or they had to fool the spirit-watchmen and steal through unnoticed by means of some clever stratagem. In case they succeeded, illness and death occurred among the clansmen. The clan shaman and his spirit-helpers entered into a struggle with the trespassing spirits, expelled them, re-erected the clan *marylya*, and set out to avenge themselves by the same means on the clan of the shamans hostile to them.

Clearly a similar idea lies behind the *Historia Norwegiae* account, and hints at the complexity of shamanic belief among the Lapps which has left no record in later accounts.

According to Lappish belief the events described in *Historia Norwegiae* must have involved the loss or sending out of three souls (the hostess's, and the two shamans'), yet the writer does not show that he is aware of the sending out of the free-soul during trance taking place at all: indeed, he talks of the shaman "sending out his spirit" only in the sense of dying, and this at a point into the trance when according to Lappish belief he would already have sent his soul out (not, of course, to die). The writer seems rather to see the séance as a magic ritual for the sending of the *gandus* on its mission. The events may be elucidated by considering the Lappish beliefs about the soul and spirits, and how the Norwegian writer has recast the events into something more comprehensible to him.

The Soul and Shamanic Spirits

In common with most peoples of northern Eurasia, the Lapps believed in one or several "body-souls", responsible for the maintenance of life functions, and a "free-soul", which could wander free from the body,

for example in sleep (Paulson 1958: 38).¹² It is not always clear which soul the shaman sends out; usually it is the free-soul, but among the Samoyeds, the nearest people geographically to the Lapps, the body-soul is explicitly stated to leave the shaman, and must be brought back by an assistant beating the drum close to the shaman's ear. The descriptions of Lapp shamanism are not precise enough to furnish an answer to the belief there, partly because none of them are in Lappish. However, terms such as *aandelos*, 'spiritless', and descriptions of the shaman lying "dead" during the trance suggest the possibility that the body-soul was believed to leave the body (it would hence become a sort of *de facto* free-soul) (Paulson 1958: 345–347).

The shaman maintained contact with various spirits, known collectively as *noaidi gadze*, 'shaman companions'¹³; the shaman was not distinguished from others by the possession of these "companion" spirits, but in his ability to contact and make use of them (Bäckman 1975: 160). The spirits may be distinguished into three sorts (Bäckman 1975: 41–43):

(1) The *saiva* (or *passevare*) *olmah*, 'supernatural (or holy mountain) men', lived in holy mountains and called the shaman to his office. The shaman contacted them by sending his *saiva leddie*, 'supernatural bird.' The *saiva nieidie*, 'supernatural virgin', strengthened the shaman with water during his initiation when he suffered from the attacks of his prospective spirit helpers, and also when the shaman's *saiva sarva*, 'supernatural reindeer', fought so as to exhaust him.

(2) The *noides-woeigni*, 'shaman's spirits', were animal helping spirits, who also lived in the holy mountains. During his later trances, when he visited the other world, and during other experiences such as consulting the spirits, the shaman was helped by these theriomorphic spirits.¹⁴ The spirits acted as escorts during the trance journey, or as riding animals. The shaman sometimes imitates, and sometimes describes the activities of the spirits. The spirits were of three sorts; the shaman usually only had one of each:

¹² The names for the spirit and soul are not entirely clear; in Skolt Lapp the spirit is *jieg'ga* (Itkonen 1946: 161); the soul has different names in different areas, with a basic meaning of 'shadow' (Paulson 1958: 36–37).

¹³ The following analysis is based on Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 41–43.

¹⁴ Ancestral shaman figures also feature in this role in some societies (Vajda 1959: 461–465).

(a) *Saiva leddie*, 'supernatural bird', apart from being sent to the *saiva olmai*, also showed the shaman his way during the trance journey; the shaman also had a hideous bird called *vurnes lodde* or *vuokko* which would be sent against rival shamans: it is probably identical with the *saiva leddie*;

(b) *Saiva guelie*, 'supernatural fish', guided the shaman to the underworld of the dead, and watched over his soul during this journey;

(c) *Saiva sarva*, 'supernatural reindeer', was bidden to fight against the reindeer spirit of a hostile shaman; the fate of the animal spirits was reflected in that of the shaman.

(3) The dead, *jamegeh* or *jabmek*, lived underground in a realm ruled over by a powerful old woman *Jabmieakka*, 'Old crone of the dead'. The shaman had to fetch the souls of the sick from this realm.

Vajda notes that the Siberian shaman is often distinguished by possessing an alter-ego in animal form: it is this spirit which takes part in shamanic fights (Vajda 1959: 462); this suggests that the Lappish *saiva sarva* reindeer, or in the case of the Lapps of the *Historia Norwegiae* the water-beast (presumably a type of *saiva guelie*), may have been this sort of spirit, but the evidence is not decisive.

The shaman himself is often conceived as taking on the forms of beasts. Olsen (1910: 32) records that the *noaidi gadze* teach the shaman to take on the shape of wolves and bears, as well as casting the form on others.¹⁵ Itkonen (1946: 120) records the tale of Päiviö from Peltovuoma, who is supposed to have swum as a pike to heal the king of Sweden, and returned as a whale, narrowly avoiding being caught in a net on his return.

Hultkrantz notes that the entire set of actions necessary to retrieve a soul from the underworld seems to have been carried out by the shaman's assistant spirits, rather than by him. One source says that the

¹⁵ In later folk beliefs, the most able shamans were held to be those that could fly as a bird; the next most able could take on the forms of beasts whilst in trance; the least able could use only the power of words, or objects, in their sorcery (Itkonen 1946: 113–120). The bird form that the shaman took on was called *kuoddälv* (from *küäd' ded*, 'carry'), 'griffon'. The *vaakalintu*, 'griffon bird', that the Mistress of Pohjola turns herself into in Finnish myth (Kuusi et al. 1977: no. 12) is clearly of the same sort; notice that the word *vaaka* is cognate with Lappish *vuokko* (Toivonen 1931: 432), indicating that the *kuoddälv*, into which the Lapp shaman turns himself, is probably to be regarded as identical with *vuokko*, again reaffirming the close connexion between the shaman and his helping spirits.

shaman travelled to the underworld *in the saiva guelie*. There is clearly a basic identity between the shaman and his spirit helpers (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 100). Hultkrantz comments (*ibid.* 18):

We have here, in the world of religious imagination, an oscillation between the conception of spirits in animal guise and the conception of the shaman's own extra-corporeal form of appearance, his zoomorphic free-soul. The free-soul often shows itself in animal form and can, moreover, assume the same distance to his owner as the helping spirit . . . Thus there is a mutual attraction between the spirit and the free-soul ideas. To make a clear distinction of these concepts in action would purely be an academic undertaking.

Thus, while the *gandus* seems primarily to be a helping spirit, it may merge into being conceived, at least by the Lapps, as the shaman's free-soul transformed into animal shape.

The Christian author, however, clearly regards the *gandus* as an evil spirit quite independent of the shaman (or his soul). His picture of the *gandus* may be summarised thus:

- (a) It is an unclean spirit;
- (b) It functions as a helping spirit to the shaman, telling him future and present happenings, and enabling him to retrieve distant treasures;
- (c) Harm to it resulted in harm to its owner;
- (d) It can steal people (i.e. their souls, since the body clearly remains stationary);
- (e) It would travel by means of animals, ships, snow-shoes;
- (f) It could assume the shape of whales/water beasts and other objects.

In points (a), (b), and (c) it corresponds to the Lapp animal helping spirits, though it was anthropomorphic spirits that were consulted for information (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 43).

In point (d) it corresponds to Lapp helping spirits or the dead.

In point (e) it may represent the Lappish shaman's own soul, which could travel on the animal spirits as steeds; ships and snow-shoes are not recorded as spiritual vehicles, and these depictions may have served a different purpose from that assigned by the Norwegian writer.

Point (f) either represents a distortion of the animal spirit, which had animal form, but not as a result of transformation, and did not assume other forms, or it may represent the shaman himself, who in later tradition could transform himself, and take on the form of various beasts (not just those of

the helping spirits), though not, as recorded, stakes.¹⁶ A more sophisticated concept may have underlain this feature, in which the (spiritual) stakes are guarded by shamanic spirits, as in the case of the Evenkis.

It thus appears that the Norwegian writer has recast and amalgamated various Lapp spirits, both anthropomorphic and theriomorphic, as well as the shaman's free-soul and the dead. This spirit he calls a *gandus*. This is not a Lappish word, but the Old Norse *gandr*.¹⁷

A detailed analysis of the Old Norse concept of the *gandr* would be out of place in the present context, but a few points may be noted. Some of the earliest occurrences of the word are in *Völuspá*: in st. 22 the *seiðkona vittu ganda*, 'summoned *gandir* with a drum';¹⁸ in st. 29 Óðinn receives *spáganda* from the *vqlva*: here the word is used in the sense '[news from] *gandir* of prophecy'. One of the main functions of the *gandr* spirit was to gather information and impart it to the seer(ess) who has summoned it.

The author of the *Historia Norvegiae* betrays a familiarity with the Norse *gandr* in his presentation of the Lappish spirit he calls a *gandus*. He talks of the *gandus* assuming various forms, just as the *gandr* could,¹⁹ whereas the Lapp animal spirits did not do so. The change into stakes may be influenced by Norse traditions of rivers being staked, as

¹⁶ In Evenki shamanism, however, a shamanic helping spirit in the form of a split stake is responsible for seizing an escaped disease spirit and bringing it back to the shaman to deal with (Anisimov 1963: 104).

¹⁷ The word has survived into modern Norwegian *gand*: Lid (1927: 331–399) discusses the uses of the word in great detail. To summarise: *gand* is used in the senses 'stick'; 'swollen ridge around a damaged place on a tree'; 'magic' specific to the Lapps: in particular, it designated a sort of artificial mannikin made of twigs, nails, hair etc., which might in vengeance be sent unseen into the intestines of a victim.

¹⁸ In *Lokasenna* 24 Óðinn is said to 'strike upon a *vétt*' while practising *seiðr*; *vitti* almost certainly comes from the same root. What the instrument was cannot be ascertained, but its function is equivalent to that of the Lappish shaman's drum.

¹⁹ *Gandr* is used in the sense 'wolf' in a number of kennings (Meissner 1984: 100, 102); the connexion between 'wolf' and 'sorcerer spirit' lies in the fact that wolves were witches' steeds. The world serpent is called *Jqrmungandr*, 'Mighty *gandr*', in *Völuspá* 47 and in *Ragnarsdrápa* (*Skjaldedigting* B I: 4), which indicates that the wolf was not the only animal that a *gandr* could appear as. Notice too how the word *qndurr*, 'snow-shoe', occurs immediately before *Jqrmungandr* in *Ragnarsdrápa*, suggesting a traditional association of the *gandr* and the means of travel characterised by *Historia Norvegiae* (83), just before the account of the séance, as typically Lappish.

a trap: this is seen in *Þórsdrápa*, where Þórr crosses such a river;²⁰ the Evenki analogue, however, makes it likely that the Lapps did indeed have concepts similar to the *marylya* fence. Norse influence is perhaps to be seen in the interpretation of the depictions on the drum as modes of transport for the spirit, in particular in the case of the non-animal vehicles (compare for example *Skíðblaðnir* as a supernatural mode of transport for Óðinn/Freyr).

The emphasis in the concept of the *gandr* on gathering information I believe furnishes a reason for placing this role at the beginning of the description of the skills the Lapp *gandus* conferred in *Historia Norwegiae*, whereas in later tradition this is not foremost among the shaman's roles, and is in any case often performed by the shaman's own soul wandering rather than by the helping spirits.

The Norwegian writer was led astray by his knowledge of *seiðr*, the nearest native practice to shamanism, into presenting the *séance* as one in which the shaman performed certain rites to induce the *gandus* into effecting particular things, rather than one in which trance took place, during which the shaman sent his free-soul out of his body. The evidence for sending out the free-soul during trance in *seiðr* is weak: it seems rather to have involved the summoning of spirits to provide information or carry out tasks.²¹

²⁰ *Skjaldedigtning* B I: 140. I here follow Davidson's translation and interpretation (1983: 521, 586–587 (*stikleidar veg breiðan*, 'the broad path of the stake-set way').

²¹ In *Vqluspá*, one of the oldest sources to allude to *seiðr*, the *seiðkona* in st. 22 *vitti ganda*, 'summoned *gandir* with a drum'; in st. 29 Óðinn receives *spáganda* from the *vqlva*: here the word is used in the sense '[news from] *gandir* of prophecy'. In the poem, *seiðr* appears as a magical practice that could provide information to enquirers, as well as a source of power to bring about rebirth; there is no hint of sending out the soul in the practice. *Seiðr* as a source of information is found in later sources frequently; for example, in *Fóstbræðra saga* (243) it is said *víða hefi ek gǫndum rennt í nótt, ok em ek nú vís orðinn þeirra hluta, er ek vís ekki áðr*, 'I have caused *gandir* to run far in the night, and I have now become wise about those things that I did not know before.' *Eiríks saga rauða* gives the fullest account we have of a *seiðr* *séance* (206–209), which involves the summoning of spirits who reveal men's fortunes to the fortune-teller.

The Shamanic Contest

Shamans contended with each other in magic power. The contest was not performed in person, but through a fight by the animal spirit helpers, and anything suffered by these spirits would be reflected in the shaman that owned them, including death (Vajda 1959: 472–474).

The following is recorded by Jens Kildal (c. 1730–1750) from among the Lapps (Kildal 1943–1945: 138–139):

Naar Noyden setter gan ud paa andre, da bruger hand fornemmelig Vurnes lodde, og Passe vare guli der til, endelig og Passe vare lodde; ellers naar det angaar store ting, setter hand og Passe vare Sarva, og Passe vare Olmaj ud . . . og da settes Passe vare Sarva ud paa begge sider, saa som de ere sterke til at gaee i strid. Naar saadant skier, da er det aarsagen, at der er den skik iblant lapper, at hvad for en Noyd, som er god for med sin gan, at holde andre Noyde fra sig, hand bliver udvalt til menighedens Noyd, og da faar den almindelige aarlige noyde-løn af hver mand . . . Naar nu 2 Noyder har hver sat sin Sarva ud til striid mod hverandre, da gaar det saaledes til, at just det samme som overgaar disse stridende Sarva til at vinde, eller tabe, det selvsamme overgaar Noyderne selv til seyer, eller ikke seyer; stanger den ene Sarva hornet af den anden, da bliver den noyd syg, hvis Sarvas horn blev afstanget; dræber den ene Sarva den anden, da dør den Noyd, hvis Sarva blev dræbt; det skier og i denne striid, at saa træt, og udmattet, som en stridende Sarva bliver, saa træt og udmattet bliver den Noyd, som hand (samme sarva) strider for.

When a shaman casts sorcery upon another, he uses especially *Vurnes lodde* ['predatory bird'], and *Passe vare guli* ['holy-mountain fish'], for it, and also *Passe vare lodde* ['holy-mountain bird']; or else, if it concerns great matters, he uses *Passe vare Sarva* ['holy-mountain reindeer'], and *Passe vare Olmaj* ['holy-mountain man'] . . . and then *Passe vare Sarva* is used on both sides, as they are strong at fighting. The reason for this happening is that there is the custom among the Lapps, that whichever *noaidi* [shaman] is proficient with his magic, in repulsing other *noaidis*, is chosen as the *noaidi* of the multitude, and then receives the general *noaidi* wage from each man . . . When two *noaidis* have sent their *sarvas* out to fight against each other, then whatever happens to these fighting *sarvas* as far as winning or losing is concerned, the very same happens to the *noaidis* themselves for their victory, or defeat; if the one *sarva* breaks the horn from the other *sarva*, then that *noaidi* becomes sick

whose *sarva*'s horn is broken off; if the one *sarva* slays the other, then the *noaidi* dies whose *sarva* was killed; it also happens in this fight that however tired and worn out a *sarva* becomes, the *noaidi* that the *sarva* is fighting for becomes tired and worn out to the same extent.

This account is important as testifying that all the Lapp spirits,²² including the anthropomorphic, could be used in contests; it is usually the reindeer that appears as the main shamanic spirit fighter. The *Historia Norwegiae* may witness to a varying tradition, perhaps based on locality (near lakes or the sea), in which the *saiva guelie* took this role.

However, the shaman whose *gandus* took the form of a *cetus* was on his way to retrieve a stolen soul, and would therefore have set out for the underworld, since it was usually among the dead that lost souls were held, and the chief function of the *saiva guelie* in later accounts was to accompany the shaman on the underworld journey. The attack by the rival shaman on the *gandus* does not correspond exactly to the contest of later accounts, which seem to be more organised and overt. The later accounts are further removed from first-hand than the *Historia Norwegiae*; they may have resulted more from questions to Lapp shamans such as “what do you do when you fight with another shaman?”, rather than observation of actual contests. The *Historia Norwegiae* is important, as it shows what could happen when something out of the normal took place, something which cannot be included precisely under any of the categories determined from the later accounts. It does not appear that, on the basis of the *Historia Norwegiae*, there is any need to assume a tradition with roles for the particular animal helping spirits which differed from that established from later accounts.

Kildal also gives a reason for shamanic contests—the materialistic one of gaining greater income and status. However, we may suspect this to be either a limited view, or perhaps a symptom of shamanism in a moribund state, when personal rather than societal considerations motivate the shaman; in the *Historia Norwegiae* contest, the shaman is acting on behalf of others, which is consistent with the shaman's activities in other societies: for example, the Evenkis had a clear concept of

²² *Passe vare*, ‘holy mountain’, is a regional variant of *saiva*, ‘supernatural’, in the designations of the spirits.

the clan or tribal lands, which the shamans were responsible for defending from shamans of other tribes by means of spiritual contests.

The Drum

Decorated drums exist in a highly developed form amongst the Lapps and also amongst their neighbours the Samoyeds.²³ The depictions of the Lapp drum represent (amongst other things) tutelary spirits, regions of the cosmos, sacrificial animals, gods, the shaman on his trance journey; there is considerable variation between drums.

The drum served various purposes: divination (this did not necessarily require a shaman); inducing trance in the shaman; summoning the shaman's spirits (our records do not allow us to determine whether this function existed among the Lapps). In Siberia, the drum was often regarded as a means of transport for the shaman on his ecstatic journeys; thus amongst the Ostiak the drum was regarded as a *qadukś* (shaman's reindeer) (Aleksenko 1978: 256). Siikala (1990: 198) notes that in arctic regions the drum is called a boat.²⁴ Similar ideas may have existed among the Lapps. Eliade notes (1972: 173):

The drumming at the beginning of the séance, intended to summon the spirits and “shut them up” in the shaman's drum, constitutes the preliminaries for the ecstatic journey. This is why the drum is called the “shaman's horse” (Yakut, Buryat). The Altaic drum bears a representation of a horse; when the shaman drums, he is believed to go to the sky on his horse. Among the Buryat, too, the drum made with a horse's hide represents that animal.

Hultkrantz argues that the *Historia Norwegiae* account shows that Lapp drums were simpler at that time than in the seventeenth to

²³ The drum is a common, but not universal, piece of apparatus for the shaman (Vajda 1959: 475). Donner (1946: 230) notes that the western Samoyeds and Ostiaks often had drums with no images, but the Ostiaks, Samoyeds and Evenkis of the Yenisei region had richly decorated specimens. Nioradze (1925: 79–80) notes that other objects take on the drum's functions (e.g. of summoning spirits) in other cultures, for example the Buriat used an iron staff, with which the shaman hit himself.

²⁴ Among the Evenki the drum was thought of variously as a wild reindeer, a weapon and a boat (Anisimov 1963: 117–118).

eighteenth centuries, for example in not including depictions of gods (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 58). The use of *occupatum* to describe the depictions “covering” the drum need not be taken too literally, however, and in the absence of more certain evidence it is dangerous to use this description to determine what was *not* on the drum (mention of gods, for example, may deliberately have been eschewed).

The drum of *Historia Norwegiae* is said to depict four things: water-beasts, reindeer, snow-shoes, and a ship, all of them said to be vehicles of the *gandus*. This interpretation must be approached cautiously. The concept of animal helping spirits travelling on vehicles does not exist among the Lapps; moreover, while the *cetus* is said to be a *vehicle* of the *gandus* when the diagrams are described, the *gandus* later appears *transformed* into a *cetus*. The information seems to represent a vacillation between the animal helping spirits seen as steeds for the shaman’s free-soul, and the free-soul transformed into, or more likely accompanied by, the *saiva guelie*.

Comparable diagrams to those mentioned occur on later drums:²⁵ fish are depicted on the drums sometimes (Manker 1950: 32); these represent real fish to be caught, rather than the shamanic helping animal; birds also represent game, but Manker acknowledges they sometimes represent the shamanic helping spirit: the same could therefore be the case with marine beasts. Reindeer are depicted on almost all drums, and represent various things: wild reindeer; the reindeer herd; the shamanic reindeer, sometimes in contest with another (e.g. Manker 1950: 213). They occasionally have a man with them, and may then represent a shaman’s journey with the reindeer.²⁶ None of the depictions indicate the presence of a bridle. However, the drums nearly all depict Rota, the god of the underworld, riding a horse (his sacrificial animal),

²⁵ Manker 1950: 139; Manker notes that the owner of the drum was apparently a sea Lapp, while the preserved drums generally belonged to reindeer nomads of the interior: however, this is based merely on interpreting the *cetus* as a whale, a beast which is not depicted on any of the later drums.

²⁶ For example Manker 1950: 318 (figure on 316); whilst Manker interprets several such depictions in this way, this goes beyond the evidence of our literary sources, which do not indicate that the spiritual reindeer acted as a steed. A contemporary annotation to a drum with a reindeer and man together from 1642 describes the scene as a Lapp going to the store with his reindeer—not particularly shamanic (Manker 1950: 146).

along with bridle.²⁷ It is possible that two or more depictions have been conflated in the *Historia Norwegiae* account.

Figures of Lapps with skis also occur on drums (Manker 1950: 18); these are not necessarily to be interpreted as shamans on ecstatic journeys—they may simply be hunters.

On later drums the ship represents either an actual ship used in fishing, or more commonly a ship offering (made in particular to the spirits that went about in the air at Yule).²⁸ The representations do not often contain oars, though at least one printed in Manker has protrusions that could be so interpreted (Manker 1950: 56).

It appears that the depictions on the *Historia Norwegiae* drum need not, in themselves, be taken as representing spiritual entities. However, the description of them as vehicles of the *gandus* indicates that at least the whale and the reindeer are to be taken as spirit helpers, which the shaman would sometimes use as steeds (the literary sources indicate this for the *saiva guelie*, and Manker’s notations to the Lapp drums for the *saiva sarva*). The Norwegian observers may simply have lumped the ship and snow-shoes together with the other depictions as vehicles of the *gandus*; this would have been facilitated by the association of at least the ship with spirits of another, not specifically shamanic, kind.

Conclusion

The *Historia Norwegiae*’s account of Lappish shamanism confirms much that occurs in later accounts. It comes from a time before shamanism became moribund: it is always to be remembered that the seventeenth to eighteenth-century accounts record a tradition that was fast being eradicated. The *Historia Norwegiae* is striking as recounting an actual séance, rather than relaying general information about séances, and the detail it reveals is invaluable as a witness to the complexities of shamanism in practice. To find parallels, for example to the fatal spirit stake, we have to turn to forms of shamanism recorded in more recent years and more fully than Lappish shamanism, such as that of the Evenkis. The parallels confirm the genuineness of the *Historia Nor-*

²⁷ In one depiction (Manker 1950: 262) Rota appears on a reindeer.

²⁸ Manker 1950: 57; the information is derived from Rheen 1897: 27.

wegiae account, and serve to remind us how much we have lost in our knowledge of the details of Lappish shamanism. While some aspects of the *Historia Norwegiae* account betray Norse influence, notably in the author's failure to understand that the séance involved the sending out of the free-soul, these elements can be identified and explained.

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Topics in the Anthropological Study of Shamanism in Japan*

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At the First Conference of the International Society for Shamanistic Research held in Seoul last year, which I attended as an observer, I had the occasion to discuss with one of the participants his reactions to the presentations on Japanese shamanism by several of the Japanese speakers. While Korean shamanism closely resembled that of Siberia, he said: there seemed to be no genuine shamanism in Japan, but only a somewhat shamanic version of Buddhism. Since my main field of interest is the non-shamanic features of Korean culture, I was not in the position to evaluate the aptness of his observation. Moreover, I could not help agreeing with it to a certain extent, since Japanese shamanic rituals are rather static as compared to those of Korea.

Nevertheless, many elements of shamanism are alive even in modern Japan, as attested by the growing interest that the Japanese man-in-the street has in oracles, mediums, magic, possession, exorcism, spiritualism, the soul, new religious sects, near-death experiences, and so on. Japanese scholarship, too, has come to widely accept the notion that there is a genuine shamanic tradition in Japan. The purpose of this article is not to define this tradition, but rather to briefly introduce the large volume of anthropological studies on shamanism in the Japanese language.

The bibliography at the end of this paper lists over one hundred publications on the subject. The collection of Professor Noriaki Satō of Komazawa University contains over 1,140 books and articles published

* This paper was prepared for the International Conference on Shamanism, August 15–22, 1992, in Yakutsk. To meet the time restrictions on the Russian presentation, I cut the original English text in half. After the conference, Prof. Peter Knecht and his colleague were kind enough to improve on the terminology of my original paper. I should like to thank them again.

in Japan between 1945 and 1989, and he estimates that the literature totals over 1,500 works altogether. Professor Satō believes that shamanistic studies in Japan were strongly stimulated by the publication of the English translation of Mircea Eliade's *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* in 1964, and, that the enormous increase in the number of publications on the subject after 1965 (Table 1) was due to the start of cooperative folklore research projects by such people as Taro Wakamori and Tokihiko Oto, and the growing interest in doing anthropological field work both in Japan and abroad.

Table 1.
The increase in Japanese books and articles on shamanism

Year	Number
1945–54	37
1955–64	38
1965–74	183
1975–84	547
1985–89	335
Total	1,140

The Study of Shamanism in Japan

Before 1945, the first Japanese to mention Siberian shamanism were eighteenth- and nineteenth-century visitors to northeastern Siberia, Sakhalin, and the Aleutian Islands. These included the castaways Kōdayū Daikokuya and Tsudayū, the captive Gorōji Nakagawa, and explorers like Rinzō Mamiya (Kato 1986). Their brief observations on shamanic practices attracted little attention until much later, however.

The first studies of shamanism in Japan are believed to have been by Kunio Yanagita, known as “the father of Japanese folklore studies.” Between 1913 and 1914, he serialized his papers *Miko-kō* (A study of *miko*) (Yanagita 1913–14), under the pseudonym Haruki Kawamura. These papers did not actually apply the word “shamanism” to ancient Japanese Shinto; however, Nobuhiro Matsumoto opines that this may

have been out of consideration of the rising nationalist sentiment of that time (Matsumoto 1971: 12).

In 1916, Aizan Yamaji, a Christian, journalist, and historian, brought the issue more into the open with a discussion that touched upon the relationship between primitive Shinto and shamanism. He concluded that primitive Shinto had been what he termed *mikokyō* (“mikoism”) (Matsumoto 1971: 52).

In 1930, Taro Nakayama, a historian of middle and lower-class Japanese culture, published *Nihon miko-shi* (A History of the *miko* in Japan), in which he explicitly raised the question of the *miko*'s connection with shamanism. Like Yanagita, Nakayama, too, divided the *miko* into two categories. The first type, the maidens in the service of a Shinto shrine, are called *miko* (daughter of the gods) or *jinja miko*. *Jinja miko* receive a salary from the shrine (*jinja*) for dancing in ritual ceremonies and assisting the male priests (*kannushi*) in their work. The other category, known either as *ichiko*, *kuchiyose miko*, or *minkan miko*, are necromancers or mediums that operate independently of Shinto shrines. Both types of *miko* derived from the ancient *miko*, who were shamanic women of high status. In the *jinja miko* tradition, the women have lost their shamanic role and become mere attendants to the *kannushi*, who are now in charge of Shinto ritual. The *kuchiyose miko*, however, have continued as mediums and necromancers.

Nikolai Aleksandrovich Nevskii (1892–1938 or 1945) first came to Japan in 1913 for two months to study Japanese culture. During his second stay from 1915 to 1929, he became friends with Kunio Yanagita, Taro Nakayama, and many other Japanese scholars. Yanagita and Nakayama both mentioned him in their own works on shamanism. One of Nevskii's topics of research was the *oshirasama*, an object of divine worship in the Tōhoku region. Nevskii related *oshirasama* worship to shamanic practices.

Hirosato Kunishita wrote that scholars familiar with the words “shaman” and “shamanism” were very rare in Japan during the 1910s; he himself was one of the earliest pioneers in the field. Russian literature on Siberian shamanism was first read and introduced by Kunishita and others during the 1920's. Kunishita also serialized “On the Origin of the Word ‘Shaman’” (*Shaman to iu go no gengi ni tsuite*) in the journal *Minzoku* (Vol. 2, Nos. 1–2 and 4, 1926 and 1927).

Ryūzō Torii was the first great Japanese field worker in anthropology. From 1895 to 1951, most of his time was spent in research abroad.

In 1924, he published *Nihon shūi minzoku no genshi shūkyō* (Primitive Religions Among the Peoples Around Japan), in which he argued that Japanese Shinto and Korean Musok (Korean folk religion with shamanic elements) had many features in common. He and other scholars began to call the folk religions around Japan “shamanism” on the basis of historical and ethnological studies. The 1930s saw a remarkable increase in the research on shamanism in China and Korea. Torii took many photographs for his time, and his field reports include descriptions and photographs of shamanism in the Kurile Islands, northern Siberia, Sakhalin, Manchuria, Korea, Taiwan, etc. Many of his photographic records (dry plates) have been reproduced on negative film and catalogued by the University Museum of the University of Tokyo.

In 1938, Ken'ichi Sugiura (1905–1954) presented a paper entitled “Shamanism in the Palau Islands” at the Third Joint Meeting of the Anthropological Society of Tokyo and the Japanese Society of Ethnology. He compared the data on Palau (representing southern shamanism) with that of Siberian shamanism (northern shamanism).

Thus it was that Siberian shamanism was known and studied in Japan prior to 1945, and certain scholars had begun to draw parallels between Siberian shamanism and that of more southern areas such as China, Korea, and Japan. Still others conducted extensive or intensive historical studies of the folk religions of each region.

The Study of Shamanism After 1945

In 1949, the Japanese Society of Ethnology brought out a special issue of *The Japanese Journal of Ethnology* (Vol. 14, No. 1) on shamanism. In this issue, Kunishita outlined the brief history of shamanistic studies in Japan, and presented a bibliography of the literature in Japanese and Chinese. He declared unequivocally that the original religion of Japan was shamanism. Though the contributors to this issue were all Japanese, the areas or cultures treated were all “northern”: Korea, Hailar Daur, Manchu, Ancient Turkic, Gilyak (Nivkhi), and Oroq (Ulqa). This issue is generally regarded as a summary of the research conducted prior to 1945.

After 1945, introductory and theoretical works summarizing and evaluating the studies on shamanism that appeared in Western languages were put out by scholars like Kiyoto Furuno (1973) and Kōkan

Sasaki (1984). Quoting from numerous Western scholars, they argued that the terms “shaman” and “shamanism” be universally applied to early religions showing shamanic features. They and Teigo Yoshida (a scholar of witchcraft, sorcery, and possession by animal spirits) introduced the term “anthropology of religion” to Japan. Taryō Ōbayashi, a scholar of historical ethnology and ethnogenesis with a strong interest in northern cultures, discussed shamanism in a broad sense in his works on the history of Japanese culture (Ōbayashi 1991).

Several international symposia on shamanism have been held in Japan and their proceedings published, I list them below, including the names of the foreign participants given in brackets.

Shamanism in East Asia. 1970. Held at Seijō University, Tokyo, under the auspices of the Japanese Society of Ethnology (Chang Chu-keun, Korea).

Comparative Analyses of Japanese Ethnogenesis: Symposium II. Shamanism. 1981. Organized by the National Museum of Ethnology. The proceedings of the symposium have been published by Kyūzō Katō (ed.) 1984 (Josef Kreiner, Germany, Ryu Tong shik, Korea, H. Byron Earhart, USA, Lee Duhyun, Korea).

The Present Conditions and Topics of the Study of Shamanism. 1982. The symposium was organized by the Japanese Society of Ethnology, and held at Ryūkyū University, Okinawa.

An International Symposium: Southern Shamanism. 1982. Organized by and held at the Intercultural Research Institute, Kansai University of Foreign Studies (Kim Tae-gon, Korea, I. M. Lewis, UK, Carmen Blacker, UK).

An International Symposium: Shamanism in East Asia. 1992. Organized by and held at Keiō University (Kim Tae-gon, Korea, Liu Zhi-wan, Taiwan).

Some of the foreign studies on Japanese shamanism that have been translated into Japanese are listed in Supplement A of my bibliography. The books written by Carmen Blacker and W. P. Lebra are reports of their field work in Japan. From the latter half of the 1960s, contributions by Korean scholars have been published in Japan, as listed in Supplement B. Although I am not very knowledgeable about recent academic exchanges between China and Japan, it is certain that Chinese scholarship will be introduced in the near future.

Tokutarō Sakurai, the well-known head of the Folklore Society of Japan, has surveyed Japanese folk religions extensively and begun

to use the word “shamanism” as a folklorist. He has advanced comparative folklore studies, traveling to neighboring countries to observe shamans and shamanic rituals. The *itako* of the Aomori Prefecture and the *yuta* of Okinawa are now recognized by many Japanese as being Japanese shamans.

The *shugendō* (*yamabushi*) are being studied as well, due to the belief that the *yamabushi* have the ability to control spirits (Blacker 1975; Miyake 1971). Scholars have found elements of mountain asceticism, Buddhism, animism, and organized shamanism admixed in *shugendō*.

Theoretical works based on foreign materials and personally collected field data are being published at such a rate that it is difficult to keep up with the output. Some scholars, such as Tokutarō Sakurai, Kōkan Sasaki, and Noriaki Satō have attempted to make the Japanese situation more manageable by producing summaries of the available information.

Although certain Japanese scholars have presented their work in the West (examples being Kōkan Sasaki’s paper “Three Types of Shamanic Initiation in Japan” at the Thirteenth International Congress for the History of Religions at the University of Lancaster, UK, and Ichiro Hori’s attempts to explain Japanese folk religion to Western audiences), I nevertheless believe that more of an effort must be made to familiarize non-Japanese scholars with the considerable Japanese academic contribution to the field.

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Techniques Among Even Shamans for Healing Humans and Animals

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This account concerns the Even, a Tungus people formerly also known as the Lamut, who live in northeastern Siberia. According to the traditional Even view, the world was divided into three mental spheres: the Upper World, the Middle World, and the Lower World. Shamans were the mediators acting between those three worlds. In the present paper, I shall try to reveal the methods and techniques for treating humans and animals used by the Even shamans as those methods have been related me by my informants in the village of Sebian-Kuel in the north of the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). Basilov (1984: 13) has written:

It is not easy to enumerate briefly all the shaman's duties. These duties were wide and varied. The shaman asked the gods and spirits for prosperity and health, for the fecundity of humans and animals, for good hunting and good weather. When misfortune occurred, the shaman asked the spirits for help. As well as protecting his fellow-tribesmen while they were alive, he accompanied their souls to the other world. It was also his business to diagnose the causes of diseases and to treat them. He could learn from the spirits what would happen to a person in the future, and the location of lost people, animals and things. In general, the competence of the shaman extended to all cases where the intervention of supernatural forces was suspected.

In connection with this, one of the important function of the Even shaman was to protect people from the influence of the evil spirits of Argi (*arin̄kolduk* and *ib̄jirilduk*) of the Lower World, as well as to aid his people in times of epidemics and misfortunes. According to the traditional Even view, “the principle of a shaman's treatment is the belief in the connection between illness and the activity of spirits.

The diagnosis and the method of treatment are based on this belief.” (Basilov 1984: 17)

To achieve this, the shamans performed various ritual séances (called *kamlanie* in Russian). The purpose of those séances was to avert or to treat human diseases and reindeer plague under the difficult conditions of nomadic life whenever practical aid was needed by the family, kin or tribe. In particular, hunters needed help if they were dogged by unsuccessful hunting. Therefore, the shaman’s séance had different meanings according to its purpose. The séance was a special conversation, a communication between the shaman and various spirits of the Upper and Lower Worlds. The Even believed that different diseases were caused by evil spirits that enter human beings, or that “the disease could result from the fact that the soul had been abducted by the spirits. In this case, one must defeat them and drive them out” (Basilov 1984: 17).

The shaman was sent for only after all ordinary forms and methods of folk medicine had been tried. The functions of a physician were performed by healers, native healers, even by adult family members (mostly the old men). For treatment, various drugs of vegetable and animal origins were applied. The fresh antlers of reindeer (*nīmet*) were used as a general restorative remedy. After singeing the velvet of the antlers on a bonfire, the Evens scraped off the singed parts with a sharp knife and then ate them. Especially valuable was the blood from inside the antler, which was sucked. Other widely used tonic medicines were the *oir* fern and the “golden root” (*ginseng*), infusions of which were taken for three, twelve, or forty days according to the seriousness of the disease. Poplar buds (*sul*) were used as a painkiller. For liver and stomach diseases, and for jaundice, dysentery, rheumatism, painful joints, abscesses and ulcers, they used bear’s gall and the stomach secretion of the musk-deer, as well as other medicines of vegetable and animal origins.

If a disease could not be healed by traditional folk medicine, the family had to call the shaman. It is surprising that, as the former shaman Stepan Spiridonovich Krivoshapkin said, “the shaman knew in advance what the disease was. To heal the patient, the shaman performed one or another specific séance.” At the same time, “shamanic ritual healing is an archaic form of psychotherapy. As distinct from the modern doctor, with his psychotherapeutic techniques, the shaman does not act in his own name. Behind the shaman stand higher forces. It is not he who heals, but spirits or gods more powerful than people. The patient’s belief in the shaman’s ability of the shaman to restore his

health is reinforced by the ritual. The shamanic session as a whole is intended to demonstrate the power of the shaman and of his spirits.” (Basilov 1984: 24)

At the end of the séance, the shaman uttered magical incantations. Sometimes he added purifying rituals including the cleansing of pollution by fire or fumigation by wild rosemary or azalea (*hēṅkēs*). It is well known that during pre-revolutionary times in northern Siberia many people died from smallpox. Sometimes whole clans perished. The Even believed that the evil spirit of smallpox appeared on the migration routes of reindeer herders in the form of a woman with red hair like a European. Usually she arrived with travellers sitting on a sledge at the back of their caravan. The people did not notice her, but the shaman saw and knew that the evil spirit of smallpox had come to their place “to pay a social call.” The shaman prepared himself for “combat.” Most shamans were unable to fight alone against the smallpox spirit, which assumed the form of a huge red bull and rushed at the shaman. If a strong shaman of the *marka*¹ won in this “combat,” he saved his kinsmen from that dangerous disease; if he lost, all his kinsmen including the shaman himself would die with the exception of two relatives who remained alive to bury the dead. Sometimes, in order to expel the smallpox spirit, two or three shamans came together and performed a special séance.

Shamans also used a special *kudai* deer (‘sacred deer’) to treat seriously ill relatives. “Every Even used to have a sacred deer of his own,” explained Stepan Spiridonovich. “Out of numerous reindeer, the shaman specially chose the sacred one as the protector of a particular person. Not every deer could become sacred, but only a deer with a divine mark, white or piebald, and only those that had a *tigék*.”

Tigék is a ball of hair that can sometimes be found on a reindeer’s neck. From that ball, the Even made a hair rope for the *dēlburge* (see below). This ball was kept in a special saddlebag called a *herūkle*, since it was believed that it brought happiness to the owner of the sacred deer and to his family, well-being to the deer, and luck to hunters. This kind of deer had been probably put on the Earth by a celestial deity called *Kudai*, or by the deity of the Sun, or even by the supreme deity *Hēvki*.

¹ *Marka* is Russian, the meaning of the expression is something like “a shaman of quality.” *The Editors*.

It was a person's protector. "When someone, man, woman or child, is ill, the shaman orders the sacred reindeer to be brought. If someone's back is aching, then the shaman treats it with a light puff of the sacred shamanic reindeer on the exact spot which aches."

The shamanic sacred deer was able to heal his owner and even to rescue him from death. According to Stepan Spiridonovich, "there were instances, when a sacred deer could even die while protecting its owner, that is, sacrifice itself in order to rescue its master." When a sacred deer died suddenly for whatever reason, it was strictly forbidden to touch it, and even more strictly forbidden to eat its flesh. The dead deer was left where it lay. "And when I was seriously ill," said the former shaman, "the great shaman Digdä Habirilla placed two sacred deer at the entrance of our tent, one white and one piebald, and then performed a healing rite. The spirit of disease was transferred to the two sacred deer and the shaman let them go free. That's how I recovered." Old men told me that "the sacred deer was used for treatment as follows: near the tent (Russian *chum*) where the sick man lay, the shaman tied up one or two deer (depending on the seriousness of the disease), either piebald (*būvdi*) or white (*geltaldi*), which had to be young. The sick man was then brought out of the tent and the deer allowed to breathe on his forehead, face and chest. The shaman then fumigated the sick man and the deer with azalea or wild rosemary smoke, directing the smoke three times to the left and three times to the right side with the aid of a small carpet (*dahi*) sewn from the skin of a reindeer's head. Then the sick man was made to spit on the muzzle of the sacred deer three times, and after that the sacred deer was set free. It was believed that the disease was passed to the reindeer with the saliva. From that moment, nobody had the right to use the sacred deer for the ordinary needs of the nomadic economy. It was even more strictly forbidden to cut the sacred deer's antlers or to brand it. The sacred deer remained free till the end of its days."

And if an evil spirit of disease from the Lower World attacked a human being, the shaman applied the following method of treatment. He performed a séance in order to transfer the spirit of the disease into a pair of wooden birds. The shaman started his séance late at night, near a bonfire. In front of the sick man's tent he attached the wooden birds, painted red, on two sticks. According to the former shaman S. S. Krivoshepin, the birds were made by another according to the shaman's orders. These birds were loons (*ōkēḡē*) or hawks (*giākān*). As

the result of the séance, the shaman made the birds fly to the celestial world, having previously transferred the evil spirit of disease into them. If the birds disappeared during the séance, the sick man recovered. Once the spirit of disease was divided into two parts and then sent to the heavens, it could not return.

One of the most effective shamanic methods of healing was to send the soul (*han'ian*) of a sick man to the celestial world (*n'amnantaldula*). This healing ritual was called *bei aianman tūtukeiek*. The shamans believed that this ritual was called for when a disease spirit from the Lower World had attacked a person. In this case, a classic principle of opposition is clearly revealed: the Upper World is opposed to the Lower World. For these purposes, the shaman used a special construction made from willow twigs which was called *hubuk*. First he cut the twigs to 70–90 cm, then each twig was split into two parts, with the upper parts of each twig kept intact. After the twigs were pulled to one side, they were stuck into the ground.

In all probability, this dome-shaped construction represents a simple model of the world. This disk-shaped device, called *indān* in the Even language, is made of wood, and has a round hole in the middle. A similar device, used by the Evenki reindeer herders of Manchuria in northern China was photographed in 1931 by the anthropologist Ethel-John Lindgren (1935: 177). The female shaman (*udagan*) of the Manchurian Evenki used almost exactly the same methods which were related to me by the Even shaman in northern Yakutia.

Stepan Spiridonovich explained to me that "the *hubuk* and *indān* represented a symbol of the Universe. The symbol of the Universe in the Even language is *nelbēn omḡo*, while the *indān* as a symbol of heaven is called *n'amgaltan*, and as a symbol of the Sun, *n'ūlten*. Having built the *hubuk* in a glade and placed the *indān* inside it, the shaman, together with the old men took some of the sick man's hair and laid it on the *indān* inside it. The Even believed that the soul (*han'ian*) of a person is in his hair. By means of the séance, the shaman sent the soul of the sick man to heaven, since it was believed that the spirits from the Lower World could not fly up to the Upper World, far less stay there and cause evil and pain in a person's soul. In heaven, the disease quickly left the person's soul and the person recovered. After the séance, the *hubuk* was left in place." According to many informants, the same ritual was applied by the shaman to the reindeer herd (*delmīčē*). This ritual was called *oron tētukehek*, i.e., sending the souls of reindeer to the celestial

country lying between heaven and earth. The Even consider that reindeer are a gift from the Supreme god *hėwk̄t* and from the God of Sun and that they are therefore celestial and solar animals.

The shamans performed that ritual in the last days of June, believing that doing so they could avert widespread necrobacteriosis among the reindeer. After the shamanic ritual mentioned above had been finished, the reindeer would not suffer from that disease, for it was believed that the deer's souls, having reached heaven, received the blessing of the Supreme God *hėwk̄t* and then returned to the Middle World (i.e., to the earth) perfectly "clean." According to the stories told by old men, that ritual was performed as follows: the shaman, together with the old men made the *hubuk* from willow twigs, and all the deer ropes called *hular* (*uhilbu*) were placed inside it. Having collected all the ropes in a circle, they hung it inside the *hubuk* (*nelbene*). Not far from the *hubuk*, a small gate called the *dėlburge* was placed. The *dėlburge* consisted of two young larches, rope made from the *tuguk* hair of the *kudai* (sacred) deer and from the hairs under the reindeer's neck (*nėielde*). Between the two trees, the *dėlburge* (the rope to which the reindeer under-neck hair was fastened) was stretched. The ritual has changed over time; instead of the hair they now hang colored pieces of cloth. But this has not changed the general idea of the ritual. Two young trees and the *dėlburge* signify the celestial gate which the deer must pass to reach the celestial world, the realm of purity and well-being. And through the *hubuk* the shaman raised the deer rope (*hular*) up to the celestial world, so that the evil spirits of necrobacteriosis would enter the rope, become separated from the deer and leave them alone. Under the *dėlburge*, a bonfire was kindled, and then rosemary or rhododendron was thrown in the fire, for their smoke possessed bactericidal properties. All those actions were performed to purify the deer's souls from pollution through fire before the souls reached the celestial world.

The ritual was performed in the following sequence. The shaman started his séance. The shaman's assistants and the old men slowly led the deer to the gate (*dėlburge*) and let them pass through the gate to heaven in single file. The deer had to move against the current of a river or stream, for it was believed that water always flowed down from mountain peaks, and heaven is located higher than the mountain peaks. According to the Even, when water flowed down it flowed to the Lower World. If the *dėlburge* had been placed downstream and the deer had been sent through the gate down with the current of the river, it would

mean that all of them would die from the disease and would go to the Lower World. Therefore, before beginning that ritual, the Even always emphasized the place from where the river (*okāt*) flowed.

"Usually, even after the ritual, individual cases of the reindeer disease called *kopytka* (from Russian, necrobacteriosis) still sometimes occurred, but there were no instances of mass outbreaks any more. In order to prevent epidemics, the shamans exposed those deer to treatment as follows. The shaman with the assistance of his helper-spirits could see 'the bacteria' (the worms) of that disease with their own eyes. They could even pick up those worms with their fingers, kill them, and thus heal the deer. The shaman was not allowed to reveal how he actually healed deer suffering from necrobacteriosis, since if he revealed his secret he would have been punished by his helper-spirits. Sometimes, the shaman sucked the microbes from the wound on the reindeer's sore leg and spat three times on the wound. After all that the treatment is considered to be finished and the deer recovered . . . An ordinary reindeer herder was not allowed to suck pus from the wound on the sore leg of the deer, for he might have died from that disease. I was taught by other shamans and helper-spirits how to treat reindeer and humans suffering from various diseases. For each disease, the methods and techniques are different."

"Informants also said that if a disease, for instance necrobacteriosis, had resulted in the death of a deer, the shaman would start to perform the following ritual. During a thunderstorm, he showed the dead reindeer and the sore leg to the lightning and the thunder (*avdri*), asking Inken, the spirit of the lightning and the thunder, to take Argi, the evil spirit of disease and death, with him. This was to be done to avert a necrobacteriosis epidemic and murrain among the deer. Sometime the shaman asked the Sun to take the spirit of the disease with it. Before asking the Sun, the shaman cut off a dead deer's leg and hung it up in the sunshine for three days. When three days had passed, the adult members of the nomad camp, led by the shaman, asked the Sun to take away the disease, to have mercy on the deer, and thus to save them from the influence of the evil spirit of that disease. After all that had been completed, the leg was taken down and burnt on a bonfire, with the shaman repeating that the spirit should disappear and leave the deer alone.

It is quite usual for reindeer to suffer from pneumonia in summer. It is very hot in the mountains in the afternoon and very cold at night, when the air temperature may fall to +3° – +5°C. Sometimes it snows in

the mountains, or *mūndi* may occur (i.e., it rains for a long time, the sky is covered with clouds, and it becomes cool). As a result of protracted rains followed rapidly by a warm spell, the deer suffer from pneumonia. The shamans used to treat those deer by the following method: with their hands they “opened” the hair on a deer’s wither and spat into it three times. If the deer’s joints also hurt, the shaman spat under its tail. Thus shamans treated humans and animals using various methods and techniques, according to the spirit of disease and death.

According to the shaman’s outlook, the health of their kinsmen and reindeer depended not only on a person but also on the place where the nomadic camp was situated. Therefore, the old men chose the site for the nomadic camp (*urikič*). The site had to be favorable both for humans and for animals. Usually, it was a clearing (*kunték*) on the bank of a stream or river. The ground should not be swampy, so that people would feel comfortable and in harmony with nature. Places with swamps and ravines were considered geopathogenic zones. To pitch a nomadic camp in such places was dangerous for the health of both humans and animals. The Even believed that the evil spirits of disease and death (*hargi*) came up through swamps and ravines to the earth’s surface. The old men never pitched their camp in the middle of a swamp (*bulé*), in a boggy area (*dotturdu*), or in an area full of dried-out trees (*borin turdu*). Dried trees were believed to impart an energy from the earth which was unfavorable for the human organism. Such places were also considered geopathogenic. The door of a *chum* (Russian, ‘tent’) should point downstream, while a person should sleep with their head pointing against the current. The Even believed that if they slept with their heads pointing against the current, the water would not wash away the person’s “thoughts” and “health” into the Lower World. In other words, the person would always feel comfortable and healthy.

Sometimes even shamans felt ill. According to stories told by the shaman S. S. Krivoschapkin and the reindeer herder E. M. Kolesova (the author’s mother), shamans sometimes suffered from various diseases if they had not performed a séance for a long time. In order to recover, they themselves placed an iron rod or a knife in the fire, or asked someone else to do it, and after making it red-hot, took it out with their hands and licked it. My mother told me a story about a female shaman and her son Pëtr. In late 1970, they worked together in the same herding camp. One day the shaman fell ill and asked my mother to make some iron red-hot in the fire and give it to her. The shaman took the red-hot

iron and began to lick it, producing a hissing sound, and kept licking it until it became cold. She said that her soul had at last been calmed, fell asleep, and awoke the next morning quite healthy. The same thing happened with her son.

To summarize, Even shamans were the protectors of their kinsmen’s souls in the Middle World. They protected people from the influence of evil forces in nature, and if these evil forces of disease and death had done any harm, the shaman would save people from their influence. Shamans used various methods and techniques of healing and restored the balance of forces between man and nature.

Informants (Evens from the village of Sebian-Kuel in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia). The shaman Stepan Spiridonovich Krivoschapkin, of Naku clan, born in 1913; Pëtr Stepanovich Krivoschapkin, Kirgembis clan, born in 1940, reindeer-hunter; Evdokiia Mikhaïlovna Kolesova, Tigiassir clan, born in 1920; and Keimetinov Vasiliï Pavlovich, Keimeti clan, born in 1918.

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Subscription rates for
two issues/year:

Institutions US\$40.00
Individuals US\$22.00

The Evenki *Alga* Ritual of Blessing

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ST PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

This paper presents an account of a shamanic rite (Russian *kamlanie*), performed by Matriona Petrovna Kurbeltinova, an Evenki female shaman. I myself recorded her shamanic songs in the summer of 1987 along with colleagues from Yakutsk, Dr. A. N. Myreeva and Dr. G. I. Varlanova. Today, Kurbeltinova is the only Evenki shaman able to present such valuable and unique material. She was about ninety years old at the time of the recording. She lived with her relatives in the *taiga* (Siberian forests) and had been nomadizing with them. She enjoys great respect among her kinsmen. This rite was performed on the occasion of our arrival and is called *alga*, which means 'blessing; wishing someone well'.

Evenki ritual folklore is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. With its social basis largely destroyed, much of it has been lost. Nevertheless, ritual ceremonies are still held in places where traditional types of households are not altogether things of the past. These rituals are a facet of the spiritual life of the Evenki on which no precise research has been done to date. No complete texts in the original language have been published, though many of the rites have been described in the ethnological literature. We were the first to record a complete version of one type of *alga* rite.

Structurally, the rite can be divided into two parts: the first began at sunset and lasted for three hours; the second began at sunrise and lasted for about one hour.

The ritual began with the preparations: a white, heavy rope (*salama*) about six meters long was prepared beforehand for everybody. We were told to tie to our ropes onto colored pieces of cloth tied together, called *zulgaptin*, sweets, cigarettes (for those who smoke) and other adornment. The grandson of the shaman, Terentiĭ, her constant helper during her shamanic activities, prepared a *turu* for us. A *turu* is a ritual name for a larch, which symbolizes the shamanic tree. Through the larch (*turu*) our souls

would travel to the upper world. Three larches were put up in the eastern part of the tent. This row of larches is called *darpe* in Evenki. Terentiï tied a long belt to the upper horizontal pole of the tent. He held one end of this belt during the shamanic activities; the other end was tied to Matrëna Petrovna. This belt connects the shaman with the Upper World, the world of birds, and Heaven. An oven was brought in, and a fire lit in it. All those present took part in the preparation. The grandmother let her hair down, sat by the fire and said: "We shall look at their future." Then she took a spoon containing alcohol and presented it to the fire with the following words: "Inhale and say if it is possible to perform shamanic activities." The fire flared up with a whoosh, which meant that permission to perform the ritual had been given. The kinsmen brought her juniper (*arči*) used for fumigating during the shamanic ceremony. The shaman put on a gown, an apron, fur and chamois shoes, tied herself to the belt, put on a special hat and asked the juniper to burn. The grandmother was given a drum. The juniper burned, the entrance to the tent was closed, and the first sound of the shamanic drum was heard—the ceremony of blessing had begun.

It started with an appeal to the spirit helpers and with a call for them to come down from the Upper World. The first of the helpers to be mentioned is the cuckoo and the hoopoe whom she summons by imitating their voices: *ko-ko-ko, tut-tut*. The Evenki consider the cuckoo to be a sacred bird; according to their belief, it was a human being who was turned into a bird by a shaman from the Kuktï clan. Even today, meeting a cuckoo in the forest is considered to be a sign of good luck and happiness. For the ceremony, the shaman also needed the help of a small stuffed animal figure, a bear (*barkanatkan*). The Evenki are known to have preserved the bear cult. The shaman called to the river near which we were camped:

Oh, Mulëmkën-river,
I ask for good from your flow,
Only for good I ask!

Then she appealed to Heaven and to the Mother-Elk, which is her soul and her spiritual double:

Mother-Elk, Mother-Elk,
Receptacle of my soul,
Tell us only the good things!

She explained to all of them the reason for her present shamanic activities, and asked them to help her.

After calling the spirit helpers, the shaman appealed to those who give her physical strength. The first was the fire, which symbolizes life. The drum gives strength to her legs, that is why she beat herself on the joints with the drum. She asked to be given water, to partake of the power *muḡun*, which is the spirit-host of all the natural phenomena: water, wind, mountains, rivers, and so forth.

Then she ordered us to bring her our piece of white rope (*salama*), and said the words of blessing sanctifying them, besprinkling them with wine and fumigating them with juniper. After sanctification, the *salama* are the bearers of our souls.

At that point, the shaman saw the mystic vision of the river which passes through three worlds: the Upper World, the Middle World and the Lower World, and ordered the *salama* to carry us to Heaven. The grandmother appealed to the bird protectors:

On the occasion of the arrival of three women,
On the occasion of the arrival of three women
We send you *salama* to Heaven blessing,
Salama to Heaven we are sending blessing,
In the beautiful sacred place *malu*¹ I pronounce my words,
Wish and say only good,
Wish only good,
Distant Heaven, distant Heaven!

Then she besprinkled us with wine, and gave some to the fire. Her helper Terentiï greeted us by touching our hands, and told us that our piece of rope (*salama*) was flowing safely down the river.

The shamanic ceremony continued with the shaman spinning around at a great speed and the drum thundering loudly. The grandmother watched our *salama* and helped her birds to carry them to Heaven. Suddenly during the journey, the birds resembling the deaf cuckoo began to peck the cuckoo. The sound of the drum grew louder. "Spread your feathers and fly higher," advised the shaman, and asked for the lit-

¹ *Malu* is the place of honor in a tent, facing the entrance, and the place where the spirits prefer to stay. *The Editors*.

tle bell, brought it to her mouth and pronounced shamanic ritual words. Then she tied it to the drum in order that she and her helpers might have more strength for the flight. The sound of the drum died down. Matrëna Petrovna tended the fire, sat down and began fortune-telling, speaking of the fulfillment of everything what she wished for us.

Matrëna Petrovna told each of us to take nine needles, thread all the needles, connect them and hold the threads in our hands. The number of needles used is determined by the shaman's strength. One can tell someone's fortune on three, seven, or nine needles. The more needles, the stronger the shaman is. She chanted that we should squat on the left-hand side of the tent, and explained to us that if the thread on the needles broke, there would be evil; if they were intact, everything would be all right. We gave her our needles one by one for her to take in her mouth. The shaman, smacking her lips, sucked the needles into her mouth. We held the threads tightly and did not let them go. Then she was given scissors, and bit it. Then everyone examined the needles and the scissors. They were intact; this was a good sign. The tension was released; everyone was satisfied. We tied our needles to our *salama*. Then she told our fortunes with a beater (a special shaman's club) called a *geχik*. A *geχik* is made of wood that has been hit by lightning. Its handle is narrower than the part that beats the drum. The latter has a *bulgë* covered with bear's fur and also with skin from deer or elk antlers. During the fortune-telling, the shaman throws up the club; the side it falls on determines whether her fortune-telling will come true. If it falls on the *bulgë*, the desired future will come true; if it falls *bulgë* side up, it will not. The assembled inform her of positive results with the word *tëvëčë*, which means 'it caught; it took'; they say *ëčë* (no) when the beater shows a negative prognosis. Matrëna Petrovna told our future, speaking of our health, of our work, and of our children; then she told the future concerning herself and her kinsmen. Then she lowered her hands into the cup of water in order to gather new strength, and began to sing again, imitating the cuckoo. This was her way of speaking with her spirit helpers. She stood near the *salama*, put the *geχik* to her forehead, looked ahead, and conjured with the following words:

Do not yield to anybody,
Do not yield to anybody,
Safely bring the *salama* to Heaven,
My drum, my drum like the fire sparkles . . .

Then she asked to be given reindeer's blood and sprinkled our *salama* with it. The first part of the *alga* rite was drawing to an end. She continued:

When the Sun-Mother rises,
When the Sun-Mother rises,
Go and tie the *salama*,
Tie it tight, not to break away.
If anybody tears it away,
There will be evil.
When the wind blows,
It may break away.
When the wind blows,
It may break away.
Even if it is so,
Let everything be well!
Let everything be well!
People with shameless eyes
May harm, may harm.
Protect from such people,
Protect from such people.
The deer may take it away
On their horns unintentionally.
Tie it tight . . .
May the good I have told come true.
Heaven, say your word,
Say your word.
To those coming from distant lands
Wish what is good, wish what is good.
To these plains, to these plains,
To the rivers, to the rivers say.
Let everything good come true . . .

Again she told the future with her beater. By and by Terentiï let the belt tied to her waist loosen. The grandmother sat down, people gave her water. She washed her hands and face with water. People took off her hat and put a scarf on her head. Then they took off her fur shoes and put another pair of shoes on her feet. Then she took off her gown.

The shaman's costume and the ritual objects are put into a special bag (*inmek*). Here the first part of the *alga* rite ended.

The next morning, at sunrise, Matrëna Petrovna put on her shamanic costume, asked people to bring her water and washed her hands. Sitting on the *malu*² she began to sing. She asked us to repeat it after her. Shamanizing, she went outside, and went up to the row of larches (*darpe*) saying words of blessing. Then she sprinkled it with wine, and rubbed her side against each larch (*туру*). An bear figure made of fell (*barkanatkan*) was tied to each larch. Then she collected the pieces of threads (*salama*), returned to the tent and fumigated it with juniper's smoke. Dancing and shamanizing, she and Terentiï tied our larch (*туру*) together putting the piece of rope (*salama*) between them. Matrëna Petrovna went around the *туру* several times, blessing and shaking the fell *barkanatkan*. Asking the spirits if everything was all right, she again told fortunes with the beater. Then she addressed the hearth with words of blessing. She drank some water, washed her face and hands, and finished her fortune-telling with the words: "And now I have told your fortune and blessed you at your request." Terentiï took the *salama* and *туру*, went off in the direction of the sunrise, and tied both *salama* and *туру* to a larch in the forest. With this the *alga* rite was over.

NADEZHDA IAKOVLEVNA BULATOVA is an Evenki scholar, born in the Amur region of the Far East. She graduated from the Department of Northern Peoples of the A. I. Herzen State Pedagogical University in St. Petersburg. She has been working in the Institute of Linguistic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences since 1975, currently she is a senior researcher at the Department of Languages of Russia. She specializes in Manchu-Tungus languages, folklore and Evenki shamanism. She wrote a number of schoolbooks for the peoples of the North. She also translated the Gospel of Lucas into Evenki (with A. N. Myreeva). Presently she is the director of the Russian Association of the Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON).

² See Footnote 1.

In Memoriam G. N. Gracheva (1934–1993)

In early 1993, a new journal was launched in St Petersburg. The very first issue of the *Kunstkamera. Ètnogaficheskie tetradi* published an article by G. N. Gracheva (1993). In it, she tells of her meeting with an old friend, the shaman Tubiaku Kosterkin, who, in keeping with the old customs of the Nganasan people, had inherited the shaman trade from his father. They had met in Avam, in the province of Tai'myr. The closing entry in Gracheva's diary reads as follows: "I am saying farewell to Avam, and I am saying farewell to Tubiaku. When will we meet again? Will we ever?" As if, in 1992, she had foreseen that she had barely a year to live.

Hers was a remarkable life, proving that one is capable of shaping one's own destiny. Galina Nikolaevna Gracheva (née Nikiforova) was born in Leningrad on November 18, 1934. She went to school during the war years, and lived through the difficult 900 days of the "blockade," an experience which effected the rest of her life. She developed, in her early adolescence, an ability to identify with the troubles and sufferings of others, to always stand by her friends, to have a keen personal interest in what was happening around her, and to maintain an intimate friendship with all who, like herself, endured the hardships of the blockade.

From 1952 to 1957, she studied Party History at the History Department of Leningrad University, and for the following three years worked in the archives of the Institute of Party History of the Leningrad County Party Committee. From 1957 to 1959, she took evening classes at the Marxist-Leninist University functioning under the auspices of the City of Leningrad Party Committee. In October 1959, she married Vladimir Ivanovich Grachev, a lecturer at the Physics Department of the Leningrad College of Textile and Light Industry. She quit work when their son, Ivan, was born in August, 1960. In September, 1962, she got a temporary job at the Siberia-research section of the Academy's Ethnographic Institute in Leningrad. Her position became a permanent one in March, 1963, and launched her on her creative career.

She was introduced to ethnography, a science theretofore unknown to her, by researchers, field researchers and theoreticians as outstanding as G. M. Vasil'evich, V. V. Antropova, E. D. Prokofeva, N. F. Pritkova, I. S. Vdovin, S. V. Ivanov and L. P. Potapov. Gracheva never met A. A. Popov, the renowned researcher of Taïmyr and Yakutia; he died shortly before she joined the Institute. But it was his work that she would carry on in later years. At first her assignments at the Institute and in the Siberia section were varied: scholarly at times, and merely routine at other times. From 1963 to 1969, she was the secretary of the Siberia-research section, and as such, quite involved in museology, but soon her aptitude for research was recognized. From 1966, she participated in the Institute's yearly scientific meetings, and delivered several presentations dealing, for the most part, with various aspects of the research on the burial customs of the inhabitants of northern Siberia.

At first, her presentations were based on archival sources, but she soon began her own research, and by 1966, was making field trips on a regular basis. A born researcher, she was quick to acquire the skills needed for methodical field work, and made good use of her natural gift of being able to inspire confidence in people. She communicated freely and easily with the subjects of her research. People answered her skillfully prepared questions without hesitation, and, in turn, were rewarded with her abiding friendship.

She timed her frequent visits to Taïmyr to fall on different times of the year to acquaint herself with the seasonally changing activities of the Nganasan, practically coming to share in their lives. She was friend to young and old, to the herdsman and the shaman, to outspoken women and reticent medicine-men alike, and was as welcome as a guest at the traditional ceremonies as she was as an extra hand helping with the household chores. It was, she felt, the only way to fully understand the Nganasan life style, their attitudes and inner personalities. I believe that she put a lot of conscious effort into developing her innate empathy into communication skills of the kind deemed essential by the founders of the St Petersburg-Leningrad ethnographic school, L. Ia. Sternberg and V. G. Bogoraz, a tradition that had been passed on by Gracheva's tutors and older colleagues.

Her April 14, 1974 dissertation, "The Nganasan's Ancient Concepts of Man As Revealed by Late 19th and Early 20th-Century Burial Customs" won her a candidacy in history. Her opponents, Professor L. P. Potapov and M. S. Butinova, and the members of the Science Com-

mittee expressed their admiration of the impressive amount of well-organized and original data gathered in the field. On July 14, 1984, the Science Committee unanimously elected G. N. Gracheva to be a senior member working on the "Ethnography of Siberian Populations."

A year earlier, in 1983, the Leningrad publishing company Nauka had brought out Gracheva's (1983) monograph, *The Traditional Ideology of the Hunters of Taïmyr. Based on Late 19th and Early 20th-Century Nganasan Sources*. The book attracted immediate specialist attention, both domestic and international. Gracheva's most lasting scientific achievement was recording and analyzing the traditional ideology of the Nganasan, one of the few peoples clinging to archaic ideas in the twentieth century, at a time when the basic concepts of soul, spirit, life, death, man's place in the world, notions as to who rules the world, and how man might influence his fate to create some sort of order out of the general chaos he lives in have become vague to the point of senselessness. She added a great many new findings to the scientific wealth accumulated chiefly by A. A. Popov and B. O. Dolgikh, and created a new and more reliable ethnographic data bank for the in-depth analysis of such important matters as the development of social consciousness and religious beliefs. While, in describing Nganasan ideology she keeps using the terms 'religion' and 'religious belief', the entire work—along with all its data and conclusions—proves that the Nganasan did not classify events and phenomena into the categories of natural and supernatural, and that God, as such, and especially God as the Creator, does not enter into their ideology at all. Interaction and reciprocity are what characterize their relationship to one another, and to nature as well. What researchers generally consider to be the Nganasan sacrificial offerings to the forces and phenomena of nature, they themselves see as giving gifts which they hope will be reciprocated. "Even the institution of shamanism had been established out of practical considerations," notes Gracheva (1983: 155), "in order to establish direct contacts with the world of material abstractions upon which human welfare depends." The use of the word "established" in the above quote may not be the most appropriate; a more neutral "developed" would, perhaps, have been more to the point. For while it is true that the shaman is expected to "establish" contact between the worlds, and this being very important, shamanism appears as a relatively independent and complex institution, its logic, as Gracheva

amply illustrates throughout her monograph, fits perfectly into the Nganasan traditional ideology.

The journal *Sovetskaia étnografiia* published a very positive review of Gracheva's book. The reviewer, Leonid Pavlovich Potapov, himself a recognized researcher of the peoples of Siberia, points out the richness and novelty of the material presented in the book, and calls the work "extremely important and seminal both for Nganasan research, and as an analysis of the early forms of social consciousness among the peoples of Siberia" (Potapov and Revunenkova 1985: 131.) Potapov fully endorsed Gracheva's conclusion that Nganasan religious thought grew out of a *Weltanschauung* which sees the reciprocity between man and nature in terms of a relationship in which man becomes one with nature (Potapov and Revunenkova 1985: 129).

Another reviewer, E. V. Revunenkova, a specialist in comparative ethnography and in the ethnography of the peoples of Southeast Asia, likewise found the monograph to be important. Unlike other ethnographers, who tended to treat primitive religion as a chaotic set of contradictory ideas, Gracheva, she pointed out, "saw the Nganasan traditional ideology as a logical system, and, overcoming linguistic and conceptual barriers, managed to grasp the most significant of the archaic forms of perception and receptivity that she encountered, and managed to show how all this was reflected in the entire complex of Nganasan behavior" (Potapov and Revunenkova 1985: 132). What Revunenkova values most is not so much the information found in Gracheva's work, what it tells the reader about a small Siberian ethnic group, the Nganasan, but her approach: a comprehensive and detailed investigation which invites further historical and typological comparison and analysis.

In the ten years since Gracheva's book was published, it has become one of the reference sources most frequently used by experts dealing with the traditional ideology of the Siberian peoples, and with archaic beliefs in general. Many of those who profited by it urged the author to submit the monograph to the Academy as a dissertation for her doctorate. Unfortunately, she ran out of time.

Gracheva kept expanding the sphere of her research activity, taking part in ethnographic and archeological expeditions, leading research trips not only to Taïmyr, but also to other parts of the vast Siberian region. She had a keen interest in economic matters, the environment, in everything having to do with material culture. At the Ethnography

Department of Leningrad University, she held seminars on the methodology of field work, coordinated the students' research efforts and evaluated their term papers and dissertations. She was much sought-after by her colleagues, who often invited her professional and personal opinion. She was known abroad as well as at home, as she participated in many scientific conferences and symposia, where her presentations were well received not only because of their novelty, but also because of the originality with which she approached her subject matter. Her standing in the scientific community kept growing, and in 1992 she was elected to be a senior research fellow.

G. N. Gracheva thought with gratitude of the old masters, especially of A. A. Popov, the great scholar who was so badly mistreated in his lifetime, and was denied the right to publish. It was, in no small measure, due to Gracheva's efforts that in 1984, almost a quarter of a century after his death, the second part of his monograph, *The Nganasan. Social Structures and Beliefs* was published (see Gracheva and Taksami 1984). Gracheva also retrieved from the archives of the Ethnographic Institute and later edited the manuscript of Popov's second unpublished work, about the Dolgan. Like many of the one-time students of the old masters, Gracheva, too, was happy to arrange such writings for publication, for she fully appreciated their contribution to science and the part they had played in her own professional development.

In 1992, Siberia researchers held a conference in St. Petersburg to commemorate the 90th anniversary of Popov's birth. Gracheva put a great deal of effort and energy into organizing this conference. She edited the pamphlet containing abstracts of the contributions, and wrote an article for the journal *Étnograficheskoe obozrenie* on the significance of Popov's scientific legacy (see also Gracheva 1992). Her efforts were instrumental in getting the name of this outstanding scholar back into the mainstream of domestic and international scientific interest.

Galina Nikolaevna Gracheva was as tireless as she was persevering. She kept at her work incessantly, always wanting to do more, and do it as precisely as was humanly possible. She had a habit of going back to her earlier findings and statements to rephrase and polish them. This is obvious if we compare her earlier dissertation with her later monograph. Her attitude to fieldwork was the same. One might think that during the many years she worked at the Institute (which today is called the Peter the Great Anthropological and Eth-

nographical Museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences) she had gathered enough material to stay at her desk and process the data. Not Gracheva. She kept taking every opportunity to go out in the field to do more and more research. Undoubtedly this is why she took part in the Russian–French expedition, from which she returned at the end of April. On May 6, 1993, I asked her for a book. She brought it over, and we had a long talk. Then she attended the defense of E. V. Ivanova’s doctoral thesis, and a number of unofficial events. She was buoyant and cheerful.

On May 18th, when some colleagues asked me in the editorial offices of the *Étnograficheskoe obozrenie* if I knew that on May 15, 1993 Gracheva died while collecting material on the Chukch Peninsula, I said that there must be a mistake. There was not. Galina had left us. What took her to the Chukch Peninsula? Fate? Destiny? Or did the forbidding North call her to save her from the harshness of life? If so, it was ruthless and unfair. How much more she could have done! How much we shall miss her!

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ST PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

A. M. RESHETOV

Heimo Lappalainen (1944–1994) A Personal Remembrance

As one of his mourners so aptly put it, “Heimo never did anything fast—except die.” Heimo Lappalainen died on Sunday, May 15, 1994, while taking an after lunch nap. Most shamanic researchers will remember Heimo as someone looked like a “friendly Rasputin,” someone who always had just enough time to help others with their projects, but never enough for his own, someone who was an academic perfectionist, yet iconoclastic, someone who loved a good story, a good song, and, of course, a good party. He will also be remembered as an outstanding and uncompromising documentary film-maker both his first full length documentary, “Chronicle of a Finnish Summer” (1984) and his multi-award winning “Taiga Nomads” (1992) and “Return to Taiga” (1994) best testimony to this, as well as his insight into the human condition, and his artistic genius as well. Nor will any of us who were in Budapest at the ISSR meeting in 1993, forget the video he made of the Tuvan shaman while she healed him. Heimo was a driving force in Visual Anthropology, being one of the founders of the Nordic Anthropological Film Association (NAFA) in the early 1970’s and serving as its General Secretary from 1983 until he died. As one of his NAPA associates expressed it, “NAPA wouldn’t have come to exist if it weren’t for Heimo.”

Heimo was an inveterate traveller, and often told the story of the first time he set out to see the world—at the age of two! “They found me at the railroad station,” he said, with his slightly incredulous smile. It seemed to be a sign of things to come. In later years, Heimo spent more time on the road than he did at home. He claimed it was the only time that he could work on his own projects, and, indeed, I can remember many times when we were on the road together Heimo staying up way beyond the small hours of the morning with his small ancient portable typewriter clacking away, finishing a report that had to be ready two days before we returned to Helsinki.

Heimo was an enigma—I think even to himself. “Now why did I do that?” I heard him ask on many occasions. Yet I am also sure that he considered himself to be a simple and straight-forward man. There were many myths concerning his life, as is only proper, because in many ways he was a mythical being. One of the last myths concerning Heimo, heard in California only days before he died, was that he disappeared in Lithuania! If only that had been true.

My first meeting with Heimo was at a course in shamanic techniques taught by anthropologist Michael Harner in Stockholm in 1984. Heimo was assisting. During lunch, I gathered from Heimo that he had been born in Finland of Inkeri Finnish parents, and his father had been a Finnish-Russian who had been a captain in the Czar’s cavalry. For some reason, which was never exactly clear to me, the family had to flee to Sweden in the political confusion which followed the Second World War (somehow, I got the idea that a row boat was involved, but it may have been a fishing cutter). There Heimo grew up, went to University, and eventually became Chairperson of the Institute of Social Anthropology at the University of Uppsala in the heady days of the late Sixties. Swedish was his mother tongue, but he was fluent in his own special way in Finnish, English, German, French and could get around in probably any language given a few weeks. He returned to Finland with his wife and two sons in 1980 and it was at about that time that his interest in shamanism, both theoretical and practical began to bloom. He made numerous trips to Sapmi (Lapland) where he met Paul-Ander Sima, the Saami film-maker, who became one of the many close friends Heimo had from all walks of life.

Two years later, in 1986, Heimo called me and asked if I would like to lead a course in shamanism in northern Finland. Little did I know that would be a phone call which would change my life. We worked together that time in June, 1986. Then we were invited to Inari, in Finnish Sapmi, for January 1987. It was at that time Heimo took me to meet his old friend Mikkel Gaup, a Saami shaman and healer, of whom Heimo had taken hours of film, yet to be released. Then one summer day in 1990 Heimo told me that we had done twenty-five courses together—and who knows how many thousands of kilometres and hours on the road in his old blue van. We worked together until 1994.

The last time I saw Heimo alive at the double celebration of his wedding with Chris Buckbee and fiftieth birthday. The wedding took place deep in the forests of Finland, in a log house with no electricity, but

filled with candles, light, warmth and the love which seemed to spontaneously generate around Heimo. After the inevitable sauna, I helped him to dress for the occasion. He wore a white embroidered Mexican peasant's fiesta shirt, as well as a machete! To the wedding! Heimo's friend who performed the ceremony ended it with the words, "I now pronounce you man and woman—until you change your minds." Little did any of us dream that in four short months Heimo would make his last journey. But for some reason, Heimo just had to pack eighty years into fifty. The last time I saw Heimo in ordinary reality was at the hospital in Salo, Finland, where I helped his sons to dress him, again in the white embroidered Mexican shirt. We laid him in the casket we had built and decorated for the final ride, lined with reindeer skins. I said good-bye to him as his sons drove him into the sunset.

Heimo was teaching his first solo introductory course in practical shamanism when he died. It turned out to be a very advanced course. As a dear friend and participant at the course said afterwards, "Only Heimo could have taught *that* course." Nonetheless, Heimo was always reticent to practice shamanism actively and to teach shamanic practice, preferring talk about it and how it was/is practiced in the traditional settings, and help others get started. Since his death, I've given much thought to the concept of initiatory shamanic illness, and it has occurred to me that maybe in our culture it is expressed by substance abuse. But then I've also thought about Vilmos Diószegi, Henning Haslund-Christensen, and Knud Rassmussen and how they died so young as well. Maybe they, and Heimo, like other anthropological researchers who know much and are shown much by shamans, were meant to be more active with passing that information on—as *shamans*?

In any case, as much as we miss his physical presence in the Land of the Living, the spirit of Heimo Lappalainen is carrying on. His wife, Chris Buckbee-Lappalainen, is continuing his fieldwork and film work in Tuva, where Heimo was much loved and respected, with the same intensity. And as Peter Crawford, his associate and dear friend in NAFA put it: "Who could imagine Heimo's soul resting in peace?"

Book Reviews

S[ENDENĀVIIN] DULAM. *Darxad böögiin ulamjal* [The tradition of the Darkhat shamans]. Volume I. 1992. Ulaanbaatar: MUIS-iin Xewlel. 200 p.

The Tradition of the Darkhat Shamans is the first volume of a new series of published Mongolian shamanic songs and invocations, as well as legends and stories about famous shamans.¹ The introduction and notes are written in Khalkha Mongolian, but the texts have been put down with the usual scholarly transcription and reflect the peculiarities of the Darkhat dialect. In the introduction the reader learns that succeeding volumes are planned with the following titles: *The Traditions of the Buriat Shamans*, *The Traditions of the Uriankhai Shamans*, and *Texts Related to Shamanism in the Mongolian Script*.

SendenĀviin Dulam, the author of the present book, is a well-known scholar and writer in the Republic of Mongolia, but this study is his first extensive publication on shamanism. His book is based primarily on the field data he and D. Lhagwasüren, a lecturer at the Mongolian State University, collected among the Darkhats in the winter and summer of 1991–1992. Certain invocations and much important information were obtained from Tuwäänää Baljir, an octogenarian female shaman, as was a full account of her life. Dulam also interviewed a number of informants, including a Darkhat teacher named L. Dūūjii, who recounted several legends about the early male and female shamans. The author also consulted the excellent monograph by S. Badamxatan (1965), and articles by Otgonii Pūrew, an outstanding researcher of Darkhat shamanism.

¹ The Darkhat language has three different words for shaman: *böö* 'shaman (in general)', *udgan* 'female shaman', *jāāran* or *jāāran kūin* 'male shaman or shaman of higher rank'.

The book consists of two parts: the first part a detailed introduction, the second a collection of texts—specifically invocations and legends, numbering thirty-one sources altogether.

The Darkhats nomadize in the territory west of the shores of Lake Khöwsgöl, the so-called “corner” of Northern Mongolia. The primary meaning of the ethnonym Darkhat (Written Mongolian *darqad*, Khalkha *darxad*) is ‘blacksmiths’; the final *-d* indicates the plural suffix added to the clan names. Later, this meaning was completed with the meaning ‘privileged ones’. In the seventeenth century, several tribes were settled as border guards at Lake Khöwsgöl and at the foot of the Sayan Mountains. The political and religious leader of the Khalkha Khaganates, Holy Jebjundamba, accorded them certain privileges for their frontier guard services: the Darkhats, as a privileged people, paid their taxes only in wild animal skins. The names of the Darkhat tribes clearly demonstrate that a variety of Mongolian and Turkic tribes from a variety of places were settled in the Khöwsgöl area, as was common during the reign of the Manchu Ching dynasty (1644–1911). They included the Sönids from the Southern Gobi, the Öölds from the Altai and Turkestan regions, the Turkic-speaking Uighur tribe from among the neighbouring Uriankhai people and so forth. There are also some tribes that were settled here in Chinggis’ time in the early 13th century, and in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. Even though the Darkhats now comprise thirty-two tribes of various origins and traditions, their settlements are quite homogeneous in respect of their culture and religious beliefs. As a member of the Hungarian–Mongolian joint expedition studying Western Mongolian dialects and popular culture, I also had the opportunity of visiting the Darkhats and some Darkhat female shamans in 1992 and 1993. We met the same female shaman, Baljir, the 81 year-old resident of Bayandsürkh, from whom Dulam had also collected the significant part of his material in 1991 and 1992. Dulam’s book contains no detailed description of the shaman’s activities. Our own studies on the day- and nighttime rituals of the shaman—the details of divination in the daytime (scapulimancy) and of purification ceremonies by both day and night—will serve as a complement to Dulam’s monograph (see Birtalan 1993).

In the introduction, Dulam discusses such notions as Yisün Xairxan, Nisex doloon böö, *udamtäa* (hereditary shamans), and *udamgii böö* (not hereditary shamans). The Yisün Xairxan are nine most powerful protector spirits, or *ongons* of the Darkhat shamans. They are

anthropomorphic spirits (transformed souls) of deceased male and female shamans who have become protectors of certain places after their deaths, and have such names as Buyant goliin xairxan Sanj böö (Shaman Sanj, Protector of the Buyant River). Another type of spirit is the Nisex doloon böö, anyone of “the seven flying shamans,” such as Agariin xairxanii xüü Arildii Bürged böö (The Son of Agariin xairxan, Shaman Arildii Eagle). Dulam also gives a detailed catalogue of *oboos*, open-air sacred altars in the Darkhat territory: the Täägiin tawan owoo (the five *oboos* of the forested mountains), and the Taliin arwan gurwan owoo (the thirteen *oboos* of the grassland).

The author also presents some life histories of living (e.g. Baljir) and legendary shamans. In the introduction, he gives the detailed story of the first years of the studies and shamanizing of Baljir—an *udamtäa böö* (a shaman, who inherited the shamanic power from her relatives). Among the legends there are also some fascinating stories about the *udamgii böö* (shamans who were given the power by the *ongons*) (e.g. the story of *Delden Mend jäaran* on pages 129–133).

Dulam’s accounts of evocations of the shaman’s protector spirit, for instance of *Ojuurää yuum* (as performed by Baljir; on pages 49 and 57) and his explanatory notes leave no doubt as to the importance of this rite. *Ojuurää yuum* is one of the most important of the shaman’s spirits. In the Darkhat language, *ojuurää* means ‘origin, stem’ (cf. Written Mongolian *ijayur*, Khalkha *yajguur*); as a rule, this is the spirit who selects the future shaman.

Some thirty years ago, the outstanding Hungarian ethnographer, Vilmos Diószegi, did research in the Darkhat territories. His excellent articles contain detailed descriptions of several aspects of Darkhat and Tuva shamanism, and would certainly warrant inclusion in Dulam’s bibliography (Diószegi 1961, 1962, 1963, and also see his bibliography 1998: xxxi–xxxvi).

Both Dulam and Diószegi discuss the problem of lamaized and non-lamaized shamans, *šarlsn böö* (yellow shaman), and *xar böö* (black shaman). Both authors conclude that Darkhat shamanism hardly shows any traces of Buddhist influence. In 1992, we ourselves learned from the shaman Baljir that she never used yellow ribbons for the home-protecting spirit images that she made for her clients because yellow was the color of the lamas. However, there are some lamaist deities among those invoked by the Darkhat shamans, as Dulam also points

out: Gombo Maxagala and Ĵamsran (from Tibetan mGon-po, Sanskrit Mahākāla and Tibetan IČam-sriñ).

The Tradition of the Darkhat Shamans is a most useful source publication with well-prepared notes to the texts. Readers will very much be looking forward to the publication of the next volumes in the series as well.

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BUDAPEST

ÁGNES BIRTALAN

WALTHER HEISSIG. *Schamanen und Geisterbeschwörer in der östlichen Mongolei. Gesammelte Aufsätze*. Studies in Oriental Religions 24. Edited by Walther Heissig and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit. ISBN 3-447031-97-2. Otto Harrassowitz: Wiesbaden 1992. XI, 214 S. 23 Abb. DM 228.

Walter Heissig, the doyen of Mongolists (he turned eighty on the 5th of December, 1993), has been studying and writing about the Mongols, especially shamanism among the Eastern Mongols, for much of his fifty years as a scholar. His course was set in the 1940s when he first encountered the Mongols of Inner Mongolia in the course of the very first of the series of field trips to China which he is still making today.

During his field trips, Heissig collected material that reflects his two main interests: the literature of the Mongols, especially their epic poetry, and their folk religion. In fact, the two topics intersect and overlap in many ways, for religious allusions are a significant element of epic folk poetry. One cannot really understand Mongolian epic poetry without some knowledge of Mongolian folk religion. It is thus, difficult to say which of Heissig's works contribute to our understanding of folk religion and shamanism, and which to Mongolian folk epic poetry.

It could not have been easy for the author to decide which of his works to include in this collection. For my own part, I wish he had included more.

At those of Heissig's university lectures that I have had occasion to attend he always began with an analysis of some Mongolian text, and related his more general observations and explanations to this interpretation and analysis. We find the same method at work in the studies published in this volume. Chronologically, the first paper is "Schamanen und Geistesbeschwörer im Kuriye-Banner." Published in 1944 and the fruit of his first research trip, it is in this paper that Heissig establishes the fundamental facts tells us about East Mongolian shamans. Using texts to illustrate his points, he showed their connections with the Manchus demonstrated and the impact of Chinese culture on Mongolian shamanism, as well as the striking influence of Buddhism. His investigation of external influences included also the costumes and tools of the shamans. We can only welcome the fact that this paper of Heissig's often cited since its publication, has been made available again in this volume complete with, illustrations and facsimiles of Mongolian texts. The second paper, "Invocation of a Female Shaman,"

is related to this first, since it is about the song of a woman shaman from Kūriye-banner.

Heissig's third paper, "A Mongolian Source on the Lamaist Suppression of Shamanism," has also counted as one of primary importance for decades. In this paper, his analysis of Mongolian sources on Neyiči-toyin, one of the most outstanding of the Mongol Buddhist missionaries, serves as the basis for a discussion of the history of the conflict between shamans and lamas. Another detailed study by Heissig (1953 and 1954) on Neyiči-toyin has not been included in the present volume. "Zur Frage der Homogenität des ost-mongolischen Schamanismus," is a thorough comparative study of shaman songs collected in Eastern Mongolia. These songs took on a lamaist guise as a result of intense Buddhist repression. Heissig contends that when their Buddhist veneer is peeled away, these songs are seen to be parts of a common tradition; they are not simply discrete songs performed in a trance.

Taking the texts of the songs as his basis, Heissig compares the eastern Mongolian rites for exorcising illnesses with the similar rites of other Mongolian peoples in his paper on "The Banishing of Illness into Effigies in Mongolia."

He writes on a closely related topic in "Shaman Myth and Clan-Epic" and "Schamanenlegenden und ihr historischer Hintergrund." In the former, he focuses on the legends of the Mongols, which often portray the ancestors of clans and ethnic groups as shamans. This tradition is closely associated with the cult of mountains and can be found also among the immediate and more distant neighbors of the Mongols. To the above examples, I would add the myths of the Yakut shaman father-ancestor, which were interrelated with the myths of the Mongols in the past. The bird-shaped, heavenly girl who descended from the sky to bathe in a pond is widely known as the mother-ancestor of the Manchus. The figure of an owl who takes care of her nestling is especially interesting because she appears in a similar role not only in the myths of Siberian peoples, e.g., the Tungus, but also in archaic Hungarian folk songs, which certainly proves its early origin.

The latter paper deals with the historical basis of certain shamanic legends of the Eastern Mongolian clans, relying for evidence on the shaman-ancestor traditions of the shamans, that is, the legends of where the helping shaman-ancestors had come from and what their relationship to the typical personalities of the epics was. Heissig's research extends to show how all of these cultural concepts have become

embedded in the culture of the neighboring Chinese peoples and in the Buddhist folk religion.

The last paper in the volume is entitled "Persecution and Continuation: Some Recent Inner Mongolian Shamanist Traditions." Unlike the others, it is published here for the first time; it was read in May 1990 in Helsinki at the Regional Conference on Circumpolar and Northern Religion organized by the International Association of the History of Religions. This paper provides an excellent summation of the problems Heissig raised in his previous papers, focusing as it does on the great tradition of the shamanic myths, and the influence that the Buddhist diffusion and the political suppressions of the recent past have had on folk religion. A facsimile of a series of satirical drawings illustrate the latter point.

This new volume of the *Studies in Oriental Religions* series is likely to be of interests to scholars of both shamanism and oriental religions. One would like to see a number similar volumes. It would be possible to compile at least one more volume from what Professor Heissig himself has written. For example, I would like to see "New Material on East Mongolian Shamanism," "Ein Text zum Kult des Sülde Tengri," and "A Note on the Custom of Seterlekü" published in such an anthology. And perhaps in that future volume, the original places of publication will be given a more prominent place.

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BUDAPEST

CATHERINE ÚRAY-KŐHALMI

ANNA-LEENA SIIKALA. *Suomalainen šamanismi – mielikuvien historiaa* [Finnish shamanism. A history of ideas]. ISBN 9 51 717704 6. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura: Helsinki 1992. 359 p. FIM 250.

Finnish studies on shamanism are surprisingly few and at the same time astonishingly wide in their perspectives. Julius Krohn and Uno Harva have described the traditional beliefs of Uralic and Altaic peoples, speaking but only not very often on shamanism proper. According to Martti Haavio the main protagonist of traditional epic, Väinämöinen, was in fact a “sage” (that is, a shaman). Juha Pentikäinen has described the shamanic background of the *Kalevala*. Other scholars tried to explain within the system of shamanism the Karelian rock paintings. Still, hitherto the Finnish “shamanism” was not described in a monographic form.

Professor Anna-Leena Siikala combines in this book two of her major research topics: Finnish folk literature and comparative religion, including shamanism. Her book was written by 1985, and indeed it is the best introduction to modern treatment of the topic. Clear presentation, concise research history, rich references and illustrations make the book a very useful university introduction to traditional Finnish folk poetry. Siikala does not present only particular school of research, nor a bluffing interpretation of shamanism. Her aim was to give a summarizing work: end of previous and a new start to further studies. Because of the clarity of the research methodology, she has presented a good portrait of traditional Finnish lore.

The book consists of about 15 chapters, grouped into four or five themes. After a short introduction the first theme is about “history of shamanism.” It is in fact a Finnish research history, quoting the “classical masters” of Finnish folkloristics. The next chapter is about world view of the “northern” shamanism, with some hints to an ecological understanding of the phenomenon. Being herself a folklorist, she deals with passion with problems of genres in folk literature. In the next part of her book, entitled “the power of the word,” she describes ritual poetry, first of all the charms and spells. In a twin grouping of chapters the “Otherworld” is described from two points of view. The concepts on the dead can be traced back by data of archaeology and comparative ethnology. According to Siikala, there is a considerable difference between the “near” and “far” concerning dead persons and

their topography. Places banned, or dwelt by the dead or ghosts were called in traditional Finnish lore as Pohjola. The word has two main meanings: (1) ‘North,’ and (2) ‘Underworld.’ Charms and spells have particular topography too, which has been intensively studied by Finnish scholars. Two groups of “beings” belong to the “Otherworld”: helping spirits (persons or even gods) of the wise persons, and the helping animals (including their spirits and souls as well). The last major part of the book has the title “Knowledge in shamanism.” Mythic ideas, guardian spirits (e.g. *haltija*), magicians and charms, accessories of healers, journeys to the other world and their various literary forms are dealt with. The book ends with a chapter-long summary, entitled “Conclusions.” Myth, culture, history, ritual poetry are the keywords there. The final question is about the transformation of shamans into healers, wise men and magicians.

In one word: all the chapters could be described in special monograph.

Siikala’s book gives a full picture on Finnish folklore and folklore research. Among comparative remarks she uses abundant Scandinavian source material (including Old Icelandic data). Siberian and Baltic parallels are less frequent. One of the great benefit in her book is the actual information on discussions among Finnish folklorists of today. Siikala’s position is always clear, but not aggressive at all. When she touches a problem, she could choose between “religious” and “literary” treatment. In her earlier book on Paleosiberian shamanism, she followed the first trend, especially with the “role taking” aspects gained from Lauri Honko. It seems to me that in the present book she is more in accordance with her first master, Matti Kuusi, using all his skills for describing genres and texts in Finnish traditional poetry.

This is the reason why her book is not only an important achievement in “shamanistic studies,” but nonetheless a concise report on current Finnish folk poetry studies. Because of both aspects there must be an English translation of the book.

There is hardly anything to criticize in the book. I would think that recent Baltic mythology studies (first of all by Veliu) would deserve more attention. In some cases Scandinavian illustrations were taken from secondary (summarizing) publications, and not from primary sources. There could be also other interpretation too. Since the book is written in elegant Finnish, it is difficult to “translate” it into English. Not only the very idiomatic terms (*loitsu*, *Pohjola*, *tietäjä*, *vainaja*

etc.) defy that attempt, but the whole terminology in the book is very Finnish. It is the reason of its success at home, but one wonders, how the coming English translation will master the equivalents to *haltija* or *tuonpuoleiset*, *hiitola* etc.*

BUDAPEST

VILMOS VOIGT

News and Notes

REPORT ON THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR SHAMANISTIC RESEARCH, JULY 11–17, 1993, BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

The International Society for Shamanistic Research assembles every two years in order to disseminate papers about the spirit world, and the *shamen* and *sha-women* who preside over it. In 1991, in Seoul, their first theme was “Regional Shamanism.” In 1993, from July 11–17th, the conference discussed “Shamanism and the Performing Arts.” Not that we spent all the time listening to papers or watching videos. There was, for instance, the incredible banquet at the Gellért Hotel, as well as a number of other worthwhile receptions and performances. On one evening came the Seven Wine Mayors to preside over a gigantic wine-tasting session in the great hall of the Kulturinnov. The wines were superb, but were drunk rather than tasted, and it was fortunate the reception following was laid



Fig. 1. The opening plenary session of the conference. From left to right: Åke Hultkrantz, András Kelemen (Hungarian Secretary of State), Mihály Hoppál, Juha Pentikäinen and Tae-gon Kim.

* The book was published in English translation in 2002, see Anna-Leena Siikala. *Mythic Images and Shamanism. A Perspective on Kalevala Poetry*. FF Communications No. 280. Helsinki: Soumalainen Tiedeakatemia/Academia Scientiarium Fennica. *The Editors*.

out on the landing adjacent to the said hall. Also much applauded was the farewell dinner at the Open-Air Museum at Szentendre. Then there was a Norwegian group performing “shamanic music and drumming” very quietly with the rapport of the audience; and then another trio-full of bounce-played instruments which looked like bits of stuff they’d picked up on the way to the hall. They were all very musical and it was mind expanding! To polish off the conference we had a dance performance by Ronald Chavers who depicted a number of animal transformations of the shaman, a performance that lasted some two hours. This incredible show of enlightened energy was interspersed by slide-shows illustrating the various images of horses throughout the ages. This performance left me feeling as if I, too, had been galloping awhile.

The real business of the conference between Monday and Friday fell under a number of plenary sessions which were loosely defined under the various forms of shamanic performance. The opening ceremony was initiated with an address by András Kelemen, Secretary of State, and concluded with a talk: “Shamanism in Mythology” by Åke Hulkrantz (Fig. 1). Monday was to do with the “Performing Arts” proper; though, here, an indication of the difference between everyday theatre and ritual performances would have been useful. Among the first speakers, Tae-gon Kim spoke on shamanic performance and the “arche patterns” which inform this; patterns which embody the cosmic rhythms whose vehicle is the “eternal cycle.” Despite diagrams, this lecture was difficult to follow because of the inadequate loudspeakers, and the tricky acoustics of the hall. Per-Arne Berglie’s account of the trance performances of Tibetan spirit mediums included observations that the healing part of the séance he watched was the most theatrical, while audience participation in such séances is decidedly sporadic—a phenomenon which poses the question of whether or not people become bored by being over-exposed to spirits. Daniel A. Kister’s paper on Korean shaman drama is a beautifully written account of a shamanic *kut* designed to bring peace to unsettled souls—in this case, the son; drowned on his first fishing trip—and the bereaved family. In the touching action of this rite can be seen all the basic elements of drama, even the *dénouement* of our own theatre, as a seven-looped white cloth is unfurled and then untied. Each of the loops symbolized the bitter frustration and regret in the hearts of the participants. Kister constantly invokes Antonin Artaud with a view to showing how close is ritual to theatre as we know it. But it should always be borne in mind that the ritual Kister describes is meant to

work “directly,” to work because of *belief*. The action of theatre works “indirectly” because of the plot: a framed action that engenders *make-believe*. That is makes you believe in that one plot happening before your very eyes. And while the effects of ritual spill into life, the effects on the stage must remain separate from it.

Ruth-Inge Heinze’s comparisons of the “ineffable” in Singapore Chinese and Thai Ritual was a paper that—like Tae-gon Kim’s own offering—overran the conference’s stipulated time-limit by a good many minutes. In this case the pot was not going to budge the kettle, and the presiding Tae-gon Kim’s attempts to dislodge the speaker were unavailing. The problem here is that the audience’s attention is drawn to the tussle rather than the talk. On the other hand an academic who has spent much in time and money, wants to get his message across. An answer to the problem might be to have a series of pre-arranged timeslots and places where those interested auditors can go later to hear the end of the talk. Obviously it is also essential for speakers to have copies of their talk ready to give out. My own paper on Hamlet’s shamanic origins also ran into trouble because it was over long. Not having the courage of Heinze, I quitted the rostrum fairly promptly after a reminder—but then I knew my whole talk could be found in the abstracts (Mihály Hoppál and Pál Páricsy [eds.] *Shamanism and Performing Arts. Papers and Abstracts for the 2nd Conference of the International Society for Shamanistic Research, July 11–17, 1993, Budapest, Hungary*. Budapest: Ethnographic Institute, Hungarian Academy of Sciences). Later that evening all the hassle was forgotten amidst the sheer gourmet variety of dishes at the Gellért Hotel. I must confess to this being one of the best banquets I have ever partaken of.

Tuesday saw papers delivered on “Shamanic Music” in the morning, and on “Shamanic Song and Singing” in the afternoon. During the first session Liu Guiteng gave a well-illustrated talk on shamanic instruments. In this he cites a number of misleading definitions of shamanism and the confusion they cause. The term *wu*, for example, appears to be part of the non-definition which takes in all Chinese folk beliefs. But is it such a useless word? Eliade uses it to denote the spinning *wu*-priestesses who finally evolve into similarly whirling *wu-tans* in Peking Opera, where their shamanic origins have been so deftly uncovered by E. T. Kirby. Takefusa Sasamori’s musical expertise is demonstrated in his analysis of the sutras sung by the blind female shamans known as *itako*. One would be interested to know whether their



Fig. 2. The General Assembly. Laurel Kendall stands in the middle, Åke Hultkrantz sits on her left. Photo: Mihály Hoppál, 1993.

tradition connects with Noh drama at any point. It is disturbing to hear these diviners and spirit intermediaries are slowly dying out. Elisabeth Wetzel's notes on the effects of music on pregnant women and unborn children concluded there are effects on both the pre-natal and post-natal development of the child. These findings obviously go far beyond the pistol shots that the foetus—of old—rapidly learned to ignore.

The afternoon session included Neil Gunson's paper on the shamanic elements in Polynesian song cycles. In these the old remnants of passage rites can be discerned in the fact that the stories are sung at times of birth and coming of age. Gunson also notes the universal tree symbolism which links Polynesia, Scandinavia, South Asia and Central America. Margarita Khrushcheva's paper on magic speech intoning was again one of those trenchant papers on rhythmic/recitative-declamatory song of the Finno-Ugric Udmurts which would have fared better with musical illustration. Again, one would be interested to know whether there are any connections between these utterances and those of "sing-spiel" in 17th and 18th century opera. Yes, I would like to know more—but how? Surely—as in the Seoul volume of abstracts—the addresses of the contributors could be inserted directly under each abstract. The afternoon saw also the first of the videos: Romano Mastromattei's "Tamang Shamaness' Séance." Mastromattei was well aware that the monotonous sequence of drumming as the shamaness worked herself into trance was over long. He cut much of

this, and thus bared the more clearly, the rather grisly human drama that had occasioned the need of a séance. Takako Yamada's paper describing how the Ladakhi shaman proves his oneness with the local gods by his performance is one of those gifts of well-documented ritual that the scholar can turn to time and again for those authenticising details which make it possible to see the glimmerings of a universal pattern of shamanic behaviour through all the particular rituals carried out. In other words the Ladakhi shaman appears to be perfectly universal in the pattern of his performance, he recites Buddhist sutras, sniffs the aromatic juniper to help himself into trance, and becomes the god himself with the donning of his head-dress. Like many shamans he sucks the disease out of patients. One needs these firm bodies of archetypal constants. Josiane Cauquelin's detailed look at the mode of Puyuma spirit-shaman dialogue revealed conventions which are decidedly esoteric, limiting the dialogue to one between only shamans and spirits. Films, in the evening dwelt on trips to the exotic world or the Nanais on the Amur River, and to the Amarnath Cave in Kashmir. Juha Pentikäinen and Bo Sommarström respectively, were the lucky anthropologists able to bring us these images.

Wednesday: Veikko Anttonen lectured on the shaman as technician of the sacred: a superhuman being who is able to cut across the boundary lines of what Anttonen describes as "the separate entities of the phenomenal world"; as shaman he knows nothing of dogmas and philosophies. Also with a bent for definitions is Vilmos Voigt's paper on "sha-women" and "sha-men," it is a salutary reminder that both these terms should be used if it is apposite to the study in question. Salutary, too; is Éva Pócs' observations on the cult of the dead, and the magic in European shamanism and witchcraft, much of which is connected with agrarian fertility. Historians of religion outside the shamanic camp will thus do well to remember that shamanism is not exclusive to hunting communities. More provoking argument was on the way in Roberte N. Hamayon's paper that questioned Eliadian enshrined terms like "trance" and "ecstasy." She suggested that such descriptions hindered anthropological analysis by "devil-izing" or "medicalizing" the cultural phenomenon of shamanism. The paper provoked Åke Hultkrantz to staging a gallant rally in defence of Eliade's traditional bastions. These exchanges did much for the morale and tone of the conference. Well done both! Diana Riboli's paper on the Chepang shaman was another of the salient papers of the conference, dealing out as it does, some extremely interest-

ing facts about this little known and threatened people. What with the drum as an *alter ego*, and the Chepang's possession of a complex and *complete* language for communicating with the gods, it would seem essential that one should have got to the video Riboli promises in her paper. I heard no further mention of this, however—a maddening sense of loss. The role of the fool in shamanic rites in Nepal and Siberia was tackled by Anne de Sales. Her paper stitches in more patches of the counterpane first begun by Otto von Sadvovsky's analysis of the linguistic ties between the ritual communities of Siberia and California.

In the afternoon, Bill Brunton's talk on the performative aspects of the Kootenai Spirit Lodge Assembly was well-received as a piece of pure objective reporting. The deliberate estrangement of parts of the wilderness by the Indians, and the calling up of the spirits from these locations, is just part of the strange Kootenai spiritualism described. By now the various sub-themes of the conference had got a fair way from the original "Shamanism and the Performing Arts." Thus, the morning talks fell under the heading of "Shamanism and Religion"; those of the afternoon: "Shamanic Healing." Films on Sibe-Manchu music and prayer filmed by Giovanni Sary, and Cauquelin's footage of shamanism in Taiwan were probably excellent, but, I fancy, the films—one of which—I must have freaked out in, showed repeated scenes of the sacrifice of a squealing pig whose tones all too accurately communicated its desperation as it felt its life pulsing out simultaneously with the blood from its slit throat. The *permission* given by the beast for its own slaughter, the trick of obtaining this, was blandly macabre.

Thursday morning was the time for "Dance in Shamanism": back once more on track! Theresa Ki-ja Kim's talk endeavoured to link cosmogonic song with shamanic dancing patterns. This was in line with a number of other papers which either explicitly or implicitly suggest that the universal magic of ritual, theatre and dance performances owes its being to the cosmogony; the first performance that was the creation, a creation that is still powering re-creations. Tina Hamrin's talk on the dancing religion of Hawaii remains on track while summarizing the beginnings of a cult whose therapeutic dancing seems to eschew trance, and rather relies on hypnagogia, a form of relaxed consciousness. A more modern shamanic slant comes in Kyoko Fuchigami's paper on exorcism as practiced in Korean Christianity. It is a missive that could well be scanned by Church-of-England clergy whose occasional attempts to exorcise devils have not always been the most suc-

cessful. Fuchigami reports that the Reverend K. of the Baptist Church in Seoul interrogates the spirits who speak through the mouth of those possessed, giving details of their life and death, and the reasons for taking possession. The Reverend K. then browbeats the spirits by shouting, making those possessed fall backwards; an ultimate movement which signals the malevolent spirit has departed.

In the afternoon came Carla Corradi Musi's report on the "shaman as actor" in the Finno-Ugric territories. This was an interesting talk, though one which I felt, blurs the line which separates ritual and art in ways which are unwise, thus: "The magic technique which gives rise to the collective pathos of the shamanic séance is art, in so far as art is one magic technique." Again: "The performance of the shaman on the stage is that of an actor, whose 'fiction' is the representation of a special experience, the outcome of which is not foreseeable." In contrast, drama's main principle: the plot, has a beginning, middle and end, and the latter *is* foreseeable. Among the other papers of interest was Mihály Hoppál's paper on performance in Siberian rock art. In the Çatal Hüyük excavations in Southern Turkey, archaeologists have come upon a number of hand-prints in the caves, some showing that fingers have been amputated. Like megalithic monuments, surely the only approach as to their function is by building up a picture of the forms of ritual they would have accommodated. The absent fingers tell their own ritual story, just as the countless animals depicted speak for some depiction of an *illud tempus*, a time of origins. Two extra special films on this day were Laurel Kendall's "An Initiation *Kut* for a Korean Shaman," and Mihály Hoppál and Marcell Jankovics' "The Shaman in Eurasia." The first depicted the unsuccessful attempts of a young aspiring shamaness to get her spirits and initiatory act together. The second is a collection of images and commentary which constitute an excellent introduction to shamanism. This latter film—as far as cutting is concerned—is a model that video-film enthusiasts would do well to ponder.

The final General Meeting of the conference went with a swing. The first significant item was the choice of a venue for the next ISSR conference in 1995. Among others, there were offers from America; a future one from France, and one from the Yakuts. The last venue was finally accepted. However, whatever venue would have been decided, someone would have been put out. There was thus a certain amount of feeling among the Americans that it was their turn to host a conference; while, among the Eastern European members there was desolation at

the thought they would simply not have the funds to fly long distances into Russia, put up at hotels, etc. Again there was a certain entrenching of positions when it came to voting for a new president of the ISSR. Here, one could complain that those responsible for the agenda might have foreseen what could be friction at this juncture of the proceedings. But it was easy to be wise afterwards. The main thing is that a compromise was sensibly arrived at after the conference, and we presently have two presidents looking after manageable areas of the globe. As for the venue: there was an after-swing away from Siberia to Nara University in Japan. The move will no doubt content those who objected to the almost total lack of media at the Yakut Conference a year or so back; on the other hand this venue is scarcely convenient for the East European scholars. What is needed is a schema or rota which—drawn up by an *ad hoc* committee—could plot a rationalized series of venues giving, as it were, everyone a turn. That is anticipating “they” will take on all problems that arranging a conference incurs. Thanks in any case to our Hungarian hosts for taking on the business of making us feel at home in their impressive capital; and for keeping up the momentum of intellectual debate that at no point seemed to slacken. This last is presumably what a successful conference *must* maintain.

CYPRUS

JOHN A. DOOLEY

JOHN DOOLEY came to his research in shamanism through his earlier studies in theatre at Lancaster University in the late seventies. Since this time he taught Drama and the Arts in many parts of the world. He also published a number of articles on theatre and shamanism. At present he is retired and living with his family in S.W. France, where he is working on a book which compares and contrasts the various healing elements of passage rites and their parallels in works of literature and drama.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR SHAMANISTIC RESEARCH, HELD 16 JULY 1993, AT THE KULTURINNOV, BUDAPEST

Chair: Prof. Åke Hultkrantz (Sweden).

1. The agenda was read by Mihály Hoppál (Hungary): (a) to establish the ISSR (b) to discuss the publication of a journal (c) to discuss the place of the next conference (d) to elect a council.

2. Mihály Hoppál referred to the proposed statutes of the ISSR which were previously distributed with the *ISSR Newsletter*. He read statutes 1 and 2, then asked members for objections, proposals and improvements to be submitted in written form.

3. The publication of a journal was considered.

3.1. Anna-Leena Siikala (Finland) noted that a journal with the title *Shaman* had been produced in Budapest, but that this was not yet recognized as the ISSR journal. Proposal: That *Shaman* be accepted as the ISSR journal. Passed *unanimously*.

3.2. The format of the journal was considered. Ádám Molnár (Hungary), as co-editor and publisher, proposed a twice annual publication of 96 pages or more. The journal will need at least 120 subscribers if it is not to make a loss; the first two editions will run a deficit and Ádám Molnár can only guarantee the publication of two editions. Manabu Waida (Canada) pointed out the journal has to compete with comparable publications. He considered it should be paid for from the subscription fee; a separate payment would make it too expensive. Mihály Hoppál thought the journal should include information previously carried in the *ISSR Newsletter*.

3.3. Considerable discussion centred around subscription fees, with several proposals that fees should be set differently for different countries and for professional members and students. There was general agreement that free or discounted copies should be distributed to those who cannot afford to pay a subscription. Agreement was reached that the subscription fee to the ISSR should include the journal, and that student fees should be set.

3.4. A proposal was tabled by Keith Howard (UK) to combine membership and journal subscriptions and to set a reduced rate for students.

Proposal: That the subscription to the ISSR cover the subscription to the journal; that the annual subscription, for individuals and institutions, be \$30, and that the annual subscription for students be \$15.

Passed by a majority.

4. The venue for the next conference was considered.

4.1. It was suggested that the next conference take place in California. Ruth-Inge Heinze (USA) pointed out this would be expensive, at around \$250 for five days, though lodging and venue were all available. She asked for a large deposit to be made now if preparations were to be begun.

4.2. It was suggested that the next conference take place in Paris. Roberte N. Hamayon (France) reported that she and her colleagues would be happy to welcome the ISSR, but would prefer to offer Paris as a 1997 venue.

4.3. Wendy Pond (New Zealand) reported that bi-annual conferences were too expensive; it would be better to hold conferences every 4 years. László Kürti (USA/Hungary) commented that scholars from the CIS and the former east Europe cannot afford to go to California. Anna-Leena Siikala indicated that Finland was also a possible venue, but would be better if organized in 1997 or 1999. Yakutsk was proposed as an alternative venue. Laurel Kendall (USA) noted that this meant ISSR will meet 3 times in Europe and 1 time in Asia in the coming years.

4.4. Colleagues from Yakutsk formally offered to host the 1995 ISSR conference.

4.5. After further discussion, Keith Howard tabled a motion either to accept Yakutsk or to refer the choice of venue to the elected ISSR council. Proposal: *A*: That Yakutsk be accepted as the venue for the 1995 ISSR conference; or *B*: That the choice of venue for 1995 be referred to the ISSR's elected scientific committee, and that they should continue to consult with Berkeley, Finland, Paris, and Yakutsk. *25 votes were cast for option A and 7 votes for option B. Option A was thus carried.*

5. The constitution of an ISSR council was considered.

5.1. Members were given a printed form on which positions on the council were marked. Romano Mastromattei (Italy) and Anna-Leena Siikala were appointed to count votes.

5.2. Yee-heum Yoon (Korea) stated there was a need to establish the relationship between the ISSR President and the next ISSR conference organizer. Theresa Ki-ja Kim (USA) queried what role the

“scientific committee” had and why its membership appeared to be already chosen. Mihály Hoppál responded that the committee had been “acting” until an election could take place. There were several queries as to why names were to be printed alongside some positions on the election form. Roberte N. Hamayon commented that the ISSR would really start here in Budapest, 1993. Tae-gon Kim (Korea) countered that Seoul hosted the ISSR founding conference back in 1991. Mihály Hoppál asked if the ISSR needed elected officers; the general assembly agreed that it did.

5.3. There was some discussion of the role of regional offices. Mihály Hoppál pointed out that the Eastern Office under Tae-gon Kim had worked well, and the Western Office had been essential as the organizational headquarters for the 1993 conference. There was agreement that the Northern Office had been ineffective. Roberto Mastromattei proposed Anna-Leena Siikala be elected to head the Northern Office. Wendy Pond suggested the need for an Oceanic Office. Mihály Hoppál pointed out there was already a Central Asian Office. Manabu Waida suggested the Western and Northern Offices should be combined, and that only one office should serve all of America. Jim Berenholtz (USA) suggested there should be an African Office. Piers Vitebsky (UK) considered this should be put on hold given that we had no representation from Africa. He asked what function the Offices had; Mihály Hoppál replied that they helped organize conferences. Tae-gon Kim pointed out that the East has shamanism, the West has scholars. He thought that too many Offices would lead to too much regionalization, and asked for the maintenance of just an Eastern Office and a Western Office.

5.4. Roberto Mastromattei suggested the scientific committee be expanded to 7 members. Laurel Kendall considered an evolving committee could organize conferences, and this would be more appropriate than regional offices. Several members considered the offices could or should be disbanded. *Proposal*: Four options were tabled for voting on: *A*: Regional offices should be retained, and the scientific committee should be expanded to 7 members. *B*: Offices should be disbanded, replaced by a larger scientific committee with clear regional membership. *C*: Offices should be disbanded, replaced by a larger scientific committee and regional planning committees. *D*: The Eastern Office and Western Office should be retained together with an extended scientific committee. *Option D was accepted with 27 votes; option C received 14 votes; options A and B were abandoned.*

6. Elections were made to the ISSR Council.

6.1. There was discussion about the role of an ISSR president. Tae-gon Kim asked that there be an Eastern president and a Western president. Manabu Waida thought that, since the ISSR is still being established, no president was needed. Anna-Leena Siikala and Roberte N. Hamayon pointed out that there must be an elected president, secretary, and treasurer to conduct the day-to-day business of the organization. David Kister (Korea) suggested there be a president and a vice president. Anna-Leena Siikala asked that elections should be held at each general assembly. It was finally decided to elect 2 co-presidents.

6.2. Mihály Hoppál and Tae-gon Kim were duly elected co-presidents by clear majority.

6.3. Ádám Molnár was elected secretary. There was no other candidate.

6.4. No treasurer was elected. It was agreed that a suitable person be chosen by Mihály Hoppál and Ádám Molnár.

6.5. 18 names were put forward for nomination to the scientific committee. Each member present at the general assembly was asked to nominate 7. The nominations were counted by Keith Howard, Anna-Leena Siikala, Romano Mastromattei and Yee-heum Yoon. In the event, 8 committee members were elected, since two tied in 7th place with an equal number of votes. The scientific committee duly elected is: Manabu Waida (Canada), Anna-Leena Siikala (Finland), Roberte N. Hamayon (Paris), Giovanni Sary (Italy), Ulla Johansen (Germany), V. N. Basilov (Russia), Piers Vitebsky (UK), Laurel Kendall (USA).

7. The ISSR has established a prize for scholarship on shamanism. This is to be awarded to a scholar whose work has created a legacy for fine data collection and ethnography. This prize was presented to Åke Hultkrantz.

London, 19 July 1993.

KEITH HOWARD