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*Front cover: Tamang shaman in his ritual dress.
Photograph by Dagmar Eigner*

Photograph from Dagmar Eigner, *Spirit Possession Rituals in Central Nepal*

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Mircea Eliade and the Shamanic Story

MICHAEL BERMAN

LONDON

As well as writing on the history of religion, myth, ritual studies, religious symbolism and yoga, Mircea Eliade also wrote what could be regarded as the first shamanic novel, The Forbidden Forest, which was translated into English in the late 1970s. This pre-dated Castaneda's efforts and all the novelists who post-dated him such as Lynn Andrews and Mary Summer Rain's books about her blind teacher 'No-Eyes'. Eliade wrote shamanic stories too. A shamanic story can be defined as a story that has either been based on or inspired by a shamanic journey or one that contains a number of the elements typical of such a journey. This paper offers an appreciation of two of those tales—A Great Man and With the Gypsies.

Despite the criticism now levelled against Eliade's work such as for his tendency "to fit evidence into a pre-existing theological and evolutionary schema" (Harvey 2003: 7–8), for the way in which he placed undue emphasis on the shaman's journeys to the Upper World and thereby demonized the Lower World by opposing celestial to infernal, for his assumption "that only a prototypical form of shamanism located in remote pre-historical antiquity was genuine" (Humphrey 1994: 191), for his mistaken belief that a visionary experience of death and rebirth was intrinsic to the making of a shaman, despite the fact that it was not even universal in that tract of Siberia in which it was recorded,¹ for the dubious nature of some of his research and the prejudices that come through in his pronouncements (on the use of 'narcotics' for example, which he regarded as a degenerate form of shamanism), without him the current interest in the subject would probably never have materialized. Without him there would have been no Michael Harner and without Harner (at that point in time an academic) there would probably

¹ See Hutton 2001: 74.

have been no Carlos Castaneda (whose doctoral thesis was actually examined by Harner).

As for the claim that Eliade was anti-Semitic, in fact it could well be unjust in that although he “temporarily championed the Legion of the Archangel Michael there is a distinction between an involvement with the politics of the right and anti-Semitism, and a brief period of political activity does not necessarily indicate either a clear or a life-long ideological commitment” (Rennie 2006: 8).

So instead of dismissing Eliade out of hand as someone who merely popularised various ethnographic reports on shamanism written by others, by casting a critical eye over what he has to say and by being selective, there is still a lot of value to be found in his writing as hopefully this article will show.

One of the many things Eliade has been accused of is of being a library scholar, in that his main concern is that “everything he says should be based on what someone else has put in a book. The printed word is authority enough and since there are enough oddities around to write almost everything, it is always quite easy to find ‘authoritative support’ for one’s own opinions” (Leach 2006: 281–282). Such criticism, however, is surely unfair as Eliade was not an anthropologist and field work was never part of his remit. Moreover, contrary to what researchers may claim to do, taking a somewhat cynical view, it often turns out to be little more than to look for quotes from reputable sources to support a case already decided upon in advance of the actual work to be carried out on the project.

Eliade’s reputation has taken quite a knock in recent years but Rennie’s *Reconstructing Eliade: Making Sense of Religion*, based on his doctoral work, is worth reading in this respect as it helps to redress the balance and place his contribution to the study of shamanism in perspective.

In this respect, it is also worth pointing out that although his seminal work, *Shamanism and Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, was not received as a genuine scholarly work when it was first published in 1951, in fact it had never intended to be. Eliade himself makes this clear in his *Journal* when he explains: “I would like it to be read by poets, playwrights, painters . . . who would benefit more from it than historians of religions,” and “my research could be seen as an attempt to rediscover the forgotten sources of literary inspiration” (quoted in Le Manchec 1991). However, despite Eliade’s stated intentions, the effect of the publication

was to rehabilitate shamanism, which had up to that point been associated with little more than backwardness and insanity.²

As for Eliade's prejudices, they were not in fact just personal (his links to right-wing Christian groups in Rumania, for example) but also based on the model of shamanism he chose to adopt. He took this from Siberia, where the use of mind-altering substances by shamans is actually quite rare. Those who follow the Latin American model, however, where mind-altering substances are frequently employed, have a reverse concept. For this reason it can be concluded that drugs are in fact an indifferent feature of shamanism.

The question as to when comparison is methodologically valid and when it is not is a complicated one, and we can learn from the mistakes Eliade has been shown to have made in this respect. Wanting to incorporate the aboriginal world into the shamanic pattern, Eliade found an anomalous story, the myth of the Achilpa tribe, about climbing a sacred pole and then disappearing into the sky, and projected it on to the pattern. However, his source was Spencer and Gillen's *The Arunta* published in 1927, which contained a Christianized reinterpretation of the myth, and by ignoring the history and anthropology of the situation Eliade entirely misinterpreted the narrative.³ Consequently, when looking at shamanic stories we should not only be concerned with when conclusions can be drawn from comparisons but also of when comparisons are not appropriate.

For the purposes of this article, a shamanic story is defined as—a story that has either been based on or inspired by a shamanic journey (a numinous experience in non-ordinary reality) or one that contains a number of the elements typical of such a journey. Other characteristics include the way in which the stories all tend to contain embedded texts (often the account of the shamanic journey itself), how the number of actors is clearly limited as one would expect in subjective accounts of what can be regarded as inner journeys, and how the stories tend to be used for healing purposes.

Eliade's *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* was in fact the first comprehensive work ever to be published on what, at the time, was considered to be the historical study of shamanism. And although the

² See Hamayon 2000.

³ See Morris Berman 2000: 252.

term 'archaic' shows how Eliade had his own biases, seeing shamanism as a kind of lower form of religion in backward primitive tribes, his book was a breakthrough in that it provided a broad overview of what was known about shamanism at the time, in the early 1950s. Eliade himself did no original research, but other anthropologists then built on what he had instigated by actually going out to work in the field and live among shamans in order to learn more about them.

For example, a researcher who became a participant in the 1950s was Francis Huxley, a British anthropologist who lived with Urubu and Tembe people in the Brazilian Amazon. In *Affable Savages: An Anthropologist among the Urubu Indians of Brazil*, published in 1956, Huxley described how he participated in a healing ceremony and tried some of the strong tobacco that the shamans smoked. Direct experiences like this helped to change anthropological thinking, since now they were better able to see the world as the people they studied did.

As well as writing on the history of religion (*The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, 1957, and *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*, 1969), Eliade also wrote on the subject of myth.⁴ There were books on ritual studies too, such as *Rites and Symbols of Initiation*, which was originally published 1958, and on religious symbolism (*Images and Symbols*, originally published in 1952). Eliade even wrote on Yoga (*Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 1958) and what could be regarded as the first shamanic novel *The Forbidden Forest*, which was translated into English in the late 1970s. This pre-dated Castaneda's efforts and all the novelists who post-dated him such as Lynn Andrews and Mary Summer Rain's books about her blind teacher 'No-Eyes'.

A contribution made by Eliade to the history of religious studies is what he had to say on the different ways in which time has been perceived through the ages. Eliade was of the opinion that the idea of time as a homogenous, linear, and unrepeatable medium is in fact a relatively recently adopted concept. *Homo religiosus*, unlike modern non-religious man, sees time as heterogeneous, divided between linear, profane time and cyclical and reactualizable, sacred time. And he believed that myths and rituals, by providing a means of repeatedly accessing this sacred time, serve to shield us from the sense of helplessness that can be brought about by what he referred to as the "terror of

⁴ See *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, which was originally published in 1949.

history”—the unstoppable nature of historical time.⁵ This could help to account for why people are turning to practices such as neo-shamanism in increasing numbers. Not only have shamanic journeys been found to provide such relief but, in a similar way, shamanic stories can serve the purpose of taking us “out of time” too.

Not only did Eliade write about shamanism, but he also wrote what can be described as shamanic stories. It can be argued, for example, that *A Great Man* (*Un om mare* in Romanian) is very much a story about soul loss through giving power away.

In his Foreword to *Tales of the Sacred and the Supernatural*, Eliade admits to repeatedly taking up “the themes of *sortie du temps*, or temporal dislocation, and of the alteration or the transmutation of space” (Eliade 1981: 10), and the result very much reflects what shamans claim to experience in their accounts of their journeys into non-ordinary reality, adding further support to the case being made for regarding certain of Eliade’s stories as shamanic.

One of the reasons for the incipient success of Eliade as a writer of fiction could ironically be his world fame as a scholar of myth and religion, with the general consensus of opinion being that a scholar’s literary efforts are just a sideline.⁶ However, if his fictional writing were nothing more than a sideline for Eliade, it is unlikely he would have written the ten novels, twenty-five novellas and short stories, and two complete plays that he did,⁷ and it has even been suggested that Eliade’s literary work could “prove, in the long run, to be of more enduring value than many of his scholarly writings” (Ricketts 2001: 93).

Eliade does not use the term ‘shamanic story’ himself in any of his work to describe the kind of tale he writes. In fact, he “never exactly, explicitly defined the nature of his fantastic style” (Simion 2001: 153). However, Eliade scholars Matei Calinescu and Walter Strauss have classified it as a form of “magic realism.” “It is a style he has developed by himself, which owes something to the Romanian folktale and something to his vast reading in mythology and literature” (Ricketts 2006: 373). It is a style of storytelling in which “the point of departure is ‘realistic’ (recognizable events in chronological succession, everyday atmosphere, verisimilitude, characters with more or less predict-

⁵ See Rennie 2006: 12.

⁶ See Calinescu 2006: 381.

⁷ See Ricketts 2006: 364–365.

able psychological reactions), but soon strange discontinuities or gaps appear in the ‘normal’, true-to-life texture of the narrative” (Calinescu 2006: 386). Eliade himself describes the technique he employs as “the imperfectly gradual transmutation of a commonplace setting into a new ‘world’ without, however, losing the proper, everyday, or ‘natural’ structure and qualities of that setting” (Eliade 1981: 10–11). In the case of *A Great Man*, written in 1945, the anomaly is the unnatural and unstoppable physical growth of the main character, which the author then sets out to explore.

Eliade uses the particular style of writing found in fantastic literature in a rather different way to other writers:

Traditionally, fantastic literature has derived its effects from a sense of menace posed by the sudden interruption of the incomprehensible (the supernatural) in the comprehensible flow of ordinary life. Everyday reality is seen as reassuring and the obscure world of the supernatural . . . is conceived of as dangerous, malevolent and destructive. With Eliade this relation is reversed: it is everyday reality which is essentially incomprehensible, meaningless and cruel. It is only when we recognize the presence of the other world (miracle, primordial time) that we are saved from meaningless. (Calinescu 1982: 150)

In the case of *A Great Man*, for example, it is everyday reality that becomes dangerous, malevolent and destructive as far as Cucoaneş is concerned, and it is only when he escapes from it that he seems to find any chance of some kind of salvation.

The story starts with the narrator meeting up with, by chance, an acquaintance from his grammar school days, Eugen Cucoaneş, who comes to him with an unusual problem. He discovers he has suddenly started to grow again physically at a rapid rate and the doctors can offer him no solution. However, is it that he really grows in physical stature or is it that everyone is so intent on giving their power away that they build him up into someone he is not and never will be? Is what happens perhaps in part due to Eugen’s own inflated ego too? Either way, things develop at an alarming pace and he finds himself unable to cope with the consequences, all the attention he receives for example, and so escapes from the gaze of the curious, with the narrator’s help, into the forests of the Transylvanian Alps. One is reminded somehow of the tragic story of Greta Garbo, who just wanted to be

left alone at the end of her days—her story being a parallel to this in many ways, or even the reclusive Michael Jackson. Eugen Cucoaneş is described at one point as having “the air of a prophet of apocalyptic horror,”—the kind of monster the media create to satisfy our lust for such larger than life personages.

The medical diagnosis of Cucoaneş’ condition—macranthropy, information on the diet he is advised to follow and on the vitamins and minerals he is supposed to avoid, provide the verisimilitude referred to earlier and also help to make the unusual nature of what follows during the course of the narrative more plausible, as of course do the precise measurements taken of Cucoaneş’ increase in height.

At another point the narrator remarks “One expected to see him raising Neptune’s trident or hurling thunderbolts like Jupiter—and all that would have ensued would not have surprised you more than his personal appearance. His beard had grown prodigiously in those last four days, completely changing his face and turning it into a theophany.” (Eliade and Niculescu 1990: 65) In other words, depending on the way you choose to interpret the tale, Eugen takes on the appearance of, or is built up into, a godlike figure. In fact the narrator is so taken in by the transformation that he more than half expects Eugen to be able to answer the unanswerable: “Tell us whether God exists and what we ought to do that we too may know him. Tell us whether life continues after death and how we are to prepare for it. *Tell us something! Teach us!*” (Eliade and Niculescu 1990: 69) At the end of the tale, however, Eugen disappears without a trace and is never heard of again, rather like the rise and fall of some of the popular iconic figures, footballers and rock stars, who appear in the media, or the false gods that some of us make the mistake of bowing down to due to our own lack of self-belief.

It has to be admitted that the interpretation of the tale proposed here is very much a personal one, and not one Eliade would have necessarily agreed with. Writing about his own fictional work, he makes the point that “the ‘fantastic’ elements disclose—or, more precisely, create—a series of ‘parallel worlds’ which do not pretend to be ‘symbols’ of something else” (Eliade 1981: 12). Be that as it may, the fact of the matter is that they are still open to interpretation as such by the reader, and the writer has little control over this. In the same way, for that matter, teachers can never be sure that what they teach will necessarily be understood in the way they had intended it to be.

When we are told that the valleys resounded to Cucoaneş' words, and that it was "like the forewarnings of a storm; the trees trembled and the branches bent," we are reminded of God talking to Moses on Mount Sinai, and then we have the revealing words "we all made ourselves, it seemed, smaller than we thought we were." It could be argued that what we have here is a glimmer of self-realization as the narrator has a vague awareness of the fact that he might actually have been partly responsible for Cucoaneş' transformation into a larger-than-life figure.

The question as to why Cucoaneş, a non-smoker, takes up the habit in the course of the story once his transformation starts to take place is an interesting one. The use of hallucinogenic drugs or alcoholic is not uncommon for ritual purposes or for entering trancelike states in certain communities and this could well be the reason why Eliade chose to introduce smoking into the tale, either unconsciously or perhaps even to point out the parallels between the journey of Cucoaneş and that of a shaman. Further into the narrative, Cucoaneş' speech becomes indecipherable, as if he is talking in tongues, another indication of being in a trancelike state, a state of non-ordinary reality, as is the inability to hear what is taking place in this reality as Cucoaneş eventually seems unable to do. Cucoaneş also talks about hearing strange things: "I seem to hear the clock ticking all the time, but it's not exactly a clock, it seems to be *something else*, which beats in everything at the same time." (Eliade and Niculescu 1990: 47) It is as if he is experiencing some form of heightened awareness, as if he can perceive life in everything and as if he can perceive how all life is connected in some way—very much what a shaman is said to experience. Consequently, we have to conclude that the parallels are more than just coincidental, especially if we take into account too what we know about Eliade's detailed knowledge of shamanism.

It has to be said the story is not without its flaws. Why for example, should the narrator have consulted every doctor he knew to help someone who was no more than a distant acquaintance, and why should Cucoaneş have chosen the narrator to confide in for that matter? However, its limitations as far as its literary merits are concerned do not detract from the fact that it clearly fits into the genre under examination, which is why it was decided to include it, coupled with the knowledge of who its author was and, of course, his significance in the field.

The argument has been put forward that we have to rediscover myths because it is only thanks to them that man can rediscover the "sacra-

mental dimension of existence,”⁸ which is perhaps why Eliade in his stories can be seen to either search for, or even attempt to recreate, the sacred out of the profane. The godlike figure that Eugen Cucoaneş becomes transformed into during the course of this particular tale provides a good example of this.

For Eliade there is a continuity between myth and literary fiction because they both recount the creation of a universe parallel to the everyday world. He also saw myth as having an exemplary value in primitive societies and believed that this could also be applied to literary works.⁹ Indeed, he once described literature as the daughter of mythology because not only does it inherit its function of telling adventures, but also its function of telling what significantly happened in the world.¹⁰ As *A Great Man* shows, his own fictional writing was clearly intended to fulfil both these functions.

Eliade talks about his literary work and the relationship between myth and literary fiction in *Ordeal by Labyrinth* (1982), a collection of conversations he had with Claude-Henri Rocquet:

I believe that all narration, even that of a very ordinary event, is an extension of the stories told by the great myths that explain how this world came into being and how our condition has come to be as we know it today. I think that an interest in narration is part of our mode of being in the world. It answers an essential need to hear what has happened, what men have done, what they have the power to do. (Eliade 1982: 166)

And our interest in narrative, as accounted for by Eliade, brings to mind the Navaho saying: “We shall exist as long as our stories are moist with our breath.”

Let us now turn our attention to another one of Eliade’s shamanic stories:

“With the Gypsy Girls” . . . abounds in symbols drawn from mythology and the history of religions—such as the labyrinth, the carriage driver as Charon, etc.—but deciphering them does not exhaust the meaning Eliade wishes the

⁸ See Simion 2001: 146.

⁹ See Eliade 1981: 12.

¹⁰ See Simion 2001: 159.

reader to derive from the story. The “revelation” as Eliade calls it comes from the total impact of the story, conveyed not *rationally*, but *intuitively* . . . just as myths make their impact on believers. Eliade would make us “believe” in the world he creates in his stories and, entering into them, be “awakened” and enlightened. (Ricketts 2006: 372–373)

In this sense, the story is very much an example of what Jürgen Kremer defines as “tales of power”—conscious verbal constructions based on numinous experiences in non-ordinary reality, “which guide individuals and help them to integrate the spiritual, mythical, or archetypal aspects of their internal and external experience in unique, meaningful, and fulfilling ways” (Kremer 1988: 192). This is in fact a characteristic shared by all shamanic stories.

Many . . . of Eliade’s . . . literary works can be classified in the genre of fantastic literature. This is true, for example, of “With the Gypsy Girls” . . . The story, like all of Eliade’s fiction, is set in an *apparently* realistic world, in this case the Bucharest of the 1930s. The hero, Gavrilesco, enters a kind of bordello operated by Gypsies and stays, he thinks, a few hours. When he emerges, some twelve years have elapsed. The passage from one time rhythm or zone to another is a favorite device, of course, of writers of fantasy, and Eliade has used it a number of times. But Eliade states in his *Journal*, that even the ‘real world’ of the first and last parts of “Gypsy Girls” is to be taken as a ‘mythical geography’—which would mean that the reader enters into a ‘fantasy world’ as soon as he begins to read, a world in which the hero’s fantastic adventure is not ‘unreal’. (Ricketts 2006: 373)

Let us now consider the plot of the story in more detail. Gavrilesco, a 49-year-old piano teacher, has to get off the tram he is travelling on because he realises he has left his briefcase with his music behind. He gets off, by chance, outside the house of the notorious gypsies, which he enters and never really returns from again.

Gradually we come to realise that Gavrilesco has in fact set off unawares on a journey into another reality. We learn, for example, that he followed the girl who enticed him into the house as if he were “bewitched” and the madam of the brothel informs him that all the clocks have stopped again. In other words, he stepped out of historical time the moment he crossed the threshold. We then learn that “He

entered stepping on the carpet which became even thicker and softer; it seemed as if he were walking on mattresses.” (Eliade 1992: 187) The feeling of walking on something that lacks solidity is not atypical in accounts of shamanic journeys, particularly in those to the Upper World. However, this particular journey, as we gradually discover, turns out to be to the Land of the Dead. Gavrilesco’s memory then starts to play tricks with him when he attempts to reminisce about the past: “Something terrible happened,” he continued. “But what? What on earth could have happened? Strange, I cannot remember.” (Eliade 1992: 190) After that, he is led into a dance, rather like the whirling dervishes perform to enter trancelike states: “The girl whirled him in a reel, shouting and whistling . . . after a time he gave up resisting and was no longer conscious of anything . . . Gavrilesco felt the room swaying around him, and once more he put his hand to his head. ‘For God’s sake, what have you done to me?’” (Eliade 1992: 191, 192).

The story is also about how we walk around with our eyes closed, unaware of all the hidden possibilities available to us: “For so many years he had ridden past this garden, never once moved by curiosity to get off the tram and consider it closely.” (Eliade 1992: 185)

Gavrilesco then find himself naked for some reason and tries to cover himself with the only thing close at hand—a curtain: “The curtain curling around me like a winding sheet . . . That curtain was a real winding sheet, I tell you. It was skin-tight. It was wound around and so tight that I couldn’t breathe. And such heat . . . it’s a wonder that I’m still alive.” (Eliade 1992: 203). It is here that the association with death is really brought home to the reader.

To cut a long story short, when Gavrilesco eventually manages to back home, he finds his key no longer fits his lock and his wife Elsa no longer living there. He then learns from the owner of a nearby pub that when Elsa’s husband went missing twelve years previously she had made the decision to return to her family in Germany.

At a loss as to what to do, the bemused Gavrilesco returns to the house of the gypsies, where he enters the room of a German prostitute he has paid for only to find his long lost love Hildegard waiting for him, someone we are led to believe had died many years before, who urges Gavrilesco to leave the house with her. They get into a cab together, the driver asks Hildegard where to go, and this is her answer: “Drive us to the woods, and go the longest way,” said the girl. “And drive slowly. We’re in no hurry.” Thus the reader understands the two lovers

are being taken to the Land of the Dead and that the cab driver is none other than Charon.¹¹ And this is how the tale ends:

“Hildegard,” he began finally. “Something’s happening to me, and I don’t quite understand what. If I hadn’t heard you speak to the cab driver, I would think I was dreaming.”

The girl turned her head toward him and smiled.

“We’re all dreaming,” she said. “That’s how it begins. As if in a dream . . .”

Let us hope that someone finally gets round to making a screenplay out of *With the Gypsies* and an enterprising producer takes on the project as what a great final scene to a film this would make! This English translation of the story can be found in the collection *Mystic Tales: The Sacred and the Profane* and it has been outlined here to show *A Great Man* is not a “one-off” and that Eliade wrote other examples of shamanic stories too.

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¹¹ See Calinescu 1982: 152.

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Spirit Possession Rituals in Central Nepal

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The present study investigates indication, structure, and dynamics of nocturnal spirit possession rituals. The diagnosis known as “possession by a spirit that has been sent by a witch” calls for a special kind of therapy session in which important family members of the patient have to take part to help restore the harmony in the extended family or in the neighbourhood. By presenting parts of the dialogues that take place during the possession rituals we wish to demonstrate the emic view of the systemic logics of such rituals. Some persons who are present in the healing session even make remarks about the meaning of spirit possession states as they appear in the light of the ritual process. By means of a comparison of life histories and utterings made in the course of a ritual the specific features of the liminal phase—beyond the time that measures secular routines—and their therapeutic value are discussed. Finally, the similarities of the structure and the effects of ritual drama and of Ancient Greek tragedy as described by Aristotle are pointed out.

Introduction

The Tamang in Nepal are famous for the numerous shamans among them.¹ Although in urban areas modern biomedical service is available, shamans still play an important role in the health care system. Especially in cases of mental disturbances, psychosocial problems, or drug addiction shamans are consulted because there is hardly any

¹ Several periods of fieldwork of altogether 36 months have been carried out in Central Nepal between 1984 and 2004. I would like to thank the Austrian Funds for the Advancement of Research and Science for their generous financial support (1995 to 1997: Charlotte Bühler habilitation stipend, 2001 to 2003: Research project “Shamans’ Comments on their Rituals”).

alternative. Sometimes they are even called into a hospital to provide additional treatment for patients.

The Tamang constitute the largest ethnic minority in Nepal. They originally come from Tibet and speak a Tibeto-Burman language. Today they live primarily in the mountains east and west of Kathmandu Valley (Fig. 1, pls. 1 and 2) and in the valley itself (Bista 1967). In the multi-ethnic areas of Central Nepal many of the Tamang shamans' clients belong to other ethnic groups. A healer is usually chosen because of the reputation that he or she enjoys and not because of a specific cultural background. The language spoken in such inter-ethnic consultations is Nepali, which is similar to Hindi and is the *lingua franca* in Nepal.

Each good shaman has a repertoire of several different methods that he or she uses according to the needs of the specific case. At first short and inexpensive therapy methods are employed. These methods include the blowing of mantras over the patient's body, brushing out the illness with a little broom made of rice-straw, chasing away the illness-causing agent with a knife, and giving the patient water mixed with ashes or rice grains, over which mantras have been blown, to drink. Only when the simple methods do not have the desired effect, other rituals have to be performed. Some of them take place in the early evening and are centred on giving offerings to pacify deities and spirits. Difficult and complicated cases call for nocturnal healing ceremonies that last from sunset until dawn.²

Indication and Dynamics of Spirit Possession Rituals

The term 'spirit possession' is based on a cultural theory attributing unusual experiences and behaviour to being seized by an external power (Pfeiffer 1994: 143). While Crapanzano (1977) regards altered states of consciousness as the basis of phenomena of spirit possession, Lambek (1981) understands spirit possession as a system of communication involving trance only as an element of secondary importance. Pfeiffer (1994: 143) as well mentions that spirit possession may occur also without accompanying non-ordinary psychophysiological states.

² For concepts of causation of illnesses see, for example, Desjarlais 1990; Eigner 2001; Peters 1978; Pigg 1990; Stone 1977.



Fig. 1. Tamang attending a full moon festival. Photo: Dagmar Eigner, 1993.

Although the induction of altered states of consciousness represents a central element of spirit possession rituals in Nepal, the patients are considered to be possessed also before a ritual takes place (as soon as the specific diagnosis has been made by a healer) or during breaks in the rituals, in which they are often inconspicuous, just like the other persons present.

The diagnosis 'spirit possession' is less important for the classification of an illness according to a scheme than for determining healing rituals requiring a considerable financial and emotional input as well as time, giving the persons present the opportunity to talk about psychosocial conflicts in a protected atmosphere and to jointly look for new solutions. Therefore the diagnosis 'spirit possession' furthers unmistakable communication about relationships and events leading to suffering and illness within the society.

In each case, however, first less intensive and shorter therapies are tried out, in the hope of achieving success. These particularly economical and pleasant treatments precede any more extensive form of therapy. It is often only in the course of these short-term treatments that the need for a longer session in which the problems causing the illness can be discussed in detail, becomes apparent. Divination often

produces vague diagnoses that, if the suffering is not alleviated within a reasonable period of time with the short-term therapies, have to be specified and sometimes also modified and then in many cases also entail other forms of treatment.

The high price for the night rituals is not due to the shamans' fee but to the cost of the sacrificial animal and other required materials. Some shamans emphasize that it would be irresponsible to carry out costly treatments lasting all night long without having exhausted all other possibilities. Nevertheless, some shamans prescribe costly rituals with less deliberation that sometimes is criticized by colleagues or members of the community. When questioned as to what criteria indicate the need for a full-scale nocturnal possession ritual, the shamaness *Buddhi Māyā* answers:

If a spirit has been sent to the patient, I must perform a big nocturnal healing ritual, call the spirit and make it speak. It will say that it has been raised by someone and set onto the patient. And then I will ask what it wants to eat and what has to be done so that it will leave the patient.

If the spirit reveals its identity during the *séance* and also says who it was that promised food and thereby caused it to seize a person, the witch will often speak through the sick person (or, if necessary, through the shaman) in order to explain the events that led to this measure. Although the witches speak through the mouth of persons present, it is not assumed that the sick persons are possessed by the witches themselves who are in fact live physical persons. The shamaness *Buddhi Māyā* relates:

I have been explaining to you repeatedly that witches do not possess persons themselves, but apply illness-causing spirits. Suppose that I am a witch and I am angry with the wives of my husband's older or younger brothers in the house, then I will set a spirit onto them. Then they will start to tremble. When someone gets sick in that way it is natural that the person begins to tremble. I, the supposed witch, could also be the mother-in-law of the patient. After I have set the illness-causing spirit onto you, now what happens? You go on trembling only and cannot say who set the ghost onto you even if you know who did it. You hesitate to reveal the identity of the witch because she might be a close relative. But when the spirit possessing you is made to confess, it will say which spirit it is and who is responsible for your sufferings.

According to Buddhi Māyā's report, the witch is in her village during the healing ritual. The paradox that a concrete living person speaks through someone at a different place, poses no problem for the shamaness: "The witch speaks, but the patient is possessed by a spirit. The witch sends the thing that speaks so that she can tell what harm has been done to her and how much she feels hurt." Although the spirit and the witch in theory are conceptually two different beings, during some parts of the healing rituals they are treated as a unity causing the illness.

The trembling of the body is considered to be a cardinal symptom of spirit possession. If this slight trembling occurs in connection with greater psychological, social or family-related problems, it is taken as a sign of spirit possession that has to be treated by a costly ritual during which several family members, friends and neighbours have to be present. On the other hand, this trembling can be seen as a signal to the environment indicating that something is out of order. In case of irreconcilable conflicts, the production of this symptom (no matter how consciously or unconsciously it may be generated) and maybe some indication of a readiness to speak—and be it only through inarticulate sounds for the time being—are sufficient to prepare the ground for a specific type of therapy. Expectation and theories existing in society may play an important part in it. "Everyone sees it happen to others and expects without question that in similar circumstances it will happen to oneself. And it does." (Carstairs 1958: 1218) Berger and Luckmann (1980: 190) also hold the opinion that the psychological theories that a person knows about become reality in his or her experience.

In the course of the nocturnal session the psychosocial conflicts have to be brought out in a clear manner that is understandable to everyone. It is irrelevant whether the essential messages come from the spirit or the witch. The presence of at least some family members is in any case very important, because they are supposed to create a frame of reference for the words of the patient (spirit/witch) since they know the patient and the relationships in the extended family and may also be involved in the events causing illness (Fig. 2). They should experience how the patient acts and also express their own feelings.

According to the shamaness Buddhi Māyā, the chances for healing are better when the possessed patient himself/herself speaks during the healing ritual in an altered state of consciousness. Nevertheless, it is not always possible to make the sick person talk. "Did you not see the other day how the patient went on trembling but could not say anything?" In



Fig. 2. Patient talking about problems in the extended family.
Photo: Dagmar Eigner, 1990.

certain ways this means the patient, but the statement refers above all to the spirit and the witch who evade interrogation. Witches allegedly remain silent because they do not want to reveal their identity. The spirits' willingness or unwillingness to talk is considered an expression of their character, their personal trait.

If neither the spirit nor the witch speaks through the patient's mouth, the shaman must let the one or the other talk through himself, whereby a helper or a second shaman elucidates the words to the patient and his or her relatives who then may intervene in the dialogue and present their points of view.³

Before a healing ritual can be concluded successfully, the conflicting parties must be reconciled. This is above all an inner reconciliation changing the way events, persons and relationships are perceived. In most cases, the witches are not told what has been negotiated in the course of the rituals, but the changed attitudes of the patients and their relatives create a new social climate that also has a positive effect on the handling of everyday affairs.

³ Cf. Eigner 2001: 214 sq.

It is necessary to create special conditions that are supposed to ensure a safe atmosphere full of power for the events taking place during the healing ritual. Deities are invoked and asked for help in the undertaking, paraphernalia are purified, and the shamans have to protect themselves, other people who are present, and the whole room so that nobody can disturb the procedure. At the end of the healing ritual the deities are thanked for their assistance and they are then sent back to their own places. The invocation of the deities, the request for their presence and power, clearly differentiates the occurrences during the healing ritual from everyday experience. In this way, a framework is provided in which all participants can feel protected and in which psychosocial conflicts can be confronted more easily—away from the restrictions of everyday life in the community.

Subedārñī, the Wife of the Soldier

The patient is a Chetri⁴ woman in her early forties who lives with her husband, a soldier with the rank of Subedār, and her five children in the Kathmandu Valley. According to the customs of Central Nepal she is addressed as Subedārñī, the wife of the Subedār. Her symptoms are chest and stomach pains, dizziness and general malaise. Approximately half a year before the shamanic ritual she had had a gall bladder operation with removal of gallstones. Since she did not feel much better after the operation, she went to see the shamaness in her neighbourhood.

Subedārñī and her family come from Western Nepal. They had visited their home village in order to attend a ritual in honour of the deceased father-in-law of the patient approximately one year before. After the event, she began to suffer increasingly from her pains that had occurred only occasionally before.

In a short diagnostic session that took place during a nocturnal healing ritual for another female patient, the shamaness *Buddhi Māyā* noticed that a spirit sent by someone is causing the illness. Also in this case the trembling of the body was considered an important indication and cardinal symptom of spirit possession. Between the diagnostic

⁴ Chetri is a Hindu warrior caste.

session and the healing ritual, a relatively long period of time elapsed since Subedārñī's husband was unable to attend for professional reasons and his presence was considered absolutely necessary.

CALLING THE SPIRIT

In the beginning of the ritual the shamaness invokes her tutelary spirit and a series of deities by drumming and singing and asks them to assist her in her undertaking (pl. 3 a). During this part of the healing ritual she sits in front of a small altar table with sacrificial offerings for the deities on top of it. Afterwards she turns toward the patient and while she continues drumming and singing, requests the illness-causing spirit to recount the events that have brought about the suffering, through the mouth of the patient. Although several facts are known, the questioning during the nocturnal ritual starts from the beginning. *Bir*, *bir betāl*⁵ and *masān* are types of spirits—demons and ghosts—which possibly cause Subedārñī's illness and *guru āmā* designates the potential mistress of these spirits, the witch.

SHAMANESS: You have been invited. Come on this girl's head and on her shoulders! Are you a clan deity? Are you a *bir betāl*? Come from all four directions? Tell me who you are! Do not lie.

PATIENT: I will not lie. I will not lie to get a spanking.

SHAMANESS: Tell me everything truthfully!

PATIENT: Whatever I tell, it will be the truth.

SHAMANESS: Even if you are Kālo Bir,⁶ tell us with your head raised. Even if you are the Kālo Bir, or Kālo Masān,⁷ wake up and come on the head and shoulders of this girl. Tell me your grievances, tell me how you are.

PATIENT: I will obey you.

SHAMANESS: You have come. Kālo Bir, where are you from? Masān, from what place did you come? Tell me. Who sent you, who coaxed you? How many years have passed? Tell me your tale completely. Who destroyed this girl? Tell me her name. Who made you come? Who is your *guru āmā*?

PATIENT: I will tell you . . . I will tell you . . .

⁵ From Sanskrit *vetāla*.

⁶ Black Demon.

⁷ Black Ghost.

SHAMANESS: Okay, now tell everything!

PATIENT: I have been taught by my own mother,⁸ yes . . . yes . . .

Although the shamaness asks the spirit to disclose who has raised and sent it, the witch answers right away through the mouth of the patient. Hesitatingly, and with many detours, as is thought to be the way witches behave, she talks about the relationships in the extended family.

The witch reveals her identity as the wife of the younger paternal uncle of the patient's husband. The word *Ṭhulā* means 'the big one' and is used for the oldest son. Although he is not the witch's own son, she uses this relationship term, which is quite common in Central Nepal. During the healing ritual all other persons present also call the patient's husband *Ṭhulā*. Later, when the shaman's husband addresses *Subedār nī* with her own name, the patient herself makes it very clear that she is the witch now.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Eh *Subedār nī!* *Subedār nī!*

PATIENT: I am not *Subedār nī*.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Who are you then?

PATIENT: Mother of *Ṭhulā*. Mother of *Subedār*.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Shall I beat the drum?

PATIENT: No, you do not know how to do it.

SHAMANESS: You are the mother of *Subedār*?

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: What shall I do? I do not know her. I have never been in her village.

PATIENT: I do not know you either.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: I like to drink a lot. Eh, *Subedār nī*, give me something to drink! *Ṭhulā*, bring the liquor here! Maybe this witch will give me a drink?

FAMILY PROBLEMS

The questioning of the witch and of the spirit goes on for hours and is the central part of the spirit possession ritual. In the course of the session several causes of the conflict emerge, and the persons involved are encouraged to talk about their feelings, thoughts and about past

⁸ In Central Nepal witchcraft is often handed down from mother to daughter.

events. The shamaness also repeatedly inquires about the reasons for the witch's behaviour.

SHAMANESS: What did this girl do to you so that you wanted to destroy her?

PATIENT (witch speaking through her): She has not done anything.

SHAMANESS: Tell me everything.

PATIENT: Listen! This Ṭhulā did not obey us. He married the granddaughter of the sergeant. (Later it becomes clear that the witch wanted him to marry some other woman.)

SHAMANESS: And then?

PATIENT: Because of that we did this to her, in anger.

SHAMANESS: How many years has it been since you harmed her?

PATIENT: When she was twelve years old. Then we postponed harming her.

SHAMANESS: Did you add more later on? Last year when she was in her village, what did you add on to this Gaṅgā⁹?

PATIENT: She showed it to the village shaman and said: "Why did they try to destroy me? I have not done anything to them." She has no sin.

SHAMANESS: Tell us everything.

PATIENT: She will tell you, she will tell you... But what does she know? I am the sinner. She knows nothing.

SHAMANESS: What else did you do? Tell us. What did you give her to eat to make her ill?

PATIENT: She gave a blouse to everyone, but she did not give any to me. She knew about it.

SHAMANESS: To give you a blouse!

PATIENT: She knew about it and said bad words to me. She gave the blouse to her sister-in-law.¹⁰ Ask Ṭhulā!

SHAMANESS: Is that so, Ṭhulā?

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: Yes.

PATIENT: Yes.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Why should you be given anything? You trouble us a lot.

PATIENT: The village shaman told her everything, otherwise she would not have known so soon.

⁹ Name of the patient.

¹⁰ Her brother's wife.

Among other things, very old family-related events are referred to. Not only the patient, but also other family members are involved in the problems being addressed. The nocturnal healing ritual is used for intensive communication, apart from the restrictions of everyday life.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND (addressing the witch): We have not taken your property, we have not done anything to you and we have not brought anything here.

PATIENT (witch speaking through her): Yes, when your own father failed to give you your share of property, why should your father's brother¹¹ do it?

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: What have we taken from you? Why did you do this to us?

PATIENT: No, you have not taken anything. But you had done something before, that is why I did this to her.¹²

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: Then why are you so angry now? Send all your sisters!

SHAMANESS: All?

PATIENT: That sister who was going to be married died. Five years ago she died.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: Even if I had married her, she would have died anyway.

PATIENT: It may be or it may not be. She had been in love with a foreigner at first. That is the reason why you did not marry her.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: Who would marry her after finding out that?

PATIENT: Is that right? Tell me the truth!

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: Who would marry a woman who has an affair with another man?

PATIENT: Even if she had not done that, you would not have married her. There was a discussion to marry my youngest sister to his younger brother.

SHAMANESS: Yes?

PATIENT: But that whore Gaṅgā refused. She is clever and said to him that he should not marry such a short woman. She said since he was an educated man, he would find an educated woman to marry. He has married a Brāhman woman. She has two sons and three daughters.

In Hindu culture everything in connection with marriages is considered very important and therefore Gaṅgā may be worried that even after many years resentment may still exist because her husband did not marry the witch's sister. Possibly Gaṅgā also thinks that the illness

¹¹ Witch's husband.

¹² Thulā did not marry the witch's sister.

has been sent to her because she is easier to attack than a strong man.¹³ Again and again she emphasizes the central role her husband plays within the family relationships.

Subedār has become relatively wealthy and successful within the scope of his possibilities what was not the case for the witch's husband. Such different life situations often provoke envy and jealousy. Gaṅgā fears that she has become the victim of envy. In many ethnic groups in Nepal the wife and mother of the children is considered an important inner support of the family although the husband occupies a considerably more important position in the society. This is the reason why it is often said that the woman's illness affects the family's well being at its very core, in its most vulnerable part. Maybe Gaṅgā is also plagued by a sense of guilt because she did not support the economically underprivileged witch.

Gaṅgā's fear of the witch's envy does not only concern the financial situation. She won the attractive man the witch wanted for her own sister. Gaṅgā has five children and lives embedded in the social security provided by a big family, seen from the Hindu point of view. In this respect as well one can sense the patient's feelings of guilt, when the witch says through her mouth: "I am alone. My house is deep in the forest. No one will come if I need someone."

Gaṅgā feels much more attached to traditional religious life than her husband. She thinks that it is important to honour the deities and to continue to perform the rituals for ancestors. During the healing session, Gaṅgā tries to persuade her husband to perform at least some of the rituals again that may have been on her mind for a long time. Due to economic and social dependency she is not able to do this on her own. It is Gaṅgā and not the witch who wants the traditional rules to be followed, but it is easier to express this wish more directly and vehemently when possessed by another being. In the course of the nocturnal séance other persons present also press Gaṅgā's husband to do what is required of him.

Through the shaman's mouth, the goddess Kālī addresses the whereabouts of a collection of written mantras. If such a legacy is to have beneficial effects, not only certain behaviour but also the right attitude

¹³ It is often left to the women married into the family to make the conflicts in the extended family a subject of discussion and argue them out (cf. Stone 1976).

is required. Gaṅgā's husband feels that he has too little contact with the knowledge and life of his ancestors due to his technical work as a professional mechanic. The decision that was made regarding the handling and the future of the inherited little book was negative: it was given over to the river. In the course of the healing ritual Gaṅgā says that, although her husband would be capable of treating minor illnesses using mantras, he does not take advantage of this possibility. As knowledge and know-how also involve obligations, it troubles Gaṅgā that her husband does not respect these traditional values.

To Gaṅgā, her husband's disregard of cultural tradition means his breaking out of the family, and she may even consider her marriage to be in jeopardy. Her husband is often away from home for long periods of time for professional reasons. About a year prior to the healing ritual he served with a peacekeeping unit outside the country for several months. Gaṅgā may be afraid that he is gaining too much terrain for himself outside the family. During the nocturnal session she says suddenly: "Her husband loves her a lot. Even though he beats her sometimes, in anger, he makes up with her very soon. This donkey!" Gaṅgā has (or needs) the feeling that he loves her, even if he treats her badly.

Later on the patient's deceased father-in-law speaks through her, pointing out disputes about inheritance and discrepancies that took place in the death ceremony. Here Gaṅgā comes off as a good, nurturing woman who is without blame. Thereby the fact is emphasized once again that although Gaṅgā is the one who is suffering, her husband is at least as involved in the extended family's conflicts as she is.

At the beginning of this scene the father-in-law says through the patient's mouth: "Listen! I am Kul Bahādur . . . hun, hun! I am an old man who has already become *pitr* (ancestor spirit), I cannot be reached." For those who have not been attentive it is pointed out again.

SHAMANESS: Okay, tell us everything!

PATIENT: Why should I not tell?

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Look, I will bring the stinging nettle now.¹⁴

PATIENT: This is not a witch now, nothing of that kind, no *bir masān*.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: What? Did you not say it was a *bir*?

PATIENT: Shut up! I am an old man, I am a *pitr*. I have told you already!

¹⁴ To make spirits or witches speak they are beaten with stinging nettles.

SHAMANESS: He does not understand. It is the father-in-law by whom she is possessed now!

LIMINALITY: ABOLITION OF THE ORDER OF SPACE AND TIME

Later, when the witch's love affairs are discussed, it is sometimes not clear whether it is really the witch who is referred to or maybe the patient. Gaṅgā also seems to know the persons that are talked about, but when the shamaness' husband addresses her with dirty words, she—still acting as witch—immediately makes clear that Gaṅgā was not involved in any affairs and unlike the witch, has always been chaste.

In the course of the session a second shaman who is a friend of the patient and her family has come and takes part in the conversation.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: Tell us, how many lovers did you have when you were young?

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Hee, hee! Yes, tell us!

PATIENT: Why should I tell you how many I had?

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: You must tell us.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: If you are a Black Bir, you must tell us.

SHAMANESS: You must tell us at once.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Black Bir!

PATIENT: I have said that already.

SHAMANESS: Tell us once more.

PATIENT: I will not tell you when my son¹⁵ asks me.

SECOND SHAMAN: You must tell us.

SHAMANESS: Who used to bring tobacco for the water pipe to you?

PATIENT: The shoemaker brought it to me.

SHAMANESS: He is very handsome, isn't he?

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: Who else did you flirt around with? How many Brāhmins were there?

PATIENT: With the Brāhman Gopāl, yes, yes.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: Then, another Brāhman?

PATIENT: He is very strong.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: What is the name of the other one?

¹⁵ Patient's husband.

PATIENT: Now he has opened a restaurant in a town where he sells buffalo meat and alcoholic drinks,¹⁶ isn't it, Thulā?

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND (Subedār' former colleague): Thulā has already come here to do service.

SHAMANESS: Shut up. Let her tell about them.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: Tell us, one is the Brāhman Gopāl and the other is the crippled¹⁷ Brāhman.

PATIENT: Yes, that is why my husband was shot with a bullet, because I left my morality. Gaṅgā's husband also went in the peacekeeping force, but nothing happened to him. She is loyal to her husband. No one has ever touched her body. When she is spoken to, she speaks. Otherwise she does not speak.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: How was he shot?

PATIENT: He was shot when he had gone to the war of Hindustan. I slept with anyone because of that he was shot. But she is loyal to her husband. Yes, a woman's loyalty to her husband is a strong power. That is why her husband came home safely without being hurt.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Gaṅgā looked after the crippled Brāhman, giving him food and shelter, for many days.

PATIENT: No, she did not. She only gave him tea and snacks and then sent him away.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Really?

PATIENT: Yes.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: But he used to come asking for shelter.

PATIENT: No, he never came to stay overnight. You should not lie.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: But I have seen him.

PATIENT: No, he did not come! I know that, do not lie!

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: I know it. He used to come to your place to sleep.

PATIENT: Do not say such nonsense. How could he go to Gaṅgā's place and sleep there?

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: We should slaughter this witch. Bring the *khukuri*¹⁸ over here!

PATIENT: She is not like that. You cannot say whatever you like just because you can speak.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: You too, do not speak whatever you like.

¹⁶ Both is strictly forbidden for Brāhman.

¹⁷ In Central Nepal also persons with very small disabilities are called *dūde* (cripple).

¹⁸ Famous type of bent knife.

SHAMANESS: What else do you want to ask? Ask her!

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: What should I ask?

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: She is telling everything.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: She has already said that she went with her crippled and with Gopāl.

PATIENT: Yes, I have told that. There is no one here who knows me, why should I feel ashamed?

SHAMANESS: You can tell us everything, can't you?

PATIENT: There is Thulā and this poor Gaṅgā who is possessed by me. How could she know anything? Poor woman!

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: If you feel sorry for her, why do you trouble her like this?

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: We will make everything public.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Yes, we will tell everything.

PATIENT: Now you can tell whatever you like. Who will believe you? I am already an old woman.

SHAMANESS: Tomorrow we will go to the mountains and tell everything about you.

SECOND SHAMAN: Do you not care about your prestige?

PATIENT: Of course, I care about my prestige. If I am known as a witch, I will be disgraced, won't I?

SECOND SHAMAN: Then?

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: We do not know who you are.

SECOND SHAMAN: We also do not know you, alright?

PATIENT: Even if you do not know the person, you will say that there is a witch of that place.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Now, where are you going? To the river bank? To the cremation ground?

PATIENT: Yes, I go to the cremation ground and play around there.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: And then . . .

PATIENT: Enough! Do not ask me anymore! I am tired.

Based on van Gennep's (1909/1986) distinction of three phases in a rite of passage: *separation*, *transition*, and *incorporation*, Turner (1982) investigates the characteristics of the phase of transition or liminal phase which is clearly demarcated from profane space and time. Through specific rites that must be performed a cultural realm that is defined as "out of time," i.e., beyond or outside the time that measures secular processes and routines, is constructed. During the liminal phase the ritual subjects pass through a period and area of ambiguity

which has few of the attributes of either the preceding or subsequent profane states and „may also include subversive and ludic (or playful) events. The factors of culture are isolated, in so far as it is possible to do this with multivocal symbols . . . that are each susceptible not of a single meaning but of many meanings. Then the factors or elements of culture may be recombined in numerous, often grotesque ways, grotesque because they are arrayed in terms of possible or fantasied rather than experienced combinations. . . . In other words, in liminality people ‘play’ with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them.“ (Turner 1982: 27)

During the healing ritual Gaṅgā’s male friends are mixed up with the witch’s lovers. The cognitive patterns that create order and meaning in everyday life are no longer applicable in the liminal phase (Turner 1982). Until the very end it remains unclear what the story behind the men who are mentioned is, and how they are to be integrated into the whole sequence of events. The persons present make fun of the witch and express clearly that her behaviour is unacceptable. This probably refers not only to her love life but also to the causation of Gaṅgā’s illness. The ritual offers an opportunity for the patient’s husband to let his resentments against the witch run wild. The shamaness’ husband seems to be motivated to actively participate just for the fun of it.

Space and time in which the witch frequented her lovers are transposed to Gaṅgā’s life. Or are these men being used as symbolic figures expressing certain attitudes and feelings? Could it be that in this way Gaṅgā is reproached indirectly for not always having acted morally and correctly?

Maybe it is also important that some events and their background are not clarified. In the discussions of the lovers a certain connivance among the persons present seems to exist: the ritual—or more precisely the liminal phase of the ritual—allows for playful mixing events, feelings, thoughts and fantasies beyond the everyday order of space and time.

LET THE PIGEONS FLY

Already before the conclusion of the séance the witch's promise to leave the patient and her family for good appears as a recurring theme. The witch is laughed at and put down in order to make it perfectly clear that the witch cannot expect anything pleasant in this place.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: Will you go for sure now? Will you touch her child or not? You have to promise not to touch them.

SHAMANESS: I will give you to eat whenever you want.

NEIGHBOUR: You can eat tomorrow.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: No, since she has said everything today, she must eat today.

SHAMANESS: You must return it seven times.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: Seven times?

SHAMANESS: Yes, it must be returned.

PATIENT: There are smaller, smaller . . .

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: She knows everything. First the cock must be sacrificed, isn't it so, grandma?

SECOND SHAMAN: Grandma, are you going to the river bank now?

PATIENT: No, I have been tied since seven days.

SECOND SHAMAN: It would be better, if you could.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Why were you so angry to do this to her?

PATIENT: Stop it! Do not ask me anymore.

SHAMANESS: Leave her alone. She has already told us everything. She can hardly speak now.

PATIENT: I will leave Gaṅgā.

SECOND SHAMAN: If she would be strong, we knew how to tease her, but she is weak.

SHAMANESS: If she were strong like us, we would have beaten her up.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT: What shall we do today?

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: We must perform a ritual like we did the other day.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: What a ritual? Do I have to do rituals again and again?

The patient's husband seems disconcerted because he is forced to contribute more and more to the family matters. However, he cannot escape the basic plot of the healing ritual. Later on the shamaness points out that a small additional ritual will be necessary after a few days.

SHAMANESS: A ritual must be performed at the river bank. The animal must be sacrificed with the blade turned round. Then you let the pigeon fly.

PATIENT: Yes, if it were let to fly, it would be better.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: What? An egg?

SHAMANESS: A pigeon.

PATIENT (louder): A pigeon!

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: A pair of pigeons must be let to fly.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: We should only pretend that we are giving an offering?

PATIENT: Yes, cut it with the turned blade and let it free.

SECOND SHAMAN: Should its head be cut and let free?

PATIENT: No, just do it with the turned blade.

SECOND SHAMAN: Just pretend to touch it?

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND: Yes, she knows it.

PATIENT: Of course, why should a *bir* not know it?

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: Do not point the sharp side of the blade towards the animal! Turn it round!

The Conclusion of the Healing Ritual

Before the powers that brought about the suffering are dismissed, they have to promise that they will stop causing problems for the patient and her family. The repeated declarations are meant to convince the participants that at the end of the healing ritual also Gaṅgā's illness will come to an end. Although the food is intended for the always hungry spirit, it is also offered to the witch in order to placate her. When the blood sacrifice has finally been accepted as a substitute for the patient, neither the spirit nor the witch may lay claim to the patient and must leave her alone forever. The fact that the symbolic food is offered to the spirit as well as to the witch shows once again the unclear separation of the forces that caused the patient's illness.

Besides the sacrificial animal and the symbolic food consisting of different types of grain, fruit and sweets, also hair, finger- and toenails as part of the body, and pieces of material as part of the clothing, are needed. Then a five-coloured thread is put on the patient's head to connect it with a clay figure that is the new dwelling place for the spirit (pl. 3 b, 4).

SHAMANESS: What is the time? Is it eleven o'clock?

SECOND SHAMAN: It is twelve o'clock.

PATIENT'S HUSBAND: It is the right time.

SHAMANESS: Are you feeling sleepy?

DAGMAR: No, no!

SHAMANESS: What to do? It is my karma to bear difficulties. Other women have already eaten and are asleep.

NEIGHBOUR: Doing such a service cannot be taken as burden.

PATIENT: Doing service is a great merit.

SHAMANESS: Put some hair there, too. It is a symbol, a substitute. You have to give a little.

SHAMANESS' HUSBAND (looking at the clay figure that has been formed as a substitute and a new place to live for the illness-causing spirit): You have been made very pretty.

PATIENT: Again he is teasing me!

SHAMANESS: Now, let us not make it late.

PATIENT: Give me to eat and send me away nicely.

SHAMANESS: Make a promise that you will attack her and her family only when there is full moon and dark moon in the same day.

PATIENT: Yes, I promise.

SHAMANESS: When the sun becomes earth then only I will touch her.

PATIENT: I promise.

SHAMANESS: Say that you will only touch her when the sky and the underworld meet.

PATIENT: I won't touch her, I won't touch her.

SHAMANESS: Make a promise 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 times.

PATIENT: I promise 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 times.

SHAMANESS: Now I will sacrifice a life and take it to the door. Do you accept it or not? I touch the Black Bir with my sole and the *masān* with my big toe. Do you recognize me or not?

PATIENT: Yes, I know you.

SHAMANESS: How many mantras do you have?

PATIENT: I do not have any mantra.¹⁹

SHAMANESS: If I ever find you here again, I will not spare you. If you do not

¹⁹ The number of mantras someone can use is seen as sign of power. Without any mantra the witch is subdued.

keep your promise, I will make you shit and urinate in one place and make you crippled.

I am going, I am going . . .

The sacrificial animal and 84 delicacies are led along the thread to the clay figure set on a leaf plate. The patient's body is repeatedly beaten with the rooster to entice the spirit (pl. 5). Then the tray is carried out to the riverbank, the spirit's old as well as new abode. Outside, the rooster's head is torn off, so that the blood trickles over the decorated clay figure. The animal's head remains outside on the leaf plate, while the body is taken inside where it is cooked and eaten. Only the patient herself is not allowed to eat of it, for the rooster was sacrificed in exchange of her life.

With ashes three lines are drawn across the path leading back to the house, because it is thought that the spirit is unable to cross these lines. The persons who have participated in the sacrifice at the riverbank are sprinkled with water before entering the house as a symbolic cleansing so that they cannot bring the dark, dangerous powers of the night inside.

Poetics of Healing

The shamans' songs and recitations during the healing rituals are very poetic and often trigger strong emotions in the patients and other persons present. In an attempt to make the illness-causing spirit reveal its identity, the history of its suffering, for which it need not feel any shame, is addressed. Whatever may have happened, now the spirit will find relief if it only comes and fulfils its duties.

Wake up, arise

Come opening up and making every limb of Bal Kumāri²⁰ shake

Don't feel worried

We will play together and stay together

Many might have hit you

Many might have thrashed you, my darling child

Your heart might have torn into shreds

²⁰ Patient's name.

Don't feel worried
 Come over Bal Kumāri's body
 Come over here
 Tell me who you are
 You may feel hungry
 You may feel thirsty
 Don't feel sad
 I will give you food to eat and clothes to wear
 I will serve 84 delicious dishes
 Wake up, arise
 Tell me who you are
 I am calling you today, this auspicious day
 Come moving along and opening up all parts of your body
 Open up the 32 rooms and come here moving along
 I will give you a gold ornament to wear around your head
 I will give you a golden ring to put in your nose
 I will give you a pair of pendants to be hung from your earlobes
 Wake up, arise
 Open your heart wide and come along
 My dear child, break the iron locks and come forward
 Tell us your name
 Why do you worry
 Why are you disappointed
 You have to talk with me
 Discuss things with me
 Come and sit with me

The ritual is the special time during which a turn of events is possible and likely. Whose heart would not be touched by the intensive attention of the shamans? Who would not be happy about the promised food and clothes? Who would not let himself be seduced by golden jewels, a nose ring and earrings? "Do not cry, my dear child!" Upon hearing these tender words many patients begin to talk about their misery. The poetic songs cause the symbolic acts to become more deeply embedded in the emotional reality of the affected persons. The aesthetic performances of the shamans are very important. Only one who knows how to sing, dance and play is considered a good shaman. Oppitz (1989: 73) says that a shamanic séance is a *performance* in and of itself. The connec-

tion with the tutelary spirit—and subsequently with various deities—lends the shaman the power and inspiration for his or her dramatic presentations (Schröder 1955).

Some shamanic performances during the nocturnal healing rituals are not directly connected with the personal problems of the sick people and their relatives. In the course of the séance for a young woman, the shamaness *Buddhi Māyā* is possessed by *Bāgh Bhairab*, the tiger god. The scene begins abruptly and unexpectedly. The shamaness falls backwards on the floor. After several seconds she straightens herself up and makes the noises and movements of a tiger.

This part of the ritual happened at a moment when all persons present were about to fall asleep. The spirit and the witch had spoken through the mouth of the patient and it was still too early to give the offerings. The sudden dramatic performance shook all present persons awake and then the witch spoke through the patient once more recounting further details of the events. The movements of the patient were completely dominated by the rhythmic intonation of her speech indicating a state of spirit possession. The room was filled with tension and power. Being a tiger, *Buddhi Māyā* had not only woken up the dozing participants, but also brought the strength and power of this being into the ritual room. The performances of the shaman were necessary in order to maintain the dynamic flow of the healing ritual and thereby achieve the desired effect.²¹

“Entertainment! That’s a key word. Literally, it means ‘to hold between’, from Old French *entre* between, and *tenir*, to hold. That is, it can be construed as the making of liminality, the betwixt and between state. Webster gives it both playful and serious valences, for it can mean (1) ‘to keep the interest of and give pleasure to; to divert; amuse,’ or (2) ‘to allow oneself to think about; have in mind; consider.’” (Turner 1982: 121) In the shamanic spirit possession rituals play and seriousness are important therapeutic factors.

Not only the elaboration of the different parts, but also the healing ritual in its entirety has a special effect on the persons involved as well as on the spectators. According to Turner (1982: 114), the social drama

²¹ With regard to the importance of poetry and *performance* for the success of shamans see also Michl 1976; Kim and Hoppál 1995; Laderman and Roseman 1996; as well as Schechner and Appel 1990.

represented in the ritual corresponds to Aristotle's description of tragedy in his *Poetics*:

We have laid down that tragedy is an imitation of a complete, i.e. whole, action, possessing a certain magnitude. (There is such a thing as a whole which possesses no magnitude.) A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle and an end. A *beginning* is that which itself does not follow necessarily from anything else, but some second thing naturally exists or occurs after it. Conversely, an *end* is that which does itself naturally follow from something else, either necessarily or in general, but there is nothing else after it. A *middle* is that which itself comes after something else, and some other thing comes after it. Well-constructed plots should therefore not begin or end at any arbitrary point, but should employ the stated forms. (Aristotle, English translation 1996: 13)

The same structure can be found in the nocturnal spirit possession rituals of Nepal. In the first part²² the illness-causing spirit is called upon to reveal its identity and relate past events: "Who are you? Why are you causing such suffering? Who sent you?" In the middle part of the ritual the psychosocial conflicts that lie at the root of the illness are discussed. In the final part of the ritual drama the illness-causing powers must promise to leave the patient, sacrifices are offered and the spirit is driven out (pl. 5).

A pattern with unspecific contents is performed throughout the nocturnal rituals and the personal problems of the sick person are expressed within the basic structure. The correspondence to the individual situation is sometimes stronger and sometimes less so. But even when the identities and events of everyday reality are not obvious, simply following the basic pattern will lead to the alleviation of the suffering. Aristotle emphasizes that the function of the poet is not to say what *has* happened, but to say the kind of thing that *would* happen, i.e. what is possible in accordance with probability or necessity (Aristotle, English translation 1996: 16). The basic sequences of events in spirit possession rituals are possible "stories." It is likely for a married or

²² The invocation of the tutelary spirits and deities must precede the questioning of the spirit. At the end of the ritual these powers are dismissed. The special framework that is thereby created distinguishes the ritual from drama on a profane stage.

widowed woman to have problems with her husband's female relatives. Likewise, it is probable that a man—and therefore also his wife—will encounter difficulties when dividing up the family property. And it is possible and likely that conflicts involving envy and guilt will develop with poorer neighbours or members of an extended family. Therefore the basic structure of spirit possession rituals match more or less the individual problems of all the patients, whose suffering is due to psychosocial conflicts.

According to Victor Turner:

there is an interdependent, perhaps dialectic, relationship between social dramas and genres of cultural performance in perhaps all societies. Life, after all, is as much an imitation of art as the reverse. (1982: 72)

Regarding a story of the ethnic group of the Ndembu about a special bracelet he writes:

Just as the story itself still makes important points about family relationships and about the stresses between sex- and age-roles, and appears to be an emic generalization, clothed in metaphor and involving the projection of innumerable specific social dramas generated by these structural tensions, so does it feed back into the social process, providing it with a rhetoric, a mode of employment, and a meaning. (Turner 1982: 72)

Social drama and its enactment in a ritual influence the way in which conflicts are experienced. The structure of spirit possession rituals in Nepal provides a symbolic language, in which conflicts are talked about. Through the rhetoric of the ritual a special meaning is given to the experiences of the sick person and his or her relatives. If the suggested solutions contained in the ritual's basic structure are followed appropriately, the suffering will be alleviated.

The success of a spirit possession ritual does not depend on whether and to what extent a connection is established to the patient's and his or her relatives' experiences in everyday life, or whether the events actually took place or not. It is essential that all participants are familiar with the basic concepts and syntax of the language used. The concept of witches sending spirits to individuals with harmful intent and advice on how spirits and witches are to be treated so that they leave the

patient, belong to a tradition handed down from time immemorial, and are not specific of ethnic groups. Therefore the shamans can assume that the persons present at the rituals understand the basic pattern of the processes taking place.

The conflicts represented in the spirit possession rituals serve as models. They are events that occur many times and deeply affect the protagonists and the audience at the healing rituals. The figures of Greek drama, like those in the spirit possession rituals in Nepal, are symbolic figures and the sequence of events depicted by them, move spectators as well as participants. Not only can the individual problems of the patients and their families be sorted out according to the represented events, but also these possible and probable occurrences serve as basic plot that structure the experiences of the individuals.

The witches who speak during the nocturnal healing rituals are no monsters, but beings who, driven by envy, jealousy and despair, turn against those whom they see as the main cause of their suffering. Similarly, in Greek tragedies, the characters must not be too different from those of the spectators, so that they are able to identify with them. According to Aristotle, a person who is basically good, but has met with misfortune on account of a mistake, is the best model. The acts committed by the witches in Nepal are regarded as abominable because they cause damage and disease, but the witches also appear as disadvantaged and tortured human beings, who, like the figures in the Greek tragedies, evoke pity and fear.

The solution to the conflict must, in the drama as well as in the healing ritual, arise out of the story itself. The patterns of the spirit possession rituals and the events in the tragedies should lead to catharsis and to an understanding of the dynamics of possible and probable sequences of events.

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Religious Education in Manchu Shamanism, as Seen from *Jiaowuyun**

SHUYUN GUO

JILIN, CHINA

The Manchu have practiced shamanism since time immemorial. Owing to the particular development of their society, Manchu shamanism has developed certain unique qualities, among them the jiaowuyun system. Jiaowuyun function as a religious education and ritual training for Manchu shamans and their assistants that embodies many of the main questions relating to Manchu shamanism. This article, based on the author's many years of research on the Manchu people, will describe the fundamental elements of jiaowuyun, including the structure of the overall system, the methods it incorporates, and characteristics of those methods.

Religious education can be broad or narrow. A broad religious education is aimed at spreading a given religion's beliefs or recruiting new believers, while a narrow religious education trains new religious leaders. Since a broad religious education is aimed at a mass audience, it must be broad in its message and convey the most important aspects of the religion. By comparison, since a narrow religious education is directed at religious leaders and other specially trained personnel it conveys specialized information. There are many differences between the goals, methods, and content of a broad religious education (aimed at laypeople) versus narrow religious education (aimed at specialists). Scholars divide religious education into three types according to their emphasis: those that train religious personnel, those that train disciples, and those that do both.¹

* The present article is based on fieldwork conducted among the Manchu Shishi Clan in Jiutai City, Jilin Province, and was translated from Chinese by Stephen Donoho with the assistance of Dr. Daniel Kister and Dr. Lorne Holyoak. The Editors of *Shaman* express their sincere gratitude to all three for their help.

¹ See Zhang 1992: 335.

The Manchu people have practiced shamanism from time immemorial. Over the course of their long history, the beliefs of shamanism have become a part of the Manchu's collective consciousness.² From the very beginning of their history, these beliefs have influenced the Manchu, leaving their mark on the people's collective psychology, values, and cultural accomplishments. One scholar writes that the ideas of shamanism "have been passed down in this group for generations, leaving a deep impression on each member of the group. As a result of this influence, in different situations members of the group feel respect, fear, or adoration depending on the subject." (Lévy-Brühl 1987: 5) Because of their esteemed position, the Manchu's shamanic beliefs have influenced their psychology and the organization of their society. These beliefs are passed down in legends, stories, poems, and sacrificial rites, allowing each generation to receive the traditional philosophical, ethical, and practical ideas of the ancient Manchu people. Sacrificial rites provide the best opportunity to teach the people their ancestors' beliefs, so the site of the rites becomes a kind of classroom. As we can see, to peoples that practice shamanism, the religious education of shamanism has qualities that are universal for every people and in every part of life. It is an example of broad education.

But what of the education of new shamans? What special characteristics does their education have? What relationship does it have to the shamanic tradition? These questions are difficult to answer and have unfortunately been overlooked in the past. Indeed, until now these questions have been almost completely unaddressed from the perspective of anthropologists of education. The author, based on many years of fieldwork among the Manchu Shi Clan in Jiutai City, Jilin Province, has identified an activity common to Manchu religious education that is called *jiaowuyun*. She hopes that this article will be the first step towards a better understanding of the questions that still remain about religious education in Manchu shamanism.

² Translator's Note: "Collective consciousness" [*jitibiaoxiang* (集体表象) in Chinese] in this case refers to Durkheim's *la conscience collective*.

Manchu Shamanism and *Jiaowuyun*

The Manchu are a minority in China, with a population of about 10 million. Their important population centers are Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Hebei, and Beijing; but they can be found from the Pacific coast in the east to Xinjiang and Tibet in the west, as far south as Hainan and Taiwan, and as far north as the grasslands of Inner Mongolia. The Manchu have a long and glorious history that dates back 2000 years to the Sushen People, their earliest known ancestors. The Manchu (or their ancestors) have been powerful at three times in Chinese history: in the Bohai state and in the Jin and Qing dynasties.³ Their role in the history of China's minorities has been tremendous.

The Manchu and their ancestors have always practiced shamanism. Early in the twelfth century, the Southern Song historian Xu Mengsheng wrote, "Wushi was crafty and very capable. He united the Nuzhen people, created their laws, and invented a script to write their language. Some of these people are called *shanman*, which means sorceress in the Nuzhen language. In the past, the *shanman* were as powerful as gods, but since Zhan Han, none are so capable."⁴ This is the first use of the word 'shaman' in Chinese historical records. Wushi's famous general, Wanxing Xiyu, was also a famous shaman and a scholar of great learning who, "inspired by the Han language [i.e. Chinese], combined the Khitan script with his own language to produce written Nuzhen." For this accomplishment, later generations of scholars compared him to Cang Jie, the mythical inventor of the written Chinese language. Because of the high position he occupied, Wanxing had access to many historical records. He is the most famous shaman in the history of China's minorities. It is from the record of his life that we know the antiquity of shamanism among the Manchu.

Manchu shamanism has undergone a long evolution, but in the final years of the Ming dynasty and first years of the Qing dynasty, it reached the apex of its development. Since the middle of the Qing

³ Translator's Note: Parhae [*bohai* (渤海)] was a state in present day Manchuria founded during the Tang empire. The Sumo Mohe (ancestors of the Manchu) assisted the Chinese Tang Dynasty in suppressing a rebellion among the Khitan in northern Manchuria, and were rewarded with their own semi-autonomous state.

⁴ Zhan Han (1079–1136 AD), also called "Wanxingzonghan," was a Nuzhen general, statesman, and one of the founders of the Jin Dynasty.

Dynasty, however, Manchu shamanism has been affected by several important developments. In order to produce a more unified people, the Qing rulers, created a unified ideology for their people. The most revolutionary was promulgated in “The Book of Sacrifices for Manchuria,” which the Qianlong Emperor published for the purpose of reforming Manchu shamanism. The changes implemented in this document revolutionized Manchu shamanism from top to bottom. It did so by forcing all the Manchu clans to elevate the spirits of the Aisin Gioro Clan [Qianlong’s clan] to the chief positions, by requiring the various clans to perform sacrificial rites together, and by making the rites themselves simpler and more stylized. An important change in the nature of the rites was the elimination of spirit possession rites in favor of rites of adoration. Scholars call this type of rite a “family rite” (*jiaji*, 家祭) and the presiding shaman a “family shaman” (*jiasaman*, 家萨满). Only a few clans beyond the reach of the government edict preserved the older rites that featured spirit possession, called “wild rites” (*yeji*, 野祭). Because the Qing Dynasty reforms affected Manchu shamanism at every level, and because of changes in society since that time, Manchu shamanism today resembles its precursors very little. Along the banks of the Wusuli River, in the middle of the Songhua River basin’s “three branches” area, however, traditional Manchu shamanism still survives. In Ningan, Jilin, Wula, and a few other areas of early Manchu habitation, Manchu shamanism survives in its traditional form.

Nonetheless, these clans have not remained completely unchanged. In particular, the means of selecting new shamans has changed over time. In the past, the ancestral spirits used to select the new shamans for most clans; but today, living clan representatives make the selections themselves. The most important figure in choosing a new shaman is the living shaman, while the clan and the would-be shaman’s family must also approve a young man before he can become a candidate.

Once approved, candidates undergo training classes in the shamanic traditions called *jiaowuyun*. The Manchu have held such classes since the Qing Dynasty. These classes are essential for passing on the knowledge of shamanism to the clan as well as the means to train new shamans in the shamanic arts. The Manchu call such classes both “*xuewuyun*” and “*jiaowuyun*.” The former is directed mainly at clan members in general (general religious education), the latter at the new shamans (specific religious education). “*Wuyun*” is Manchu for ‘nine’, the most important number for the Manchu and regarded as a lucky

number. Because the new shamans' periods of study are divided into sections of nine days, these sections are known as *jiaowuyun*.⁵ Different clans have different periods of study depending on their situation and the clan, hence there is a “*jiu* (nine) *wuyun*” (81 days), a “*qi* (seven) *wuyun*” (63 days), a “*wu* (five) *wuyun*” (54 days), etc.

From the perspective of anthropologists of education, *jiaowuyun* satisfies the requirements of a religious education for shamans and their assistants. Since the Qing Dynasty, *jiaowuyun* has been a very important event in Manchu society. Although attitudes in modern society towards traditional religion have changed tremendously so that holding *jiaowuyun* has become much more difficult, the efforts of clan leaders and shamans have ensured that *jiaowuyun* is still held. For example, the Manchu Shi clans, which live in the villages of Hujiaoxing and Mangkaxiang, near Jiutai City in Jilin Province, have held *jiaowuyun* sessions several times in recent years. Because their shamans and the shaman assistants, called *zaili*, have now been growing older, they have done so to insure the production of several new young shamans.⁶ These villages have also held *luowuyun* ceremonies, where new shamans have the opportunity to practice their skills in an actual ritual and receive the clan's approval.⁷ On December 27–30, 2004, February 6, 2005, and March 8–9, 2007, the author observed three separate ceremonies held in the villages of Xiaotun and Dongha. This article is the result of that fieldwork.

The Manchu Shi Clan

The Shi Clan is a *fomanzhou* family composed of several branches, the Xiketeli, Shiketeli, Qiketeli, Yiketeli, and other branches with similar

⁵ Translator's Note: *Jiaowuyun* is a mixture of Chinese and Manchu. Jiao (教) is Chinese for 'to teach' combined with wuyun (乌云). Together, the composite term means something like 'to teach for nine [days]'. For its part, *xue* (学) in *xuowuyun* means 'to study'.

⁶ Translator's Note: “*Zaili*” (栽立) are assistants to the shaman and undergo much of the same training.

⁷ Translator's Note: “*Luowuyun*” also combines the Chinese and Manchu languages. Luo (落) means, 'to finish', hence *luowuyun* means roughly, 'to finish the nine days'.

sounding, but differently written names.⁸ According to the clan's own *jiapu* (lineage scrolls), the family is seventeen to eighteen generations old (over 350 years); and today it includes some 200 families.

The clan originally lived in the Huifa River area, in the eastern Nuzhen territory. Later they moved southward; and after many migrations, they arrived at the foot of the Changbai Mountains. After Nurcai began uniting the Manchu clans, the Huifa region submitted to him in 1670. Before long, the Shi Clan was moving south again as soldiers in Nurcai's armies, and they were stationed in Shenyang.⁹ In the first year of the Shunzhi's reign, the Shi Clan was sent to the area of Wula to "fish pearls and catch marten," and to take over the government of Wula. They took up residence on an island in the Wula River, and were made responsible for pearl fishing in the region. But when the Shi Clan's shaman killed the shaman of another, related clan in a battle of skills, the Shi Clan was forced to move again.¹⁰ In the course of this move, the clan split into two branches. One settled in Xiaochaotun, the present day Huizu County of Jiutai City; the other originally settled in Xihacun, in the town of Qitaimu, also near Jiutai City. At this time the Manchu Gua'erjia Clan (called "*luoguan*" (罗关) in Mandarin Chinese) lived in Mangka Village, a mainly agricultural community on the banks of the Songhua River, near Dongha Village. Mangka Village had suffered for many years from the flooding of the Songhua, and the villagers had grown weary of their precarious existence on the banks of the river. Meanwhile, the Shi Clan was still expected to send an annual tribute of pearls to the Imperial Court; but it found it difficult to fish for pearls from Xihacun, which lay a fair distance from the river. After many negotiations, the two clans agreed to exchange villages. Since this time, the Shi Clan has lived in Dongha Village continuously for over 300 years. The villagers call Dongha Village, Dongtun (lit. "Eastern Village"), and Xiaochotun, Xitun (lit. "Western Village").

⁸ The "*foumanzhou*" (佛满洲) are those Manchu clans that submitted to Nurcai's rule relatively early. "*Fo*" is Manchu and means 'old'.

⁹ Translator's Note: It was common for Nurcai to absorb whole clans into his armies as a unit, making all the men in the village soldiers and their village headman the captain.

¹⁰ Translator's Note: It was common for Manchu shamans to battle each other in either the physical or spiritual worlds to prove their power over each other.

The two villages originally shared a single *jiapu*, but since 1943 have kept separate lineage records.

Dongha is located on the West bank of the Songhua River, a region of pristine forests and waters. It is called “a fishing village of heroes.” Dongha Village is actually composed of two smaller villages, Dongha and Dagang, connected by a winding cow path. To either side of the Songhua, a floodwall stretches for 4–5 kilometres, protecting the villages from the effects of the Songhua. Willow trees grow in lush groves along the riverbanks; and in the springtime, their new growth gives an appearance of thriving life to the village. The total area of the village is more than 450 square metres, of which more than 250 are farmland. The per capita yearly income of the residents is 2700 RMB; and although the village cannot be called rich, neither is it poor (Fig. 1).¹¹



Fig. 1. Behind the author is the Shi Clan village of Donghacun, 2005.

Dongha is a “multi-clan village” where members of the Shi, Jin, and other related Manchu clans live together. Originally the villagers were only Manchu, but later Han soldiers from the Manchu armies (called Hanjun) and other Han Chinese came to live there as well. Although the population today is both Manchu and Han, the Manchu have always

¹¹ Translator’s Note: 2700 RMB is equal to approximately \$380 USD.

been in the majority, today comprising about 60% of the population. The Shi Clan is the largest family in Dongha; out of a total population of 2100 people (470 household) the Shi Clan accounts for more than 430 (120 households), or about a quarter of the village. Thus the important positions in the Village Council are often filled by members of the Shi Clan. The shamanic rites discussed in this article are predominantly those of the Shi Clan (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. *Jiaowuyun* has strict regulations, which are written down by the organizers and posted on the wall. Photo: Shuyun Guo, 2005.

The Process of *Jiaowuyun*

Jiaowuyun consists of a series of steps, each of which is both independent and inseparable from the others. Together, they constitute a comprehensive program of religious education.

CHOOSING CANDIDATES

Since choosing and training the most qualified students affects whether or not the clan's shamanic rites will be passed down, this is an important objective of *jiaowuyun*. In recent years, the Manchu tribes of Northeast China have begun holding more “family rites,” which do not include spirit possession, and so have come to regard the training

of “family shamans” as the primary function of *jiaowuyun*. The Shi Clan, however, has preserved to the present the traditional shamanic rites involving summoning spirits and spirit possession down. In the past, Manchu shamans strictly abided by the tradition of the ancestral spirits choosing the candidates. The clan used *jiaowuyun* only to select and train the *zaili* and *guotou*.¹² Owing to changes in society, however, the spirits have not chosen a shaman for the Shi Clan for nearly fifty years. In order to ensure the survival of their traditions, the clan has recently begun training a new kind of shaman, called *biaogun* (标棍) shaman.¹³ Thus, in recent years the *jiaowuyun* of the Shi Clan have served to train *biaogun* shamans.

To be allowed to attend a *jiaowuyun* session, students must be chosen by the clan and willing to participate. At a set time, the clan leaders, present shamans, and *zaili* gather as a committee to discuss the selection of candidates and question potential candidates and their families about their willingness to be trained. Candidates can also be nominated by themselves or their family members, but the nomination must be approved by the committee. On the other hand, if a selected candidate does not agree to be a candidate, the clan cannot force them to participate in the selection process. The committee carefully considers the prospective candidates’ intelligence, health, and personal qualities. The ideal candidate is honest and upright, clever and enterprising, respects the old and loves the young, and actively participates in clan activities. The wishes of those who, because of a childhood sickness or other trauma, feel called to be shamans are also respected; and they are allowed to attend the classes. This type of candidate was very common in the past, but is rarely seen today.

The Dongha branch of the Shi Clan began holding *jiaowuyun* classes in 1998; and since then, they have held classes in 1999, 2004, and 2007. They have trained six batches of students, including shamans, *zaili*, and *guotou*.

Shi Clan Dongha Village *jiaowuyun* students:

Shi Guanghua: Male, 21 years old. He works outside the village, mainly in musical acoustics. As a result, he understand music very well

¹² Translator’s Note: *zaili* (栽立) are assistants to the shaman and *guotou* (锅头) are specialists who prepare the sacrificial offerings.

¹³ *Biaogun* is Manchu for ‘of the family’.

and his chanting is especially precise. He has already completed two sessions of *jiaowuyun*.

Shi Wenbao: Male, 28 years old, married, junior high school education. He raises pigs, works on cars, and farms the land near his home. He has attended *jiaowuyun* classes since 1998 and completed four. His father, Shi Dianyi, has been very supportive of his efforts.

Shi Zongchao: Male, 28 years old, married. He attended junior high school at a young age, over the objections of the clan, but did very well in his studies. He has a contract for the village ferry service and does wiring at construction sites, with the result that his household is fairly prosperous. He has completed four sessions of *jiaowuyun*.

Shi Zongming: Male, 12 years old, student.

Shi Jixin: Male, 14 years old, student.

Shi Wenchang: Male, 42 years old, farmer, *guotou*.

The Xiaochaotun branch of the Shi Clan has had six persons attend *Jiaowuyun* classes. Of them, only Shi Zongchao has been able to become a shaman; the other five students are *zaili*. Of the six students, five are descended from the Shi Clan's powerful *zaili*, Shi Qingmin. In 2004, three sons of Shi Wenduan, the sixth son of Shi Qingmin, were selected as students: Shi Zhongyi, Shi Zhongxue, and Shi Zhongduo. Their father asked them, "Who among you is willing to study?" All three replied that they were willing, so Shi Wenduan urged them to study hard so that they might carry on their clan's traditions.

Shi Clan Xiaochaotun Village *jiaowuyun* students:

Shi Zongyi: Male, 28 years old, part time farmer and laborer. His singing and chanting strongly resembles that of his grandfather.

Shi Zongxue: Male, 24 years old. He has worked part time outside the village for a long time.

Shi Zongduo: Male, 19 years old. Part time laborer. His education stopped before the first year of junior high school. He studied *jiaowuyun* in 2004 and was quickly able to summon the spirits. He has already mastered six spirits including: the eagle spirit, the golden flower fire spirit, *selengtaimani*, and *duoheluomanni*.

Shi Zongchang: Male, 27 years old, the son of Shi Qingmin's third son, Shi Wenzhen, junior high school education. He works as a brick-layer for an engineering company.

Shi Zongbo: Male, 27 years old, part-time laborer outside the village.

Shi Zongle: Male, 22 years old, son of Shi Qingmin's seventh son, Shi Wenming, manual laborer.

It must be understood that not every student admitted to the *jiaowuyun* training can become a shaman. If a student proves to be un-clever, uncoordinated in his activities, or not diligent in studies, the instructor can drop him at any time. Some students drop out at halfway point; others finish the training, but are still unqualified to become shamans. In 1998, eleven people began the Dongha branch's *jiaowuyun* training. Today, only three students out of the original group remain. The others have all been eliminated. If new candidates are chosen in the midst of a *jiaowuyun* process, they simply join the older students in class.

OPENING CEREMONY: WORSHIPPING THE ANCESTORS

At the commencement of a *jiaowuyun* class, the senior shaman holds an opening ceremony. Under the guidance of the master shaman, the students worship the ancestors, hang the *jiapu*, burn incense, sacrifice animals, lay offerings, and display the ritual implements. The new students and the master shamans kneel before the ancestors in proper order, and the master shaman asks the ancestors' blessing on the new students, that they might succeed in their studies and ensure the transmission of shamanism to the next generation. At the conclusion of the ceremony, everyone kow tows. The function of the opening ceremony is to establish proper reverence for the ancestors in the minds of the new students and to fill them with a sense of responsibility for the task they are about to undertake.

THE NINE-DAY EXCHANGE OF OFFERINGS

Jiaowuyun classes are divided into nine-day periods, accompanied by specific ceremonies dividing them. Although these ceremonies are not particularly formal, it is necessary to use ritual implements and change the offerings to show respect for the ancestors. For every nine-day period, the students replace the offerings of alcohol and fruit and sweep away the incense ash and accumulated dust. This exchange of offerings is an important day in the *jiaowuyun* system. The master shaman and *zaili* administer tests to the students at this time, and they then begin the next section of *jiaowuyun* (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3. During *xuewuyun*, the exchange of offerings every nine days acts to divide one section (one *wuyun*) from another. Photo: Shuyun Guo, 2005.

CONCLUDING CEREMONY: *LUOWUYUN*

A *jiaowuyun* course concludes with a ceremony called *luowuyun*, which is a combination graduation ceremony, test of the new students' accomplishments, and presentation of the students to the ancestors and the clan. At the same time, the *luowuyun* ceremony provides an opportunity for the new students to apply their skills. *Luowuyun* is an important part of the *jiaowuyun* process, but it is also an important ceremony in itself. Although *luowuyun* is different from ceremonies conducted for the whole clan, it is considered an authentic shamanic ceremony and an important opportunity for the students to put their skills into actual practice. Normally, shamanic ceremonies are presided over by an experienced shaman and take place at certain fixed times of year. A *luowuyun* ceremony, however, is overseen by the student shamans themselves, is held on a date determined by the progress of the *jiaowuyun* course, and includes content appropriate to the skill level of the student shamans. As one might expect, the content of a *luowuyun* ceremony is typically reduced somewhat from that of an ordinary shamanic rite (pl. 6).

The villages of Xiaochaotun and Dongha designated December 27–29 of 2004 for their separate *luowuyun* ceremonies. Shi Zongduo,

the student shaman from Xiaochaotun attended *jiaowuyun* classes when he was only sixteen. The clan leader took into consideration that he was still young and his body still weak. So he was only introduced to six spirits: the eagle spirit, *ansemanni*, *duoheluomani*, *selengtaimanni*, the golden flower fire spirit, and *huyaqimanni*. In his *luowuyun* ceremony in 2004, Shi Zongduo was only responsible for these six spirits.

Luowuyun is similar to the traditional shamanic ceremonies of the Shi Clan. It includes two parts. The first consists of sacrifice to the clan spirits and includes: setting up the altar, placing offerings, burning incense, making the *dagao*,¹⁴ *tiaoshen*,¹⁵ praising the war goddess, “*aodoumama*” (奥都妈妈), and *huansuo*.¹⁶ The second part consists of summoning the spirits and includes: summoning the spirits, possession by the spirits, dismissal of the spirits, animal sacrifice, offering the animal parts, and inviting the spirits to purify the courtyard. A *luowuyun* ceremony requires about three days to complete, whereas a normal shamanic rite requires nine days. Because the Shi Clan’s shamanic rites are so complicated, I will describe them in more detail in another article, using the techniques of symbolic anthropology to decipher their meaning.

¹⁴ Translator’s Note: *Dagao* are cakes made of glutinous rice beaten into a paste. The Manchu and other Northern Chinese minorities normally eat them dipped in sugar or honey. In Manchu shamanic rites, the rice is washed and cooked outside while the shaman and *zaili* sing. Then the cooked rice is taken inside and placed in a boat shaped trough, where two *goutou* stand on either side of the trough and beat the rice into paste with alternating strokes from large wooden mallets. Finally, two unmarried girls form the paste into cakes, which are then offered to the clan’s ancestors.

¹⁵ Translator’s Note: *Tiaoshen* (跳神), *fangdashen* (放大神), and *fangyeshen* (放野神) are the three kinds of spirit invocations in Manchu shamanism. *Tiaoshen* calls on the spirits of distant ancestors, such as *Chaohazhanye* (超哈占爷), the Spirit of the White Mountains; *fangdashen* invokes the spirits of past shamans; and *fangyeshen* calls on the spirits of animals.

¹⁶ Translator’s Note: *Huansuo* (换锁) is a part of the ceremony honoring the Mother Goddess, *Foduomama* (佛朵妈妈). At a certain point in the ceremony, the shaman places a string of colourful threads, called *suo* (锁) (lit., ‘chain’), around the neck of a young child. If the child is a girl, it is believed that the threads make her grow up healthy and beautiful; if the child is a boy, he will grow up to be a hero.

The Content of *Jiaowuyun*

The many components of *jiaowuyun* include: moral education, the fundamental concepts of sacrifice, ritual procedures, model rites, and various other shamanic arts. The most important of these are as follows:

(1) Moral education in: responsibility to the clan, a sincere belief in shamanism, respect for the ancestors and all other people. The students are lectured by the clan leaders and master shaman on the legends of shamanism, the history of the clan, the origin legends of the clan, and the laws of the clan, with the goal of establishing in students' minds a profound respect for the clan and their religion.

(2) The procedures of shamanic rites:

- (a) the procedures and taboos surrounding individual ceremonies;
- (b) the placement of altars and shrines, the treatment of idols, and the placement of offerings, as well as the use of the ritual instruments;
- (c) for *guotou*, study of the preparation of offerings such as the ritual wine, the *dagao*, the *tuanzi*,¹⁷ and sacrificial animals.

(3) Shamanic arts, including drumming, waist bells, dances, and coordinating the drum with other instruments (pl. 7 a).

(4) Shamanic knowledge, including, ritual songs, ritual language, spirit legends (pls 7 b, 8 a).

The above skills are necessary to the task of all clan shamans and *guotou* and an important part of the training of all *jiaowuyun*, albeit with minor differences between clans.

As was said above, the Shi Clan alone has preserved into modern times the so-called "wild rites," those featuring spirit possession. The skills needed by Shi shamans are thus necessarily more numerous and complicated than those needed by other Manchu shamans. The training of Shi shamans emphasizes the ceremonies for summoning and dismissing the spirits, the origins of the spirits, the different dances for various spirits, their songs, the instruments appropriate to each spirit, walking through

¹⁷ Translator's Note: *Tuanzi* (团子) are cakes made of powdered rice and water.

the fire pit, holding hot coals in the mouth, climbing trees and other ritual structures, and coordinating all of the above with the *zaili*.

Manchu shamanic believers have a saying, “three parts shaman, seven parts *zaili*.” This highlights the important role of the *zaili* in shamanic ceremonies. The *zaili* are not only well versed in procedures, laws, and taboos of the shamanic rites, they also know the particularities of each individual spirit and are able to adapt to them accordingly. When different spirits descend, the *zaili* must be able to address them in appropriate language depending on the spirits’ habits and characteristics and present the proper offering to them. For example, if the ancestor spirits express dissatisfaction with the clan, the *zaili* must placate them by explaining the situation and begging for forgiveness. Also, after being possessed, the shaman is often left exhausted and confused. The *zaili* must hasten to his side and gently wake him, then guide him through the remaining ceremonies. At the same time, the *zaili* must answer the spirits for the shaman without making any errors, hand the shaman the appropriate tools for the ceremony, and continue praising the spirits throughout.

Methods of Training

The arts of shamanism are many and varied, and *jiaowuyun* students must master them all in a short period of time, no easy task to be sure. Over the course of their long history, the various Manchu clans have developed an effective method of instruction that has been passed down from generation to generation.

ORAL INSTRUCTION AND ROTE MEMORIZATION

Manchu shamanic rites, both spirit songs and plain speech, are conducted in the Manchu language. As most Manchu no longer speak their ancestral language, however, and have no language environment in which to learn it, beginning students cannot understand the words of the rites. Thus the master shaman must teach them the verses word by word. Oral instruction is the oldest and most successful means of instruction in *jiaowuyun* and for this reason is still used today. Likewise, when teaching the students how to beat the drum, use the waist

bells, and perform the various dances, the master shaman teaches each drum beat and each dance individually until the students can perform them skillfully and harmoniously without assistance.

COMBINED INSTRUCTION AND PRACTICE

The end result of *jiaowuyun* is that the new shamans can conduct whole rites themselves, finally replacing the master shaman and ensuring the survival of shamanism for the next generation. For this reason, *jiaowuyun* stresses practice. The master shaman and *zaili* drill the students repeatedly on each skill, both as a class, and one-on-one (pl. 8 b).

DRILL AND TESTING

Because the Manchu language is so difficult to study without a language environment, and because the skills of shamanism are so unique, the master shaman makes extensive use of review and testing when training new students. In a single nine-day training period, the first eight days are devoted to instruction and practice, and the ninth day to review and testing. After passing the test, the students begin the next phase of training. The comprehensive techniques described above ensure the effectiveness of *jiaowuyun*.

A Few Reflections on *Jiaowuyun*

In *jiaowuyun*, the Manchu manifest the beginnings of a theological system of education.

(1) *Educational system*: The activities of *jiaowuyun* have certain characteristics—structure, timing, selection process, etc.—which have remained unchanged over many years because of their effectiveness. The Shi Clan divides their *zaili* into five grades based on their age and the shamanic skills they have mastered.¹⁸ One can say that the Manchu *jiaowuyun* has the characteristics of a religious education and manifests the first steps towards a religious system.

¹⁸ See Canjiansongheping 1993: 3.

(2) *Educational form*: There are several similarities between Manchu religious education and modern secular education. Several aspects of the instruction and organization of present-day Manchu religious education have been influenced by ideas of modern education. These include: the use of short term training classes, collective study (as opposed to traditional one-on-one instruction), mutual encouragement among students, and combined drill and testing. Although other Northern Chinese minority groups train their shamans by having them study under a master shaman, the Manchu *jiaowuyun* system is unique to their people.

(3) *Dual purpose education*: *Jiaowuyun* serves both as an education in shamanism and a means to strengthen the students' connection with their clan. The group that organizes the clan also organizes *jiaowuyun*. It is they who charge the master shaman with passing on the clan's beliefs and training others in the shamanic arts. The students are all drawn from the clan, selected by the clan, and approved by the ruling body of the clan. Finally, the clan shoulders the expense of training the candidates. The clan-oriented nature of the training is a prominent characteristic of this form of Manchu religious education.

In recent years the Northern Chinese minorities have shattered the boundaries that once separated them. It is thus now possible to study shamanism under the teacher of another minority, and for shamans from one group to preside over ceremonies for others. For example, the *Hanjun*, although they already belong to the shamanic community, can study shamanism in the *jiaowuyun* classes of Manchu clans with whom they have close relations. Thus *Hanjun* shamanism not only has characteristic unique to their minority, but has also begun to take on the characteristics of Manchu shamanism.

(4) *The character of jiaowuyun education*: The fundamental character of *jiaowuyun* is that of a religious education. Although, *jiaowuyun* has incorporated certain elements of modern education, it still utilizes the traditional content of legend, stories and other elements that are easily understood and generate interest. Nonetheless, religion is at the soul of *jiaowuyun*. Religious ideas are at the center of *jiaowuyun* lessons, and shamanic ceremonies permeate its activities from beginning to end. From the opening ceremony to the graduation, shamanic ideas are present.

From this study we can conclude that *jiaowuyun* has the characteristics of both a broad and a specific religious education.

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Selkup Shamanism in Correspondence between Vilmos Diószegi and R. A. Uraev

ALEXANDRA KIM-MALONEY

ANCHORAGE, AK

This paper focuses on an original source on Selkup shamanism from the archives of my late uncle, ethnographer Rafael Amirovich Uraev. These contain a draft of his reply to a letter from Vilmos Diószegi, the famous Hungarian scholar, asking for details of the shamanic huts (ambarchiks), wooden idols, open-air burials and fortune-telling among the Tym Selkups which he thought Uraev might be able to provide. The correspondence was dated October/November 1966.

Vilmos Diószegi and Rafael Uraev met in person in Leningrad in 1958 while Diószegi was studying shamanic objects in Russian museums. Diószegi had come to Russia in June 1957 and spent 15 months collecting materials for an archive of shamanism he wished to found and carrying out fieldwork among Siberian peoples (Hoppál 1998: 118).

Rafael Amirovich Uraev was born in 1926 of a Tatar family in the Bashkir Republic of the Soviet Union (now Bashkortostan). He came to Tomsk when he was 15 years old. He worked at the Tomsk Instrument plant as a turner for seven years and later enrolled on a history course at Tomsk State University. After graduating in 1952 he worked at the Tomsk Regional Museum, first as a scientific assistant, then as a vice director and finally as director. He traveled in the Tomsk region documenting the cultural sites of indigenous peoples of Siberia and collecting artifacts for the museum. His interest focused on native peoples of that region (Selkups, Khanty and Chulyum Turks) and their cultures.

While working for the museum, Uraev got in touch with a famous Tomsk scholar, Professor Andreas Dulson, and discussed with him the dating and components of Kulai culture, the ancient culture of modern Selkups. Like Dulson, Uraev applied a holistic approach in his study

of indigenous cultures of Siberia, the term holistic referring to a concern with a system as a whole rather than with only some of its parts. Thus, Uraev explored archaeological findings, language, folklore and toponyms. He also applied observation as a participant during his fieldwork among the Selkups and other Siberian peoples. Being of Tatar origin and speaking the Tatar language fluently, he was able to communicate with Chulymys (Siberian Turks living in the Tomsk region) and document their language.

Rafael Uraev did extensive fieldwork among the Tym Selkups in the early and mid 1950s. He explored ethnographic materials, conducted archaeological excavations, and collected Selkup vocabulary and folklore in the area of the Tym River in the Tomsk region. Uraev was quite impressed with the Selkup shamanism that was still practised in this area. In summer 1956 he spent a few weeks among the Tym Selkups exploring their beliefs and trying to trace connections between ethnographical data and artifacts from archaeological sites in the area. He documented a few Selkup cultural sites with an *ambarchik* (log hut on piles) in the center. His notes on Selkup shamanism at the Tym River are of great value (they were prepared for the publication by Alexandra Kim and published in 1994, see Uraev 1994: 73–85).

As already mentioned, Uraev met Diószegi in Leningrad in 1958 and shared his findings on Selkup shamanism with the Hungarian scholar. This information was the subject of Diószegi's correspondence with Uraev. In his letter, Diószegi enquired about shamanic huts (*ambarchiks*), wooden idols, open-air burials and fortune-telling among the Tym Selkups. An incomplete draft of Uraev's reply found in his family's private archive illuminates some of these questions.

Будапешт, 11. X. 1966.

Многочаженный Коллега!

Извините пожалуйста, что я помещаю
Вам. у меня просьба к Вам!

Я пишу статью о шаманстве бара-
бинских татар — и так вижу, некоторые
параметры можно найти у селькизов.
Я помню, в Ленинграде (в 1958 г.) Вы
рассказывали мне о священном амбаре
селькизов. Прошу Вас, пошлите мне
описание амбара, и если возможно, фото
хоть одного островного головного идола.

Кроме этих мне очень важно было бы
знать: известно-ли у селькизов воздуш-
ные захоронения и лицо гдид гада-
ния.

Что касается последний: шаман во
время гадания берет в правую руку, боль-

Fig. 1. Diószegi's letter to Uraev, page 1.

шим и указательными пальцами захва-
тывает тетиву посередине, уравнивает
оба конца лука; ждет, загадав что-либо
далее на что хочет получить ответ; лу-
чок по его словам, должен сам за-
жаться на тетиве, как оси.

Я очень прошу Вас, если у Вас есть
такой материал, такие данные, сообщите
пожалуйста со мной. Конечно с Ва-
шим разрешением я буду сослаться в
моей статье на эти данные.

Я надеюсь, что Вы здоровы и
успешно работаете. Я желаю
Вам много успехов

В. Диосеги.

P.S. Статью мою я должен скоро кончить,
поэтому прошу Вас, немедленно отве-
тить.

Адрес: Венгрия
Budapest VIII
Könyves K. ut. 40
Diószegi V.

Fig. 2. Diószegi's letter to Uraev, page 2.

Diószegi to Uraev

Budapest, October 11, 1966

Dear Colleague!

I very much hope that the following request will not be too much trouble for you.

I am writing an article on the shamanism of the Baraba Tatars, and I note that some parallels might be traced among the Selkups. I remember you telling me about the sacred hut (*ambarchik*) of the Selkups, in Leningrad (in 1958). Please could you send me a description of this hut, and if possible, at least one picture of the pointed-head idol.

In addition, it is important for me to know if open-air burials and bows for predictions are known among the Selkups.

“Bows for predictions” involve a shaman taking the bow in his right hand while making his predictions, and taking the string in the middle between his forefinger and thumb. Balancing both ends of the bow, he waits for the answer to his question; in his words the bow should swing on the string by itself.

I would very appreciate it if you could share any material you may have with me. I would like to cite these data in my article, of course, with your permission.

I hope you are in good health and that your work is going well. I wish you much success.

Sincerely,

V. Diószegi

PS I have to finish my article soon, and therefore I would really appreciate a speedy reply.

Томск, 2/11-66г.

многочитаемый Диосеги

Доброего на Ваши записки:

1. У селкупов, араны боютих в округлах среднее Ураев (по р. Оби и ее притокам Тывму, Паравам, Назвоату, Кенит) до последних времен сохранялись неск. названий или обозначений или чисел в их амбарниках. Средневековые родовые селы они стали единичными.

По виду амбарника небольшого (1,5 x 2 м), в духе каменной крестной, с окном (30 x 40 см) с занавеской или восточной широтой или стелом, сверху окна вдувание с вдуванием нахлывающимся духом и крестом таратву. Внутренне амбарника, с занавеской широтой стелом в один ряд стелом-ребристом в один ряд из дерева изображены земля свелки т.е. Кудей - духи духа каждого теля семьи (малый дух всегда находится в семье во мне). Так, в Ураеве сохраняются Мамбокская пуховая амбарника (она в старом виде была река Мамбокская (Мамбокс-Орел, ка-река - Орелская река), урало-приток р. Тывма/Мамбокская река) изображены. Их размеры: ширина от 1 до 2 м, высота, которая от 1 до 2 м, длина 1 м, ширина и высота. Каждый дух имеет свое название. Так, в Мамбокске: 1. Квуйяргу - отец, глава семьи (он по размеру так же самый большой);

2. Квуйяргу дмайо - его жена; 3. Квуйяргу

йда - его сын; 4. Квуйяргей кийда - его дочь;

5. Квуйяргей пийендэ - его младший сын.

Fig. 3. Uraev's letter to Diószegi, page 1.

после смерти галва семьи действующим, ^{Коронет} в) думно, т.е. их ~~возвращаются~~ в ~~русские~~ в тех местах, где ~~август~~ и ~~католический~~ ~~Солов~~ ~~один~~ ~~засид~~. Это ~~описывает~~ ~~наверное~~ ~~мен~~, ~~то~~

По представлению селкупов смерть - это уход души (духа) от тела. ~~Потому~~ ~~мои~~ ~~дух~~ ~~после~~ ~~смерти~~ некоторое время ~~продвигает~~ ~~есть~~ ~~в~~ ~~селкуп~~ ~~мире~~, т.е. продолжает жить ~~как~~ ~~и~~ ~~раньше~~, в состоянии которого и ~~может~~ ~~возвратиться~~ ~~к~~ ~~телу~~ души ~~мало~~ ~~духи~~.

4. Олке для ~~позани~~ ~~камень~~ ~~селкупов~~ ~~не~~ ~~знают~~ ~~или~~ ~~не~~ ~~знаю~~, ~~хотят~~ ~~ли~~ ~~использовать~~ ~~засид~~ ~~применяются~~ ~~в~~ ~~их~~ ~~ритуалах~~ ~~абрико~~ ~~сий~~.

Надеюсь, это мои ответы в ~~кажд~~ ~~мне~~ ~~степени~~ ~~кажд~~ ~~вам~~ ~~в~~ ~~ваши~~ ~~исследованиях~~. Эти ~~подразумевает~~ ~~дополнительные~~ ~~данные~~, ~~кто~~ ~~я~~ ~~буду~~ ~~рад~~ ~~найти~~ ~~в~~ ~~мне~~ ~~моих~~ ~~исследованиях~~.

Ураев.

Адрес Томск-4.

Уч. Белинского 27, кв. 1.

Ураеву Р. А.

Fig. 4. Uraev's letter to Diószegi, page 3 (page 2 is missing).

Uraev to Diószegi

Tomsk, November 4, 1966

Dear Diószegi,

In response to your questions:

So-called sacred huts (*ambarchiks*) were maintained among the Selkups living in the neighborhood of the Middle Ob (along the Ob and its tributaries—the Tym, Parabel, Vassiugan and Ket) until quite recently. With the collapse

of the tribal system they were turned into family-oriented sites.

The huts do not look big (1,5 x 2 m). They have sloping roofs, a window (30 x 40 cm) facing east or west, and are supported on stilts. Communication with the spirits inside was conducted through the window, where the offering was also placed. At the back of the hut there were images of the family members carved out of wood standing in one row, i.e. *kuwej*—spirits of every family member (my spirit is always in me).

Thus there are five wooden images in a well-preserved Lymbel cultic hut discovered at the mouth of the Lymbelka (*lymbel* ‘eagle’, *ka* ‘river’ ‘Eagle river’), a right-hand tributary of the Tym. The images are pretty big, between 60 cm to 1 m and more, and the faces of women, men, and teenagers are clearly differentiated. Every spirit has its own name. For instance, in Lymbel:

квутärꝑꝑꝑ [kvutärgu] ‘father, the head of the family’ (also ‘the largest’);

квутärꝑꝑꝑ эмата [kvutärgu emata] – ‘his wife’;

квутärꝑꝑꝑ ида [kvutärgu ida] – ‘his son’;

квутärꝑꝑꝑ нейда [kvutärgu neida] – ‘his daughter’;

квутärꝑꝑꝑ төжөндө [kvutärgu töjendə] – ‘his younger son’.

[One page is missing from here. A. Kim-Maloney.]

[The wooden images] after the death of the head of the family really are “buried” in the open air, i.e. they are hung out in baskets of birch bark in places frequently visited by the deceased. This is explained by the fact that death among the Selkups involves the departure of the soul (spirit) from the body. After death my “spirit” remains in the earthly world for a while, i.e. it keeps living in the same ways as before death, in its control, and the spirits of my spirit mentioned above are subordinate to it.

The Selkups do not seem to know, or I do not know, about the bow for predictions, although the bow and arrow are often present in their religious rites.

I hope that my answers will help you in some extent in your research. If you need additional data I would be glad to help as far as I can.

Uraev

Unfortunately the draft of the answer found in the home archives of Uraev has a gap—one page is missing. Evidently, this part included a continuation of the description of the Selkup *ambarchiks* at the Tym and some information about the open-air burials among the Selkups. Uraev's article "Materials on Shamanism of the Tym Selkups" (1994) contains details of the Selkups' cultic *ambarchiks* and idols that are missing in the draft.

As a comment, concerning the open-air burials among the Selkups the following information gathered in Chizhapka (a related area) could be added. In ancient times, when a Selkup died the relatives made a wooden figurine representing the deceased person. The figurine was dressed in Selkup precious clothing, put in a basket and hung on the bough of a tree in the forest (Kuznetsova et al. 2004: 177). Uraev probably had this kind of open-air burial in mind in his reply to Diószegi.

However, this is not the only kind of open-air burial known among the Selkups. The oldest form of burial was practised by the Tas Selkups, who placed the deceased in a coffin in the form of a traditional Selkup boat (dug-out) and floated it down the river to the cemetery. If the death occurred in winter, the body was placed on a wooden platform supported on stilts until the ice on the river melted. This temporary burial could be regarded as a variant of open-air burial. Kulemsin (1994: 356) described the following open-air burial of the Selkups: the body was wrapped in the skins of animals or birch bark and hung on a tree; after a few years the belts were cut and the body was dropped on the ground. The body was then placed in a shallow hole in the ground, covered with birch bark and burned. Deceased babies and shamans were buried, usually with a wooden idol, by placing them in tree trunks (Kuznetsova et al. 2004: 244).

Fig. 5. (courtesy of Svetlana Osipova, Uraev's wife) from the archives of Uraev illustrates this topic.



Fig. 5. Two Selkup pointed-head idols from one of the Tym cultic shamanc huts (*ambarchik*), picture taken by R. A. Uraev in the Kolpashevo (Tomsk region) museum.

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Shamanic Healing Dramas and their Healing Agents

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The healing effect of many shaman rites derives from their dramatic potential to induce a psychological effect. Some Siberian, Korean, and Chinese rites exemplify a contemplative, symbolic form of psychodramatic healing. They aim to free one from a debilitating self-image by centering consciousness on a world of supernatural power. Other Korean rites and a Manchu rite exemplify a spectacular, mimetic form of psychodrama. These derive their healing potential from dramatic interaction with gods, spirits, or ghosts. In all rites, that potential is virtual; it needs the patient's mental interaction to be realized. The process commonly involves interaction as well between the supernatural and natural, belief and experience.

Shaman healing rites commonly use dramatic means to reinforce healing ends, constituting a form of psychodrama. When the problem to be cured is to some degree psychosomatic, the healing dynamics can be understood in part in terms of the rite's dramatic potential to induce a psychological effect. A shaman's powers are not reducible to dramatic or psychological skills. Still, whatever special supernatural or inexplicable powers he or she may have are regularly complemented by understandable performance skills and psychological prowess. I here survey a few of the forms that shamanic psycho-dramatic rites can take and discuss dramatic dynamics of the healing process. I make specific application of an approach I proposed earlier (Kister 2006: 41–60). Except where otherwise noted, I refer to rites I myself have observed.

Contemplative, Symbolic Rites

We begin with a brief Siberian rite performed in the summer of 2001 by a Khakassian neo-shaman psychotherapist. An informant said that the purpose of the rite is to dislodge a demon from a man suffering from what is probably a psychosomatic problem and thus help him recover his “lost soul.” In modern psychological parlance, it is to free him from a debilitating focus on his situation. The ritual action seeks to do so by centering consciousness dramatically on the potentialities of a vaguely imagined world of healing power.

While divining the time and place of the rite, the shaman gave the impression of being in trance, but not during the rite itself. During the simple symbolic-mimetic rite, the patient sits contemplatively, facing a fire. The shaman beats his back with branches to drive the demon away and, says the informant, to give it a painful memory so as not to re-enter the patient. A female assistant tosses food around the outside of the ritual area, then sits and joins the shaman in drumming. The drumbeat suddenly gets slower and harder; and the shaman moves his fingers in front of the man as if plucking out something from his breast and flicking it away. Eyes closed, the patient shakes gently. The drumming ceases, and the shaman fingers the patient’s head and chest. He then claps softly behind him. Later, putting his fingers on the man’s forehead, he tells him to open his Buddha’s eye. He puts some food in the fire, and the assistant drinks from a cup. The action ends when the man is given strips of cloth whose significance is not immediately clear.

If a shaman has special healing powers, he should be able to cure without this bit of dramatic activity. The fact that the shaman-psychoanalyst resorts to it, suggests that he realizes that the transformational power of drama can enhance whatever special healing powers he has. It suggests, too, that he finds in this evocative, mildly destabilizing dramatic mode of healing advantages over whatever direct, verbal skills he has learned from modern psychotherapeutic science. The understated theatricality of the action can bring to life a world of uncanny power working through the shaman and invite the patient to see himself anew in terms of the hope for better health that that world offers.

In a family rite on the Korean island of Cheju, a similar healing rite may constitute a segment of a larger ritual that brings to life the family’s world of belief centered on its gods and ancestral spirits. In the spring of 1994,

such a rite was performed for the middle-aged father of a family. He was thought to suffer from “soul loss” in the form of free-floating anxiety.

The shaman invokes several gods and uses water as a symbol of the purified, revitalized state of health that the gods and family seek for the afflicted person. With no appearance of trance, the shaman covers the man with an article of the man’s clothing that has been partially dipped in water; and he uses knives to press the seventh vertebra, where the soul is thought to return. The low-keyed dramatic action accelerates to the beat of a drum, and it reaches its climax when the shaman sprays a mouthful of water on the patient’s head.

The analyzable healing power of the Khakassian rite lies in its transformational potential to re-center consciousness on a vague world of mystic power; that of the Cheju rite lies in its potential to center consciousness on the caring presence of the family, its ancestors, and its gods. In both cases, the dramatic mode of the rite taps a supernatural or quasi-supernatural worldview for its healing potential. In the second case, the rite draws also on the presence of specific gods, ancestral spirits, and the caring family. As ritual, the rites succeed if they heal; as psycho-dramatic ritual, they do so if the evocative dramatic mode aids the healing process.

Shamans performing such rites cannot be characterized simply as mystics with uncanny powers. As a respected Korean shaman once said, an effective shaman needs not only firm belief in the world of the spirits, but also an actor’s ability to bring that world to theatrical life.

In analyzing the psycho-dramatic dynamics of shaman rites, several points need to be kept in mind. Firstly, one uses the methods of dramatic analysis, not anthropology. One begins with the dramatic action itself, not with what an informant says about it. Like an ethnographer or anthropologist, one must know the language of the culture one studies. In the case of shamanic ritual culture, this includes the gestural and symbolic language of the theater. Indeed, it is primarily from the spatial language of the rite itself, not from an informant’s explanation, that one understands a rite’s dramatic potential for psychic healing.

Secondly, the language of dramatic ritual, like that of literature and other forms of drama, is often open-ended, evocative, ambiguous, enigmatic. The symbolic-mimetic activity of the Khakassian rite evokes an amorphous world of undefined power. That of the Cheju rite invites the patient to re-orient himself in a world of caring gods, ancestors, and family that he is left free to experience as he will. Like much ritual

activity, moreover, both rites include a certain amount of ritualistic rigmarole that elicits no clear meaning, but fills out the time and adds a mystic aura.

One accustomed to seeking well-defined meanings from a knowledgeable informant may feel uneasy with the open-ended character of ritual language. However, ambiguous, enigmatic elements contribute to the power of a rite to foster transformational healing by stimulating fertile mental activity in the afflicted person. The mildly destabilizing mental chaos spawned by such elements can heal by freeing the patient to contemplate his or her situation in a new light.

Thirdly, a dramatic rite does not in itself heal; it has only the potential to heal. As is said of a literary work, it projects a "possible world," a "possible way of orientating oneself" within the world, (Ricoeur 1976: 88). In itself, as has been said of a literary work, the action of a ritual work is "virtual," unfinished (Iser 1980: 106). For effective healing, it needs the mental cooperation of the patient. The symbolic-mimetic activity of these Khakassian and Cheju rites demands little active external participation on the patient's part, but it does demand inner mental activity. The afflicted person must consciously or subconsciously complete the curative process in his mind and heart, where the real healing action takes place.

A Tuvan shaman I once met underlined the importance of the patient's mental attitude in the healing process. He said that a shaman drives away evil forces that cause disease. He said that he sends persons with physical problems like infections, tuberculosis, or syphilis to a physician, but he himself can heal mental diseases. He tries to help the soul, and he can do so if a person desires to get rid of guilt. He cannot help, however, if the person himself does not so desire. In all healing, he said, the patient must trust and believe the shaman.

Fourthly, in a psycho-dramatic rite, who then is the healing agent? It is certainly not just the shaman. What Shirokogoroff says of Tungus rites applies to many shamanic rites: "The acting agent is the community itself, the shaman can only be regarded as a special organ of the community" (Shirokogoroff 1935: 335). In the Cheju rite, the shaman clearly acts as the organ of the family. The family invites the shaman to perform the rite. They contribute to the healing process by their loving presence. They ratify the action by their belief in its power and in the presence of the gods and ancestral spirits who oversee the action. Still, however, the ultimate healing agent is the patient himself.

Of course, it is as hard to know what takes place in the patient's mind as it is to know what takes place in the mind of the officiating shaman. One can ask the patient what he thinks or feels, but most participants in shaman rites are not used to articulating what takes place in their minds or hearts. Still, to know if healing actually takes place, one must ask the patient later on. Dramatic analysis points only to the healing potential of the rite.

Finally, in stressing the role of the community and patient in the healing process, I do not dismiss the possibility of supernatural agency or what has been called "supernatural presence" (Kirby 1975: 2) acting through the shaman and the participating community. There is no need to posit a dichotomy between supernatural agency and natural human agency, between a shaman's extraordinary powers and his or her natural human endowments. As with saints and creative artists in other traditions, extraordinary gifts and natural endowments can very well work together in symbiotic relationship. The supernatural both builds on the natural and brings its potential to full fruition.

Turning from Siberia and Korea to the mountains of Southwest China, we find a further example of psycho-dramatic healing in a family new year's rite of the Yi People. With a population of about 8,000,000 persons, the Yi constitute one of largest of China's fifty-five minority nationalities. An Yi shaman serves as ritual officiant rather than classic shaman (Bamo 2004: 5–7). In a rite held in 2002, the shaman was assisted by the father as the ritual organs of the family. From an informant, the first son, a university student, we learn that the rite is held for family well-being and the health of the grandmother, mother, and daughter. From the understated theatrical language of the rite itself, we see that it has a virtual power to bring the family's world of belief to life in poetic chants that sing of the family gods and in symbolic gestures that invite the family into contemplative interaction with that world. As with the Khakassian and Cheju rites, some of the activity suggests readily grasped lines of meaning; some is more arcane, ritualistic activity that, dramatically speaking, simply adds to the aura of solemn mystery. I describe the whole rite elsewhere (Kister 2006: 49 ff.); here I discuss only its healing dynamics.

The rite begins with purification procedures at the family hearth the first evening. It acquires a specific healing focus the following morning. The shaman then performs a brief, low-keyed rite outside to diagnose the health of the mother and grandmother. He does so in

albumen strands that are seen strangely to form from an egg cracked in water. The son says that the strands are associated with the ghosts of persons who died unnatural deaths and are now troubling the two women. Simply for medical diagnosis, the shaman presumably does not need this mystifying bit of symbolic theater. In resorting to it, he seems consciously or subconsciously to realize that it can aid the healing process. The ambiguous, virtual mode of the understated mini-drama has the potential to draw the women into the process by awakening in their minds a sense of the presence of uncanny power. In psychological terms, the dramatic action can transform their sense of self-awareness. It can help them break free from a debilitating focus on themselves and their health problems and re-center consciousness on the healing potential of such power.

At noon at the hearth, the main action for family well-being begins. It reaches a climax in a rite to call back the soul of the daughter, a university student who was suffering "soul loss" in the form of chronic anxiety. As the new year comes on, Yi families are said traditionally to perform a rite to call back the souls of family members that get lost while they are away from home pasturing or hunting. It is all the more understandable that a young woman far from home at the university would suffer such soul loss. The rite takes place in the caring presence of the family, their ancestral spirits, and Yi deities.

The symbolism of the healing rite is partly understandable, partly arcane. Smoke from a small fire outside announces the rite to the gods. On a cloak spread on the floor, the father sets a wooden bowl containing things used to call back the soul. He leads a string from the bowl to the goat as a symbolic path for the soul's return. He waves the cloak and bowl over the smoking fire outside. He then lays the end of the string on the goat's hind parts. For his part, the shaman, chanting, ringing a bell, and holding a small straw sheaf, moves toward the door. Swaying in what seems a mild trance, he calls out and lightly stamps his feet. The father then slowly draws the string into the bowl, covers the bowl, and puts it behind the hearth. The understated symbolic thrust of the dramatic action invites the daughter to re-orientate herself more confidently in the world of family care and mysterious power that it evokes and thus bring the rite's healing potential to fulfillment.

A simple rite to heal the mother's rheumatism was held the next morning, assisted by the father and attended by the sister. It seemed aimed to draw the mother more securely into that same world of loving care and

mystic power. It employed mostly enigmatic ritualistic activity involving sticks, straws, a bowl of buckwheat, and a baby chick (Figs. 1 and 2); but the rite's setting had an understandable relation to the healing action. Out of a recognition that moisture from the spring may constitute a factor in the mother's rheumatic pain, the rite was held at a spring near the house.

A few more points can be noted about the healing action and its agents. Firstly, as in the Khakassian and Cheju rites, participation in the action entails little or no active physical interaction or explicit verbal exchange. Except, moreover, for recognition that proximity to a spring may contribute to the mother's arthritis, there is no attempt to identify specific causes of an illness. The healing procedures thus differ from the more explicit, verbal methods of some modern psychotherapeutic techniques and the forms of shaman healing which we will discuss shortly.

Secondly, studies of shaman ritual commonly focus on the mental state of the performing shaman. However, a psycho-dramatic study focuses rather on the dramatic action itself and its transformational potential to stimulate mental activity on the part of the patient. In terms of religious psychology, a shaman's state of possessed or ecstatic trance is in itself a suitable object of investigation. In terms of the psychological dynamics of healing rites, however, trance, or the theatrical appearance of trance (Choi 1987: 35–36), is significant because of its virtual dramatic effect. It reinforces a sense of the reality of a world of healing power as centered on the shaman.

Thirdly, just as supernatural and natural agency can go hand in hand in the healing process, so do belief and experience. In a discussion at the 2007 Budapest Conference of the International Society for Shamanistic Research, Sergio Poggianella stressed that shamanic activity is a matter not so much of belief as experience. Visionary trance and dream experiences are important for the shaman; and the experience of a rite's dramatic effect is important for the community. As with the supernatural and natural in the agency of a rite, however, there is no need to set up a dichotomy between belief and experience in the effect of a rite. Belief and experience, too, work together in symbiotic relationship. Experience bolsters belief, while belief imbues experience with meaning.

Finally, whatever forms they may have originally had, Korean and Chinese shamanic rites have apparently evolved over the centuries to include the kind of contemplative, symbolic activity we have been discussing. This kind of activity finds a counterpart in the neo-shamanic rites that have sprung up in the post-Communist revival of shamanism



Fig. 1. Turbaned shaman and husband arrange a stick configuration to heal the wife's rheumatism (wife standing behind). Photo: Daniel A. Kister, 2002.



Fig. 2. Afflicted wife blows bubbles in a bowl of water.
Photo: Daniel A. Kister, 2002.

in Russia. Those performing such contemplative rites are not shamans in the classic sense, however, if they rely only such simple, symbolic activity. Nor are persons shamans in the classic sense if they choose shamanhood, but have no compelling experience of being chosen—chosen by a god, spirit, or believing community—or if they work on their own, not as the organ of a community.

Spectacular, Mimetic Rites

Turning once more to Korea, we find in a Seoul initiation rite a spectacular form of healing drama that stands poles apart from these low-keyed Yi rites. The rite aims in part to free the initiate, most often a woman, from the recurring psychic dissociation of the classic shamanic “spirit illness.” This anomalous, often visionary experience is believed to be caused by the agency of a god or distressed spirit who chooses the afflicted person for his or her service and the service of a believing group. The painful psychic chaos that marks the spirit illness constitutes a sign that one “is being ‘dissolved’ and a new personality being prepared for birth” as a shaman (Eliade 1958: 89). Understood psychologically, the painful experience is not so much an illness as an “exceptional human experience,” one pregnant with “life-potentiating aftereffects” that can “lead to a fuller life” (White 1997: 93–94).

Nonetheless, in Korea, as in some other shamanist traditions, persons afflicted with the spirit illness commonly shun the possibility of rebirth as a shaman. They see that possibility as a sentence to a hard and lowly life. An initiation rite has a potential for healing transformation in part by freeing the initiate to accept one’s destined new life.

More spectacular, anarchic, and aesthetically appealing than the rites surveyed so far, a Seoul initiation rite provides a venue for the manifestation of supernatural presence in much more concrete form than in the amorphous evocation of a world of mystic power in the contemplative rites described earlier. It takes the form of lively mimetic interaction with specifically named gods and spirits. It is dramatic, moreover, not only in the sense of such interaction. It manifests the “forward movement of consequential action” that is said to mark dramatic action, a movement toward “Destiny” (Langer 1953: 307, 311).

An initiation rite commonly begins on an evening at a mountain site, progresses through much of the night, and ends at dawn. The prolonged

urgency of the night-long interaction has a cathartic potential gradually to loosen resistance to one's lot as a shaman and to prod one to experience it rather as a life-potentiating grace. It does by immersing the initiate and others present as well in the chaotic play, beauty, and miracle of "the fabulous world of the gods" of a classic shaman séance (Eliade 1964: 551).

It is said that any vital artistic activity contains anarchic elements that have a potential to free the mind and heart to see oneself in a new way (Peckham 1967: 37, 313). This is true of the dramatic activity of a healing rite. The simple symbolic rites seen earlier contain ambiguous, open-ended elements that promote cathartic transformation by drawing the patient into a contemplative form of mildly stimulating mental disruption. An initiation rite does so by plunging the initiate into wave after wave of conflicting emotional currents: solemn beauty and anarchic play, laughter and trance, tears of the god for the initiate's hard life, and a wild knife dance that builds to the climax. The planned aesthetic chaos of the action brings to a healing head the real-life chaos of the spirit illness. At the same time, the beauty of the dramatic movement gives an appealing luster to the world of the gods.

The rite's virtual cathartic power is capped by a spectacular mimetic-symbolic feat that participants take as no less than a miracle. In the costume of the Spirit General, perhaps in mild trance, and believed to be empowered by the god, the initiate "rides the blades," doing dance-like gestures barefoot on high set rice-chopper blades. Whatever supernatural or extraordinary power enables the initiate to perform this feat, its healing dynamics is understandable also in terms of its natural psychological potential. It transforms past pain and alienation into new inner freedom and social stature. It dramatically raises the initiate to the awe-inspiring center of her group's world of belief as one marked out by supernatural presence.

The rite's healing action, like the spirit illness, may be primarily the work of supernatural agency; but, here too, the supernatural works in collaboration with human agents. The shaman directs the action as the organ of the participating community; the community ratifies it by their belief and encouragement; ancestral spirits add their support; and for success, the initiate must bring the virtual healing thrust of the action to fulfillment. The initiate must assent to the work of supernatural presence in her experiences and confidently accept her destined new life. Presumably, a god or exceptionally empowered shaman could prod the initiate to do so miraculously without the dramatic process

and without the community's collaboration. In the normal workings of the human psyche, however, the dramatic process and community's presence seem necessary.

Whether a rite consists of the understated dramatic mode of simple symbolic rites or the spectacular mode of a Seoul initiation rite, it is not just a stage performance. The transformational drama of the rite is rooted in the drama of life. The initiate has long been engaged in real-life dramatic interaction with the gods and spirits, with oneself, sometimes with one's family, with the pain and suffering of human life.

An initiation rite brings to a head the real-life drama of an individual's interaction with the gods. A Seoul rite for family healing summons the gods, but focuses especially on interaction with the family dead. A family holds such a rite at a time of crisis due to illness, financial setbacks, or a series of bad luck. In accord with common shamanic belief, distraught spirits of the family dead are thought to give rise to the family's problem. Face-to-face interaction with the living is thought to give the dead a chance to express pent-up ill feelings and be appeased. This is the rite's stated aim.

From an empirical psychological point of view, however, the interaction has a potential to provide cathartic healing for the living as well. The rite's dramatic mode aims clearly to foster this. It gives the living a forum to express their own pent-up feelings and frustrations, work out unresolved tensions with the dead and one another, rid themselves of attitudes that contribute to the problem at hand, and move toward a hopeful solution.

The dramatic action takes the form of vivid representations of recognizable loved ones, back from the world of the dead. As the ritual organ of the family, the shaman uses fine-tuned mimetic skills to bring to life the personal traits of a whole line of deceased loved ones from the past—grandmother, aunt, cousin, father, or daughter—each in their own ritual clothes. She arouses a medley of conflicting emotions, including tears and sometimes laughter, when she portrays an uncle or aunt known for comic antics when alive. The shaman is believed to be possessed by the spirits of the dead, but she commonly manifests no obvious trance.

Indeed, she manifests all the while a clear, conscious awareness of the psychological needs of the living. Making good use of fine-tuned psychotherapeutic skills, she draws upon empathy sprung from personal pain, as well as witty humor and anarchic, but well-directed play to get the family to see their situation in a positive light. She prods

them to shed self-destructive attitudes, identify specific causes of their problem, and engage in explicit verbal exchange to deal with it.

The cathartic process thus resembles some forms of modern psychotherapy. It has the added power, however, of belief in the presence of the gods and spirits of the dead, who encourage the family with, "Don't worry," or "I'll be with you."

When a family in Seoul or other regions of Korea holds a rite for a recently deceased loved one, the stated aim is to bring the soul of the deceased to peace. Here, too, however, the rite's dramatic mode aims as well at cathartic healing for the living. It allows the bereaved family to interact with the deceased through the mediumship of the shaman, releasing any unresolved tensions and exchanging final words of farewell.

As I have shown elsewhere, the various forms of Korean death rites seek to assuage feelings of grief by drawing in some instances on the cathartic power of anarchic laughter and regularly on the virtual aesthetic power of controlled beauty (Kister 1997: 107–113). In a Seoul death rite these take the form of a slow, graceful dance performed by a shaman dressed in the elegant royal gown of the psychopomp spirit, the Abandoned Princess. To the accompaniment of stately music and perhaps in mild trance, the shaman moves gracefully around tables of offerings and before a paper-flower bedecked "gate of thorns" to the other world, leading the deceased to his or her destined end. A family member follows, carrying white funeral clothes symbolizing the deceased. Whatever supernatural power achieves peace for the deceased, the natural aesthetic power of the dramatic action nurtures healing peace in the hearts of the bereaved family. Fusing sorrow with contrary feelings of dignity and soothing release, the rite's aesthetic power transforms the painful separation of death into an event of august beauty.

In realizing the virtual potential of the staged action in the inner action of their minds and hearts, the family needs faith. It needs faith not so much in the Princess Spirit herself as in the process of ushering the loved one to peace that she is imagined to achieve. Here, too, however, belief and experience work in symbiotic relationship. The family's belief in the process ratifies the rite's meaning, while its dramatic aesthetic power bolsters their belief.

Finally, returning to China, we find in a Han Banner Manchu clan rite of the far Northeast a lively mimetic form of drama that can assuage natural feelings of fear. The main action stages the presence of the clan gods (Kister 1999: 81–86, 2006: 55–56), but a masked play ends the rite

at night with a display of ghosts that cause disease. In a demonstration of this ghost play performed in the summer of 2004, a hoard of grotesquely masked assistants imitate the antics of fearfully threatening yet comical ghosts. As they chaotically grab at persons, a shaman fights them off. Enacting what seems an attack of stomach pains, he next chews on white paper flowers and vomits them out. He grabs his stomach, and the ghosts pull out of his stomach something that looks like the large intestine. In the end, the shaman thrashes them off; and the whole rite ends.

An informant says that this ghost-play is sometimes performed to heal a particular patient, at least on one occasion for a patient not actually present, but lying in an adjoining room. If the rite can be held in the hope of healing a person who does not actually participate in the performance by his or her presence, it constitutes an exception that proves the rule that I argue in this paper. For in such a case, it can only heal through some sort of a mystic or magical relationship with the action, not through its psycho-dramatic potential.

If the ghost-play has healing potential as psych-drama, it must be for persons who actually witness or participate in the action. Broadly understood, it can perhaps be seen as doing so by rousing archetypal fears in persons present and then freeing them from these fears. As has been said of children's tales and ghost stories, the action taps currents of "helplessness in the face of . . . nameless power" (Holland 1968: 44). Whatever magical healing power it may have for a patient not present, it has an inherent natural potential to invite spectators to stand above their fears by laughing at the comically frightening ghosts.

Whatever form shamanic healing rites may take, a shaman's psycho-dramatic prowess may entail little in the way of the conscious creative strategies of a playwright or stage actor and little in the way of the psychological strategies of a modern psychoanalyst. It seems mainly an intuitive gift, bolstered by belief—the shaman's belief, the community's belief, the patient's belief.

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Rediscovered Buriat Shamanic Texts in Vilmos Diószegi's Manuscript Legacy

DÁVID SOMFAI KARA

BUDAPEST

The article is based on the materials collected by ethnologist Vilmos Diószegi (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) and folklorist Nadezhda Sharakshinova (Irkutsk State University) from the Western Buriat Bulagats on a joint field trip in September, 1957. It was the first time that a Hungarian ethnologist had undertaken fieldwork in Siberia during Soviet times. Nadezhda Osipovna Sharakshinova, herself a Bulagat Buriat, took Diószegi to her home area around the town of Bokhan. During the one-week field trip they collected folklore texts mainly on shamanism and native religion. This fieldwork marked the beginning of Diószegi's research on Siberian and Mongolian shamanism (1957–1964). Later Sharakshinova typed the Buriat texts and sent them to Diószegi, and together they published six prayers to the ancestors (durdalga) in English in 1970. Diószegi died two years later and the rest of the material remained unpublished, even though the most interesting information on shamanism (on all kinds of spirits and idols: udxa, zayaan, onggon, neryeer) is to be found among these items. The present article is a short introduction to this valuable material, which is now kept in the archives of the Institute of Ethnology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Vilmos Diószegi (1923–1972), the well-known Hungarian researcher on Siberian shamanism, left a prolific manuscript legacy on his untimely death in 1972. Some of this material is now kept in the Institute of Ethnology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Diószegi's manuscripts, typescripts and notes are kept in paper folders in the archives of the institute. Éva Schmidt compiled a tentative catalogue in Hungarian

but did not publish it.¹ When I started to work at the Institute of Ethnology in 2003 my aim was to find out exactly what kinds of materials were kept in the Diószegi collection relating to shamanism. I have found fourteen folders filled with manuscripts on shamanism. Some of the materials were collected during Diószegi's field trips in Siberia between 1957 and 1964. I also found many valuable unpublished materials and have started to prepare them for publication. I have compared the manuscripts to data on his field trips published earlier. The present article is a preliminary report on the materials collected during his first field trip among the Western Buriats in 1957. I have chosen some valuable data on Buriat beliefs about how shamans received their shamanic ability (*udxa* and *neryeer*). The texts are published here with Buriat transcription and English translations by the author.

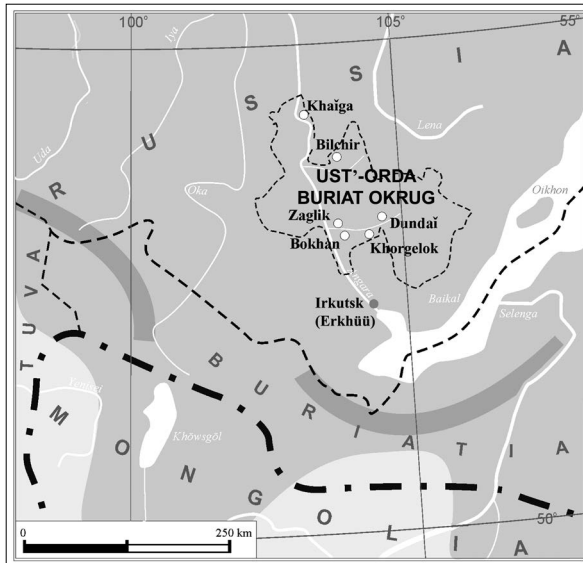
A Short Description of the Field Trip

Vilmos Diószegi first travelled to Siberia² (Map 1) in 1957 as part of the exchange programme between the Soviet (now Russian) and Hungarian Academies of Sciences. Diószegi arrived in Irkutsk on August 30, 1957, and the following day he met the famous Bulagat Buriat folklorist Nadezhda Osipovna Sharakshinova when he paid a visit to her house. Sharakshinova was about to leave for Bokhan³ (Buriat *Böö-xuhan*) in the Ust'-Orda Buriat Autonomous District in order to collect oral literature among her native people, the Bulagat (Buriat *bulgad*)

¹ Sántha ed. (2002: 419–420) also gives a rather sketchy overview of this material in Hungarian.

² I took all the data on Diószegi's trip of 1957 from his diary published in 2002 (see Sántha ed. 2002: 81–90), though note that this trip was also described by Diószegi in the book he published in Hungarian (Diószegi 1960: 11–35). This account is available in English (Diószegi 1968).

³ In Diószegi's diary the Russian name Bokhan is explained from the Buriat as *böö xaan* 'shaman khan'. During my short visit in 2005, local old Buriat residents said that the name of their village comes from the birch trees on their sacred hill called "shamanic" trees (Buriat *böö xuhan*). These trees can be seen even today on the top of the hill (pl. 9 b).



Map 1. The Ust'-Orda Buriat Autonomous District showing the geographical locations visited by Vilmos Diószegi and N. O. Sharakshinova in 1957. Drawn by István Sántha, 2006.

tribe of the Western Buriats.⁴ Sharakshinova agreed to take Diószegi on the field trip.⁵

After Diószegi had received the official permits, they drove by car (Figs. 1 and 2) to Bokhan on September 3, 1957, despite heavy rainfall. They visited the famous story-teller (*üligeršen*) Apollon Andreevich Toroev (Fig. 3) in Bokhan and then spent the night in the village of Khada-aïl.⁶

On the following day, September 4, Diószegi met an old Buriat shaman (*bööv*) in Khada-aïl. The 73-year-old Khadi Khankhaev (Fig. 4), born 1884, was the first shaman Diószegi had ever met.

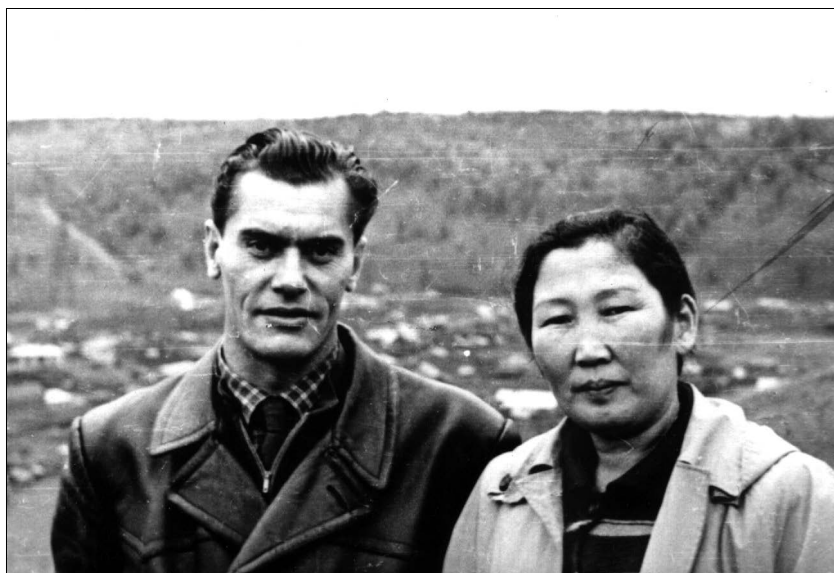
⁴ Bulagat: in Buriat *Bulgad* is a plural form of *bulgan* 'sable'.

⁵ This was Diószegi's first fieldwork in Siberia, and was followed by a series of others between 1957 and 1964. In these years he collected materials on shamanism of the Buriat, the Abakan Tatar (Khakas), the Tofa, the Tuva and the Altai Turks (Kumandy and Telengit).

⁶ This geographical name cannot be identified with certainty. When I asked the local people during my trip in 2005, they told me they had never heard of that village. Diószegi may have misunderstood this geographical name, and it is possible that he was in the village of Khandagai west of Bokhan (see Map 1).



Fig. 1.



Figs. 1, 2. Vilmos Diószegi and Nadezhda Osipovna Sharakshinova on their field trip among the Bulagat Buriat in 1957. Archives of the Institute of Ethnology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.



Fig. 3. Nadezhda Sharakshinova with the famous Bulagat story-teller Apollon Toroev and his wife in Bokhan (Ust'-Orda Buriat Autonomous District). Photo: Vilmos Diószegi, 1957. Archives of the Institute of Ethnology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.



Fig. 4. Khadi Khankhaev, a Bulagat Buriat shaman from Bokhan, the first shaman Diószegi ever met. Photo: Vilmos Diószegi, 1957. Archives of the Institute of Ethnology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

In the following I list the texts Diószegi and Sharakshinova collected as we know them from Diószegi's diary. Khadi Khankhaev gave him the following texts:

- (1) Legend on the origin of the Bulagat Buriat tribe
- (2) How he became a shaman
- (3) Shamanic prayers:
 - (a) *Daidiin ežed* (owner spirits of the land)
 - (b) *Übsein töödei* (the Übse Lady lit. 'grandmother')
 - (c) *Ünggein axanuud* (the Üngge Lady lit. 'grandmother')
 - (d) *Übsein axanuud* (forefathers of the Übse clan)
 - (e) *Tarsain axanuud* (forefathers of the Tarsa clan)
 - (f) *Ardain axanuud* (elders or forefathers of the Arda clan)
 - (g) *Xori-iin zayaan* (or *zayaan šubuun*, the swan spirits of the Xori tribe)
- (4) How to make a *zayaan* idol
- (5) Shamanic prayers:
 - (a) *Zülxein übged* (forefathers of the Zülxe⁷ clan)
 - (b) *Xotonsoi übged* (forefathers of the Xotonso clans)
- (6) A legend
- (7) On the *onggon* spirits:
 - (a) *Zayaaša ongon* (the 'creator' idol)
 - (b) *Baraa ongon* (the 'dark' idol)
 - (c) *Holongoto ongon* (the mink idol)
- (8) How to make the *morin horibo* (horse-headed shaman's stick)
- (9) The shaman's initiation.

In the afternoon they visited another section of the village,⁸ where they recorded further texts from an old man by the name of Damba Mantikov (born 1888):

- (1) A legend about milk-liquor (Buriat *arxi*, Bulagat *arsi*)
- (2) The shaman's initiation
- (3) Damba Mantikov's genealogy

⁷ Zülxe is the Buriat name of the Lena River, which has its source at a mountain north of Lake Baikal (Buriat *Baigal*).

⁸ Diószegi uses the Russian word *ulus* 'settlement, village in Siberia'.

- (4) The shaman of the Šaraldai clan:
- (a) The Lower Šaraldai clan
 - (b) The Uxir clan
 - (c) The Xorgil clan
 - (d) The Šara uhan clan
 - (e) Xozoi *bööhüüd* (shamans of the Xozo clan)
 - (f) Dundai *bööhüüd* (shamans of the Dunda clan)
- (5) *baraa ongon* (the ‘dark’ spirit or idol)
- (6) Esege Malaan (lit. ‘the bald father’, the main God of Heaven).

The following day, September 5, Diószegi requested Khadi the shaman to prepare him horse-headed shaman’s sticks (*morin horibo*). The old shaman cut some birch (*xuhan*) branches from which to carve the sticks, enabling Diószegi to photograph the process of carving (Fig. 5). In the village they also managed to photograph an idol called *baraa ongon* in one of the houses.



Fig. 5. Khadi Khankhaev the Buriat shaman with the horse-headed shaman’s sticks (*morin horibo*) he specially prepared for Diószegi. Photo: Vilmos Diószegi, 1957. Archives of the Institute of Ethnology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

On September 6 they visited the village of Khorgelok (Buriat Xorgil ail), where they met an old man named Badukhanov (born 1875) who told them the following texts:

- (1) The genealogy of the Gotoľ⁹ clan from Bokhan
- (2) The genealogies of the shamans from the village of Argakhan
- (3) The genealogies of the shamans from the village of Zaglig
- (4) A legend about Xudagii böö (shaman)
- (5) A legend about Poxosoi böö (shaman)
- (6) The story of the clan's nine generations of forefathers and foremothers
- (7) *Yexe tailga* (the great sacrifice of the clan)
- (8) *Tarsain axanuud* (forefathers of the Tarsa clan)
- (9) The legend of *Tarsain axanuud*
- (10) *Xori-iin zayaan* (the *zayaan* spirit of the Xori Buriat¹⁰).

On September 7 they visited the villages of Dundaĭ and Zaglig, but they were unable to make tape recordings due to the lack of electricity. On the same day they returned to Bokhan and walked up a hill, where at the site of the sacrifice (*tailga*) Diószegi took a picture of the sacrificial table (*šeree*). Finally they spent the night in Zaglig, where locals invited them to drink *tarasun*.¹¹ They also ate *salamat*¹² and horse meat.

On September 8, they visited again the story-teller Toroev, who told them about the fifteen types of *tailga* (sacrifice).

On September 9, they collected texts from Nikolaeva Mariia Antropovna (born 1877) in Zaglig:

- (1) The shaman's initiation
- (2) The legend of Buxa Noyon baabai ('Lord Bull', the totem ancestor of the Buriat)
- (3) The genealogy of shamans from the village of Zaglig.

⁹ In Diószegi's diary *Gorol, most probably a misspelling, see Sántha ed. 2002, 105, footnote 37.

¹⁰ The Xori Buriat tribes live south of Lake Baikal.

¹¹ *Tarasun* is in Russian the same as the Buriat *arxi* 'milk liquor'.

¹² *Salamat* (correctly *salamata*) is also Russian, the same as the Buriat *šarahan zööxei* 'baked sour cream with flour'.



Fig. 6. Vilmos Diószegi and Nadezhda Sharakshinova visiting M. N. Khangalov's daughter (in the middle) in her father's house in Bilchir (Ust'-Orda Buriat Autonomous District). Photo: Archives of the Institute of Ethnology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 1957.

They met another old man, named Sagakchin Khantaev (born 1873), who also provided several texts:

- (1) The legend of Buxa Noyon baabai
- (2) The genealogy of shamans from the village of Zaglig
- (3) The legend of Xudag böö (shaman)
- (4) The legend of the *zayaaša onggon* (creator idol).

In the afternoon they made a trip to the village of Bilchir (Buriat Belšer), where the famous Bulagat scholar Matveĭ Nikolaevich Khangalov (1859–1918) had lived. They visited his house, which at that time was owned by his daughter (Fig. 6). They spent the night in the village of Khaĭga.

On September 10, Sharakshinova found a *zayaan* idol and they took a picture of it. They tried to find a shaman's gown, but failed.

On September 11, they visited some friends in Böö-xuhan and returned to Irkutsk the same evening. This was the end of Diószegi's one-week field trip among the Bulagat Buriat.

Places visited during the field trip (see Map 1):

Sept 3	Bokhan	Arrival
Sept 4	Khada-aıl	
Sept 5	Khada-aıl	
Sept 6	Khorgelok	
Sept 7	Dundaı, Zaglig, Bokhan	
Sept 8	Bokhan	
Sept 9	Zaglig, Bilchir, Khaıga	
Sept 10	Khaıga	
Sept 11	Bokhan	Departure

Materials Found in Diószegi's Manuscript Legacy

In Diószegi's manuscript legacy I have found typed materials only from Khadi Khankhaev and Damba Mantikov (both from Khada-aıl). Of these texts the following items were published by Diószegi and Sharakshinova (1970: 103–117) in English.

Informant: Khadi Khankhaev, Xeltegei clan, Khada-aıl village (born 1884):

- (1) *Daid-iin übged*
- (2) *Übsei Töödein tuxai durdalga*¹³
- (3) *Ünggei Töödeiyi mürgexe*
- (4) *Übsein axanuud*
- (5) *Übsein Tarsain axanuuheı temseen*
- (6) *Tarsain axanuud*

- (1) The ancestor spirits of the land
- (2) A prayer (*durdalga*) to Übse Töödei (lady)
- (3) A prayer to Ünggei Töödei (lady)
- (4) The forefathers of the Übse clan

¹³ The text on Khadi shaman's initiation was a prayer (*durdalga*) to a so-called *töödei* 'grandmother' who belonged to the Übse clan. The spirit of a *töödei* can be harmful and usually originates from the soul of a lady who died in a tragic way (Sántha ed. 2002: 428).

(5) The conflict between the Übse and Tarsa clans

(6) The forefathers of the Tarsa clan.

This is a preliminary list of texts in Diószegi's manuscript legacy which, to the best of my knowledge, have never been published:

(7) *Ardain axanuud*

(a) *Neryeerte neryüülee*

(8) *Zayaan (šubuun)*

(9) *Zülxein übged*

(10) *Xotonsoi übgen*

(11) *Neryeer buuxa tuxai*

(12) *Holonggoto onggon*

(13) *Zayaaša onggon*

(a) *Zayaaša baabai*

(b) *Zarlightai töödei*

(14) *Tümeršiin ežen*¹⁴

(15) *Morin horibo*

(16) *Yodooto böö*

(17) *Bööyi xüdöölelge*

(18) *Maraa Xara Edirxen*

(7) The forefathers of the Arda clan

(a) Hit by sacred lightning (*neryeer*)

(8) The *Zayaan šubuun* spirits

(9) The forefathers of the Zülxe¹⁵ clan

(10) The forefathers of the Xotonso clan

(11) On receiving the sacred lightning (*neryeer*)

(12) The mink idol

(13) The *Zayaaša* (creator) idol:

(a) *Zayaaša* (creator) father

(b) *Zarlightai* (lady)

(14) The protecting spirit of the smiths

(15) The horse-headed stick

¹⁴ Buriat *ežen*, Bulagat *ežen*, see Banzarov 1891: 45; Heissig 1988: 547.

¹⁵ Zülxe is also the name of a Bulagat Buriat clan.

- (16) A shaman using the bark of larch¹⁶
 (17) The shaman's burial
 (18) Maraa Xara Edirxen¹⁷

Informant: Damba Mantikov, Khada-aıl village (born 1888):

- (1) *Bööyi ugaalga*
 (2) *Urdanii udxa, türiün tüüxe*
 (3) *Xese yaagaad xedeg-iime*
 (4) *Xese xexedee bööhüidei udxa uzuur*
 (5) *Böögei yamar udxatai baigaa-b*
 (6) *Bööhüüd xaanahaa bii boloho-iim*
 (7) *Tarsain axanad*
 (8) *Yodoto böö Üxer, Šaraldai*
 (9) *Boidon geže neretei töödei xiin*
 (10) *Šaraldai baabai, Iidxeen iibii*
 (11) *Xarbari Töö iibii*
 (12) *Alaanii šara Nixuun yexe böö baigaa*
 (13) *Ene xadahaa aršaan garaža baigaa*
 (14) *Irbaaragai udxa übei xiin übei iime*
 (15) *Münggen noyon*
 (a) *Tongxoihoo udxa bariža*
 (16) *Ohoin goldo egeen türiün*

- (1) The shaman's purification
 (2) The ancient *udxa* spirit, an old story
 (3) How to make a shamanic drum (*xese*)?
 (4) The *udxa-uzuur* spirit and the shamanic drum
 (5) What kind of *udxa* spirit does the shaman have?
 (6) Where do the shamans come from?
 (7) The forefathers of the Tarsa clan
 (8) Üxer shaman and Šaraldai shaman using the bark of larch
 (9) A respected lady by the name of Boidon

¹⁶ Buriat *žodoo*, Bulagat *yodoo*.

¹⁷ This name is unidentified but probably the same as Esege Malaan, see Manzhigiev 1978: 105.

- (10) Šaraldai forefather and Iidxeen foremother
- (11) Xarbari töö foremother
- (12) Alaan's fair-haired Nixuun was a great shaman
- (13) From this mountain a sacred spring¹⁸ flows
- (14) Irbaaragai was not without an *udxa* spirit
- (15) Münggen noyon
 - (a) Got his *udxa* from Tongxoi
- (16) At the beginning of the Oho (Osa) River.

There are some discrepancies between Diószegi's diary and the texts in his manuscript legacy. He mentions six Buriats he collected data from, but among his manuscripts we can only find the texts he recorded from Khadi Khankhaev and Damba Mantikov.

A few items were not mentioned correctly in the diary; for example, Diószegi twice mentioned items named "shamanic initiation." In the typed material we find other types of rituals, like Buriat *bööyi xüdüölelge* (burial/leaving the shaman's body in the fields) and *bööyi ugaalga* (the shaman's purification).

In my opinion the title of Diószegi and Sharakshinova's (1970) article, "Songs of Bulagat Buriat Shamans," is not quite precise. The songs of shamans are closely related to their activities, e.g. calling the spirits (*duud-laga*), shamanic sacrifice (*tailga*), fortune-telling (*iüzel*) or healing (*emnelge/argalamža*). The published texts are prayers (*durdalga*) to the spirits of the ancestors (*uzuur*) and to spirits that help them to inherit their abilities (*udxa*). These prayers were said during communal events to ensure the clans (*otog/omog* or *yahan*) fortune and happiness (*zol žargal*). Diószegi's misconception came from the fact that he recorded the texts on request and not on the spot when they were actually performed. So Diószegi could not see the function of the texts within the society, where their context can be defined.

Khadi explained to Diószegi how the picture of the *zayaan* idol¹⁹ was drawn and how the horse-headed shamanic stick (*morin horibo*)²⁰ (Fig. 5) was made. We also find important data about the different *onggon* spirits and idols (e.g. *holonggoto*, *zayaaša onggon*). Khadi also told them a story about the *zayaan* spirits (*zayaan šubuun* 'spirits of swan

¹⁸ Buriat *aršaan*.

¹⁹ See Manzhigiev 1978: 52; Birtalan 2001: 1070.

²⁰ See Manzhigiev 1978: 94; Birtalan 2004: 541.

origin'). According to this legend *zayaan šubuun* spirits and their *udxa* spirits originated from the south, where a man called Xoriodoi married a heavenly swan lady (*xung šubuun eži*). Later their two daughters became shamans, and after death their souls turned into *zayaan* spirits (Khangalov 2004: ii, 277–278). There is also information on the sacred Oixon (Russian Ol'khon) Island and its 'owner spirit' (*ežen*), whence apparently the *udxa* spirit of the Tarsa clan comes. For that reason the shamans of that clan are highly respected. Whereas the Arda clan, which originates from the southern Xori tribe, does not have a proper *udxa* according to the Bulagat tradition.

The Receiving of Shamanic Ability (*Udxa*)

In the unpublished material we find very interesting data on one of the key aspects of Buriat shamanism, namely, the receiving of shamanic ability (*udxa*). There are two ways for a clan to receive shamanic ability if they do not already have it:

(1) obtaining it from another clan through a wife. The wife's clan is called *xuda* by the clan of the husband and *xadam* by the husband himself.

(2) receiving it from heaven (*tengger*) via sacred lightning (*neryeer*).

Members of the Übse (Russian Obusa) clan believe that their shamans received their shamanic talent (*udxa* spirit²¹) from their Ewenki²² neighbours. There follows a text illustrating this belief from Diószegi's unpublished material:

Xaanahaa, yüün deerehee Übsein axanuud 'taiga-iin tabinhee tabin naiman xamnagadhaa' geže nere abaha-iim aa-b?

Urg-iin uzuurhaa oldohon Obgon gedeg, Obgon gurban xübüüitei baigaa: Ongxotoi, Oloi, Onggoi. Obgon-ii gurban xübüüid agnaxayaa xeere garaba. Üdešen-iini miaxaa šaraad le orxibod. Üglöö bodood xaraxada-ni, nege xübüün-iini miaxan-übei bolood-lo baigaa. Gurban hüni miaxan-iini übei bolood-lo baiba. Yexe gaixaad xaraašalba. Xaran gexede-ni nege miir

²¹ See Sántha 1998: 163; Manzhigiev 1978: 75.

²² The Russian name of this ethnic group is *tunguz*, the Bulagat Buriats call them *xamnagan*.

baiba. Xoinohoo-ni müršelööd ošoxodo-ni, nege nüüle baiba. Nüüle-ni saana ošoxodo-ni, nege haixan basagan xebtebe. Tere basagayaa bariad gertee asarba. Tere basagan-iini xamnagan basagan bai-šoo. Gertee gurban xübüüd-iini tere basagayaa bulialdaba: “ši xügše xexeš, bi xexem.” geldeed bulialdaba. Tiigeed Obgon baabaihaan huraba. Axa-ni xelege:

—*Minii šortoi miaxayi edibe’—gebe, esege-ni xelege:*

—*Xüüri übei-m aad, xeni-tnai šortoi miaxayi edibe, terenii-tnai hamgan boloxo-iima hiim.*

Axa-ni gerlebe, tere basagan xübüütei bolobo. Tere basagan böö udxatai baigaa. Tiigeed übesein axanuud taraa. Tere ušarhaa boložo xamnagadhaa udxatai boloho-iima.

Why do the elders of the Übse clan say that our *udxa* originates from the ‘50 x 58’ Tunguz (*xamnagan*) clans?

Obgon from the Urga clan had three sons: Ongxotoi, Oloi and Onggoi. Obgon’s three sons went to the wilderness to hunt. In the evening they roasted some meat. When they got up in the morning they saw that one portion of meat was missing. Their meat disappeared three days in a row. They were puzzled and angry. They noticed that there were marks on the ground. The marks led them to a cave. They went inside and found a girl there. They took the girl and brought her home. The girl was Ewenki (*Xamnagan*). The three sons started to quarrel over the girl:

“Will you be her husband or me?” Thus they argued. Then they asked their old father. The oldest boy said:

“She ate from my meat”, he said. Then their father said:

“Then there is no quarrel, from whose meat she ate she should be his wife.”

Their brother married her and she gave birth to children. That girl had a shamanic *udxa*. The Übse clan originates from them. This is how the Übse clan received its Ewenki *udxa*.

The data above indicate that there is a strong link between Western Buriat and Ewenki shamanism, and I suggest that further research is needed on these interethnic relations. For example, why do the Buriats consider an Ewenki *udxa* stronger than a Southern Buriat one, and why do the Buriats use the Ewenki to legitimize the abilities of their shamans?

In the fifth item we find data on the *neryeer* phenomenon, which is a peculiarity of Western Buriat shamanism (Manzhigiev 1978: 61). The meaning of this term is explained well by one of the texts recorded from Khadi the shaman:

*Xudain goldo ene Adli geže daida bii, tende yabahan Irbaantain xübüün Baližuuxan xurdan moritai baiba. Tere Baližuuxan geeše:
—Xüxe morin xurdang-gii, ali xüxe üülen xurdang-gii?—geže morio unaad türgen xurain oroxodo güilgeže yabaa. Xüürge deere neryeerte neryüüleed, udxatai bolood durdalgada oroo hiim.*

*Güng yexe, Güžer yexe
Tere garahan türehen
Irbaantai orood
Irbaantain xübüün Baližuuxan
Tagdar, Yagdar, Emxen, Daagan geže.*

Tendehee udxa bariža gašarxadaa xan tailga Xudagiitan, tere ardain axanuudii udxa bariža gašarahan Xudagiin xübüün—Šooboxon. Šooboxonii dürben xübüün—Šeedel, Šiidee, Hamarxan, бага xübüü-ni Xudagii. Xudagii xoyor basagatai baigaa. Tereenhee taraahan Mantalayevskad yabana hiim. Dürben üye bolobo. Tere Xudain golhoo gašaraahan taba-yorgoon, naiman üye boloo.

Along the Xuda River there is a place called Adli. Irbaanta's son Baližuuxan lived there. He had a fast horse. Baližuuxa once said:

“My grey horse is faster or the clouds?” he said. Then one rainy day he mounted his horse and started to gallop. Just when he reached the bridge a “sacred lightning” (*neryeer*) touched him and he received the *udxa* spirit (shamanic ability) from it. We remember him by this prayer (*durdalga*).

Great Güng and great Güžer
They descendents are
Irbaantai's offspring
Irbaantai's son Baližuuxan,
Tagdar, Yagdar, Emxen, Daagan.

Their *udxa* spirit was inherited by xan-tailga Xudagii's descendents. Xudagii's son Šooboxon got his *udxa* spirit from the Arda clan's ancestors. He had four sons, Šeedel, Šiidee, Hamarxan and the smallest also Xudagii, who had two daughters. From them originate the Mantalay clan's four generations. They migrated from the Xuda River about five to six or rather eight generations ago. Here is a prayer (*durdalga*) to Xudagii:

Dalain šeneen undaa(ta)n

Buliin šeneen buxiutan

Taiga yexe neryeerten

Tala beri buudaltan

Tengereer güixe

Teršee xüxe moriton,

Ogtorgoor güixe

Olon xüxe moriton.

His drinks are like the sea
His rifle (*buxiu*) is as big as an axle.
His *neryeer* spirit comes from the taiga.
He lives in the plains,
He runs in heaven,
He has a fast grey horse,
He runs in the sky,
He has many grey horses.

Epilogue

In October 2005, with the support of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, I participated at a conference dedicated to Nadezhda Osipovna Sharakshinova (1915–2000) on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of her birth, where I read this article in Russian. During the three-day conference organized by the department of Buriat (Mongolian) Philology at Irkutsk State University we unveiled a memorial tablet to Sharakshinova. Linguist and Mongolist Tanaka Katsuhiko from Japan was the only participant from abroad besides me. On the first two days the papers were read at Irkutsk State University; then, on the third day we travelled to Sharakshinova's native town, Bokhan, where her memorial museum was opened (pl. 9 *a*). The museum has been built not far from the sacred hill of the village (pl. 9 *b*), and a local shaman blessed it according to Buriat customs. He purified the place from the evil spirits using the smoke of juniper and sacrificed some vodka to the spirits of the ancestors (pl. 10).

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(The Problem of) Shamans in the *Secret History of the Mongols*

CATHERINE URAY-KÓHALMI

BUDAPEST

In the Secret History of the Mongols none of the persons mentioned is explicitly identified as a shaman. But two persons, Kōkōcū Teb Tenggeri and Üsün ebügen have been hypothesized to be shamans. Studying the characterization of both in the text of the Secret History, it became evident that Kōkōcū was a great shaman but that Üsün ebügen was a tribal leader in charge of certain ritual functions.

The unique work of the *Secret History of the Mongols* poses many questions not only for historians and philologists but also for ethnologists. Of these questions, the one I would like to discuss here is that of the shamans. There is no doubt that shamanism was already present in the spiritual life of the Mongols in the time of Činggis qan. Proof of this is provided by the *Secret History*, for example in §272, where, when Tolui sacrifices himself for his gravely ill brother, Ögödei Qa'an, he turns to the shamans: *bö'es arbatqun jügerütkün ke'eǰü bö'es jüger'esü jügersen usu Tolui kö'ün u'ubai* ". . . Sorcerers, incant and conjure! When the sorcerers conjured, Prince Tolui drank the water of conjuration." (Cleaves 1982: 213)

Bodončar, the ancestor of the Borǰigin clan, also shows characteristic traits of a shaman (U[ray-]Kóhalmi 1970: 252). We know from the accounts of European travelers that there were shamans at the court of the Mongolian Khan (Franke 1978: 20–22; Ratchnevsky 1983: 139; Hage 1976: 114–124; Heissig 1970: 306–307).

However, when studying the *Secret History*, one must realize that none of the persons mentioned there is explicitly declared to be a

shaman.¹ Only two persons, namely Kõkõcü Teb Tenggeri and Üsün Ebügen, have been hypothesized to be shamans. Üsün Ebügen is mentioned in two paragraphs of the *Secret History*; in §210 he is referred to in laudatory terms together with Gunan, Kõkõ-Čos and Degei on the occasion of the bestowal of military titles. After an interpolation the eulogy continues in §216:

Again, when Činggis Qahan spake unto Old Man Üsün, he made a decree, saying, Üsün, Gunan, Kõkõ Čos, and Degei—these four—not hiding and concealing, have been wont to declare what they have seen and what they have heard. They have been wont to tell what they have perceived and what they have thought. [After] the principles of the Mongγol, [as to] the way of chief, there is a custom whereby one may become a *beki*. [Üsün] is the seed of the Ba'arin Elder Brother. [As to] the way of *beki*, from among and above Us, let Old Man Üsün become a *beki*. Having raised [him] up as a *beki*, [with one's] causing [him], wearing white raiment, to ride [upon] a white gelding, causing [him] to sit upon a seat, and serving [him], and again [with his] considering the year and the month, let it so be. (Cleaves 1982: 152, 156–157; Rachewiltz 2004. II: 807–808)

Kõkõcü Teb Tenggeri appears in §§244–246: he was the middle one of Mõnglik's seven sons of the Qongqotad clan. Mõnglik himself must have been a distinguished personality, since on his deathbed Yisügei, the father of Činggis, put him in charge of bringing home the boy Temüjin from the parents-in-law. As far as Kõkõcü himself is concerned, already the title *Teb Tenggeri*, “The Most Heavenly,”² refers to his special position. His tutor spirits, from whom he got his calling and with whom he negotiated about past and future, stemmed from heaven. The *Secret History* talks about his attractive force, his charisma and his influential family. We may presume that he was a “great shaman.” Yet he was not satisfied with his social position and he

¹ In §181 Senggüm mentions a certain Toyto'a Bö'e “wearing the tail of a Sartaq sheep” (Rachewiltz 2004. ii: 103). The meaning of the passage is not clear. In Cleaves' view (1982: 110, note 51) “This must be an old saying containing an allusion which was perfectly clear at the time.” Heissig (1985: 88) sees in it the expression of treacherous intent. See also the commentary of Rachewiltz (2004. ii: 652–641). Anyway, it is not concerning a real person.

² For various meanings of the title see: Cleaves 1967 and Shastina 1973: 345.

wished to extend the attraction that he exercised upon the people with his shamanic activity to political power and lured the people of Qasar and Temüge Otčigin and even Činggis himself to him. The protesting Qasar and Temüge were beaten and humiliated. Kōkōčü Teb Tenggeri tried to sow the seeds of discord between Činggis and Qasar. The clever spouse of the khan, Börte Čino, saw through the intrigues of the shaman and persuaded the khan to entrust the deeply offended Temüge Otčigin with the punishing of the arrogant Kōkōčü. When Mōnglik paid a visit to Činggis with his seven sons, Teb Tenggeri was attacked by Otčigin, taken out of the yurt and his backbone was broken by three wrestlers. His body disappeared without a trace, although Činggis had it strictly guarded.

Kōkōčü Teb Tenggeri really seems to have been a shaman. Rashīd ad-Dīn reported that he would rise to Heaven at night and, more interestingly still, that he would sit on the ice of rivers without freezing. According to many narrations, the great shamans of the Tungus were in possession of these abilities.³ Besides, a legend of the Khorchin recorded by Heissig traces the spiritual lineage of the shaman Qoboytai to Kōkōčü Dzairan in Činggis Qan's time (Heissig 1989: 155). All this goes to prove that he was a shaman, and a powerful and highly esteemed one, too.

Nothing supports, however, the assumption of certain scholars claiming that Kōkōčü Teb Tenggeri was a "chief shaman" or the head of a "shaman aristocracy."⁴ Ligeti asserted that Činggis Qan appointed

³ Probably the shamans' ability to produce great body heat depends on similar exercises to the ones practiced in certain tantric sects, cf. Eliade 1951: 115, 387, 412.

⁴ Roux 1959: 427–430, 1984: 72; Ligeti 1962: 100, 111–114, 174, 178–179; Heissig 1970: 300; Shastina 1973: 345; Ratchnevsky 1983: 38, 87–91; 1991, 12, 41, 96–101, 157 and Menges 1989: 245. It is generally assumed that shamanism originally related to the clans transformed in the differentiated societies and the shamans rallied in a hierarchy in the service of the state, that something like a "shaman aristocracy" had survived. What probably subconsciously contributed to these interpretations was the European model of the connection between church and state in the Middle Ages. Besides there is a simplifying view that shamanism is a developed religion whose priests are shamans.

Üsün Ebügen to the place of the ruined Kököçü as chief shaman. In my view this interpretation is erroneous as it even overlooks chronology.⁵

It still remains to be clarified whether Üsün was also a shaman or not.

Heissig doubts, and rightly so in my opinion, that Üsün Ebügen was raised to be a shaman upon Činggis Qan's order, and he points out that the word *beki*⁶ should not be equated with *böge* 'shaman'. Neither was the white color specific to the ritual attire of the shamans, not even of the so-called white shamans, who had tutor spirits of good will in contrast to the black shamans, whose tutor spirits were wicked (Hesse 1984: 174), even if there were occasions on which the shamans or those involved in the shamanic ritual performed clad in white or at least in something symbolizing the white clothing.⁷

In §216 of the *Secret History* it is expressed explicitly that Üsün was named *beki*, 'tribal leader'. Vladimirtsov made a list of the persons in the *Secret History* who had the title *beki*, and they were really tribal leaders: Seče beki of the Qutuγtu-γürki, Toyto'a beki and his successor Tögüs beki of the Merkit, Quduqa beki of the Oyirad, Qači'un beki of the Dörben and Bilge beki of the Kereid (Vladimirtsov 1948: 80). Until then Üsün had been the head of the clan Ba'arin, its *ebügen* 'father, elder'. For some reason, Činggis found it important to confirm Üsün as tribal leader of the Borjigin, and since the Ba'arin were the oldest of the lineages derived from Bodončar, the post went rightfully to Üsün, the white color being obviously a concomitant to it. As tribal leader Üsün had evidently to perform different ritual functions including—according to most translators of the *Secret History*—determination of the fortunate years and

⁵ Ligeti (1962: 174, 179) opines that Üsün's appointment as chief shaman was mistakenly earlier mentioned in the *Secret History* as the removal of his predecessor, Kököçü, with that however, Ligeti proposes a chronological correction in favour of an erroneous hypothesis. Cf. also Ratchnevsky 1983: 91; 1991, 101 and Roux 1984: 64, 71.

⁶ Heissig 1984: 319–320. For the word *beki* see Pelliot 1930, 49–51.

⁷ When the spirits, or in Mongolian the *ongons*, of the deceased shaman were taken to their final accommodation in a hut in the woods, the nine shamans performing the rite were wearing white clothes or at least white headgear (Rinchen 1962: 256). For the great smith-ritual of Buriats the actors of the nine heavenly smiths had to be clad white (Sandschejew 1928: 539–541, 548–543). The nine Tayijis, who surrounded shouting on horse-back anything or anyone struck by lightning, were also dressed in white (Potanin 1881: 140). All these are special rites somehow in connection with the heaven, see Pallas 1980. i: 282. For the white colour symbolizes heaven and the ruler's power among the nomadic peoples.

months. Plausibly it was one of his duties to worship the ancestors of the Borjigin and the holy mountain of the clan, the Burqan Qaldun.

European travelers reported that there were priests of the cult of the ancestors at the Činggisid court, and there were also various groups of exorcists (Hage 1976: 114–124; Heissig 1970: 305–306; Ratchnevsky 1970: 418). The cult of the ancestors was often linked to the cult of mountains, e.g. among the Turks (Tujue), the Kitan and Mongols (Wittfogel and Fêng 1949: 216–217; Heissig 1970: 301–305; Rinchen 1977; Sinor 1982: 230; Kļjashtornyĭ 1987: 51 and Uray-Kõhalmi 1987: 144–145). It is to be noted in this connection that usually the ancestors of the ruling dynasty became the protective spirits of the entire realm and their worship was an act of state.

At the great state ceremonies of the Turks (Tujue) the khagan himself was the personality who performed the rite (Sinor 1982: 230–235; Kļjashtornyĭ 1987: 51). The Chinese sources also mentioned in connection with the Kitan that their ruler functioned at the most important ceremonies such as new year, weather-making, the beginning of a war, cult of ancestors, etc., as a priest, but that he could also pass on this office to someone else. He was supported by a variety of lower-ranked ritual assistants. Thus at the important ceremonies there appeared a certain hierarchical order of ritual personages who were termed *wu* by the Chinese. In European languages this word was rendered by ‘shaman’, although during the long history of the Chinese language many kinds of persons of cult and ecstasies, such as weather-makers, exorcists and fortune-tellers, and also the performers of the ancestor cult and certain state cults, were called *wu* (Wittfogel and Fêng 1949: 217–218; Ratchnevsky 1970: 418–419; Eichhorn 1976: 15–36).

Though a known fact, it has often been ignored that in the case of nomadic peoples certain persons were in charge of the clan cult. They, however, were not necessarily shamans but rather the heads of the clan. The cult could be performed not only by single persons but by certain groups as well. The best known of these groups are the Darqad, who are still practising the Činggis Cult in Yeke qoriya in the Ordos. The originally one hundred Darqad families were chosen by Qubilai Qan to be the custodians of the Činggis’ relics. The leaders of the Darqad were ritual personages with great social prestige (Zhamtsarano 1961: 194, 225; Sagaster 1976: 190–211; Rinchen 1977 and Rintschen 1959).

These data warn us that, among the peoples whose beliefs are simply termed ‘shamanism’, the shaman in the customary sense was not the only

and exclusive ritual personage but that there were others parallel with him. In fact Eliade (1951: 17–22) had already suggested that the shaman acting in a trance was only available for certain fields of the religious life while a greater part of religious practice was carried on without him.

It comes from his nature that the shaman was and is not suitable for adjustment to a hierarchic structure. He is a person of ecstatic states, a highly sensitive, more or less extravagant person often with artistic talents. In rigid social structures, whether admired or feared, he only has a place at the periphery of society: in folk religion or in ecstatic rite.

What may have led to the misconception of shamanism in nomadic empires as a hierarchic social structure was the state cult that grew out of the cult of ancestors whose execution was entrusted to appropriate persons or groups of the clan hierarchy. These persons or groups were either originally and by inheritance involved in the clan or tribal hierarchy, or they acquired a place assigned to them by the ruler. In quite a few societies the priests and priestesses of the state cult could be nominated by the charismatic ruler, even if some degree of initiation was required, whereas not even the mightiest khan could appoint somebody to be a shaman, for a shaman had to be called by the spirits. Kōkōcū was a shaman, but Üsün was a tribal leader in charge of certain ritual functions.

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Amban-Laï, a Siberian Shaman? The First Theatrical Representation of a Shaman: A Play by Empress Catherine II of Russia*

VILMOS VOIGT

BUDAPEST

Empress Catherine II of Russia wrote a comedy in five acts in 1785 entitled Shaman sibirskoi (A Siberian Shaman). The main protagonist in the play is Amban-Laï, a shaman. A Russian nobleman from Tobolsk, Bobin, takes the Siberian shaman to his home in St Petersburg, where he performs some shamanic activity and enters into discussion with the guests of the house. The play has been mentioned both in the history of Russian literature and in the history of shamanism. However this article presents the first description of the shamanic elements in the Russian text of the play. Also reproduced and discussed here are written notes by Catherine about the characteristics and doctrine of her "shaman," which deal more with the phenomenology and philosophy of religion than with Siberian shamanism.

The First Russian Data on Shamans

All scholars of shamanism remember that the much-discussed Tungus (?) word *shaman* was first registered in the Russian language 350 years ago. Protopope Avvakum (1620/1621–1682) was condemned to exile in Tobolsk in 1653, and later to Dauria in the area bordering Mongol

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territory. He was ordered to return to Moscow in 1663. Subsequently he was banished to “very distant regions” again, though not to Siberia. His apologetic autobiography, *Zhitie protopopa Avvakuma* (Life of Protopope Avvakum), was written between 1672 and 1675. The manuscript existed in three slightly different variants (there are many good modern editions, with notes and commentaries). Avvakum, describing his forced journey from Yenniseisk along the great Tunguzka River, once mentions the rapids of a Siberian river as *shamanskoï porog*. (The adjectival ending *shaman-skoï*, instead of the more recent form *shaman-skiï*, corresponds with the title of Catherine’s comedy.) He may have seen the river between 1653 and 1663. Avvakum’s *Life* is an important source for Siberian ecology, ethnography and particularly concerning the Buriats, but no description is given of a shaman or a shaman’s séance. The Russian orthography of the word *shaman* is very important too because of the initial *sh-* (and not *s-*) and because the word has two syllables rather than one.¹

The First Russian Literary Work on a Shaman

It is not a secret either that the first description of a Siberian shaman occurs in a literary work by a Russian royal.

Empress Catherine II of Russia (1729–1796), the iron-lady ruler, also engaged in various literary activities. In addition to political pamphlets, journals, writings on the importance of the Russian language, historical studies and children’s tales, she wrote several plays in Russian. Because her Russian was poor, it was already the gossip among contemporaries that some of her secretaries (G. V. Kozitskiï, A. V. Khrapovitskiï and others) corrected or even rewrote the royal texts. She produced six plays and some other texts for the *opéra comique*. Her first comedy was completed in 1782 and the last in 1785. The title of the last is *КОМЕДИЯ ШАМАНЪ СИБИРСКОЙ* (The Siberian Shaman. A Comedy). The work was published twice, as part of the *Complete Works of Imperatrice Catherine II*, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, for the

¹ See my preliminary remarks: Voigt 1984: 14–15, 17. On Avvakum and his works there exists a vast literature.

general public. In other editions of Catherine's works her dramas were not included.²

The second volume (all the publisher's data are the same as for the first volume) was in fact bound together with the first. It was accepted by the censors on 28 May 1893 and was published soon after. Its 330 pages contain 12 comedies in from one to five acts. Among these is a short piece in imitation of Shakespeare (we know that in Catherine's time this play was performed together with *The Siberian Shaman*). In the middle of the book, on pages 237–279, we find the text of *The Siberian Shaman*. This is in five acts (with, respectively, 12, 7, 13, 11 and 10 scenes), thus representing quite a long play by the writer.³

As for the origin of the work, we know that Catherine had read the article "Théosophes" by Diderot in the *Encyclopédie* (Volume 16, 253–261) and that she decided to write a comedy on a similar topic: the false spiritualism of the shamans.⁴ Probably the first title of the play was *Shaman Yakutskoï* (A Shaman from Yakutsk), and some of the protagonists' names were changed. The first edition appeared in 1786, and it was republished in the following year.⁵ The first German

² In preparing this article I have used the following edition: *ПОЛНОЕ СОБРАНИЕ СОЧИНЕНИЙ ИМПЕРАТРИЦЫ ЕКАТЕРИНЫ II*. Томъ I. С.-ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ. Издание книжнаго склада «Родина». 1893. The book begins with a two-page introduction, then the *Nakaz* (= "Decree" – a draft text of a "spiritual constitution" for the Russians), two tales, two historical studies, four "comic operas," one "opera" and two "comedies" follow. The last pages contain 126 "Selected Russian proverbs" by the author. On page 321 is the table of contents. On the cover of the first volume we read "Edited by A. A. Kaspari." Russian literary historians usually quote the plays from a different, critical edition (Pypin 1901). The text of the play is on pages 347–406, the notes are on pages 407–419. As for the history of writing, publishing, translation and performing of the play, I used Pypin's very valuable commentaries.

³ The Empress Catherine disliked plays that lasted longer than one-and-a-half hours. In my paper here I will not quote the rich literature about Catherine II.

⁴ See her letter to Johann Georg Zimmermann of 17 April, 1785 (or of 7 April, 1786) mentioning her two other plays, adding "une troisième est sur le métier, c'est le Schaman de Sibérie, l'article Théosophe de l'Encyclopédie en a fourni le canevas, vous l'aurez en son temps" (Pypin 1901: 409). Zimmermann, in his letter of reply (28 May, 1786), praises the choice, see Pypin 1901: 410.

⁵ *Комедія Шаман Сибирской*. Sanktpeterburg, 1786. Pri Imperatorskoï Akademii Nauk, 108 p., the second edition in *Руссiйскiй Феатр* том XIII (1787) 175–296. I do not list here the later Russian publications.

translation⁶ was published soon afterwards in Russia, and the empress sent copies to Germany. The same German text was republished in Germany, together with two similar plays by Catherine.⁷ The French translation appeared considerably later (Paris, 1826).

From Khrapovitskii's notes we know that in July 1786 the text was ready, and it is probable that he made some corrections. By 24 September the play was being performed at the Hermitage Theatre, and by 17 October the text had been given to a German secretary, Arndt to translate into German.

Pypin's critical edition was based on the manuscripts, which are kept at the Russian State Archives. There is a draft and a corrected manuscript, with a very few differences from the printed text. At the end of the corrected manuscript there are some notes in Russian and French written by the Empress. We will come back to them later.

There are 15 characters in the play: Bobin and his wife, Bobina; Prelesta, their daughter; Kromov, Bobina's brother; Sanov, a relative of Ivan Pernatov; Sidor Drobin and his wife, Flena Drobina; Karp Drobin, the son of Sidor's brother; Ivan Pernatov, Prelesta's bridegroom; Bragin, a friend of Ivan Pernatov; Amban-Laï, the shaman; Ustinia Melent'evna Mashkina, or Mavra, Bobin's maidservant; and Prokofii, Bobin's boy-servant, a yardgroom.

The play is set in the town of Saint Peter (i.e. St Petersburg).

The comedy does not excel, so I will not give the plot in detail. For us only the activity of the shaman (Амбан-Лай) is of interest.

The Plot of the Play

Act I. Bobin and his family have just returned to St Petersburg from Tobolsk. With them is a Siberian shaman who has successfully healed

⁶ *Der sibirische Schaman, Ein Lustspiel*. Aus dem Russischen übersetzt. St. Petersburg, gedruckt in der Breitkopfschen Buchdruckerey 1786, 110 p.

⁷ *Drei Lustspiele wider Schwärmerey und Aberglauben: 1) Der Betrüger, 2) Der Verblendete, 3) Der sibirische Schaman*. Berlin und Stettin bey Friedrich Nicolai, 1788. (12), xvi + 347 p. with the preface by Nicolai about the purpose of the plays. There was a separate printing too: *Der sibirische Schaman. Ein Lustspiel*. Berlin und Stettin, 139 p. The book has a drawing of the 4th Scene of the 2nd Act. German bibliographies mention another edition: *Der sibirische Schaman*. Aus dem Russischen. Riga, 1786.

Bobin's wife, and now he has to heal the daughter, Prelesta. Members of the family, friends and servants gather, and among other things they talk about the shaman and his activities. For some Siberia is simply a terrible, wild place, and in their view the shaman too is a "terrible person," in fact a witch or devil. Bobin relates that the shaman can speak Russian and was born in the Chinese border area. His parents died, and he became an Amban in Urga. He is a "Mungal" shaman. Many shamans have the name Laï. Sometimes Amban-Laï reads a Chinese book, and he makes his own clothes and footwear. We learn that the servants have secretly changed the "medicaments" that he prepared for the sick daughter, so she has taken nothing more than plain water.

Act II. In Bobin's house a separate chamber has been arranged for the shaman. He is sitting there, sewing boots. Then he puts on his shaman's costume. He reads from a book which is lying on the table. Bobin and his guests arrive; they greet the shaman politely with "One hundred-and-forty-grades Amban-Laï!" and want to know more about his wisdom. The shaman makes only some welcoming gestures and moves to a corner of the room, gazing at the guests. Finally he responds to the questions by saying "Wou, wou, wou . . . Miau, miau, miau . . . Kukureku, kukureku, kukureku . . . Kudataktak, kudataktak, kudataktak" and leaves the room. When some of the guests make sarcastic remarks, Bobin asks them to excuse the shaman and be patient. He explains that from time to time the shaman is out of his senses and that only after a time does he return to the everyday world. The shaman reappears on the stage in a half-trance and circles around the guests singing "uuuuuuuu, oooooooo, iiiiiiiii, eeeeeeee, aaaaaaaa" before falling unconscious. The guests continue to discuss this extraordinary behaviour. The shaman recovers and they ask him questions: Does he remember what he has done? What is written in the book? Can he foresee the future? There are vague statements from both sides. The scene ends with a summons to dinner, and the exhausted shaman is offered vodka by the yardgroom.

Act III. Bobin's daughter Prelesta is sick and unhappy. She is longing for Siberia. The family wants to arrange a marriage for her. The shaman arrives, and the guests ask him to see and heal the daughter, but he refuses the task: "It is not the time for that" (*время не пришло* *итти*), he says. He explains that behind all illnesses are two "forces": one comes from the universe (*сила для стихий*), the other is related to the body (*сила для телес*), and the effectiveness of healing depends

on the balance of the two forces. However, the shaman finally decides to visit the daughter.

Act IV. Complications arise concerning Pernatov, Prelesta's bridegroom in Irkutsk. A trouble-maker, Ustinia Mashkina, has appeared on the scene and she is telling a lie: she says that she has become engaged to Pernatov. The shaman wants to cheer up Prelesta by giving her a love letter from the bridegroom, but Prelesta refuses to read it because she believes that Pernatov has abandoned her.

The yardgroom informs Bobin that more and more people are coming to the house to seek the shaman's advice. Moreover, the shaman is organizing a secret "school of shamans." Bobin wants to close the doors of his house immediately.

Act V. Bobin and his friends are shocked by the news of the shaman's activities. They want to inform the authorities, but the state has already acted and arrested the shaman. We are told that he was arrested for three reasons: he has cheated a rich merchant's widow by promising to show her dead husband in an illusion (*показать мужа наяву*), he has organized a school of shamans (*шаманская школа*), and by tricks of prophecy and fortune-telling he has by force obtained a lot of money from a great many people (*своими финты-фантами не токмо привлечь народу много, но и предсказаніями и угадками выманилъ у всех денег колико могъ*).

Meanwhile the bridegroom Pernatov arrives, and a joyful wedding will be arranged after all. After so many troubles Bobin will be able to return to Siberia and live there in peace. And in Siberia there are still many shamans! The play ends with a pronouncement from Bobina's brother, Kromov: "Some people follow illusions, like the shamans, who first cheat themselves and then others who believe in them."

The Context of the Play

To interpret the text, we have to understand the situation of the theatre and literature in the Russia of the 1780s.⁸ The theatre was a very important area of social life and social criticism, as well as for the development of Russian literature. It followed the repertoire of French and German drama. The rulers of Russia had always kept a very close watch on everything connected with the theatre. Catherine was very keen on the theatre, but at the same time was a cruel censor of those who wrote for it. Her son, Prince Pavel, was ordered to take courses in drama. We know of hundreds of plays by various authors from Catherine's time, and people's, market or street theatre flourished too.

In the late 18th century orientalism or exoticism appeared often in the Russian theatre. A Turkish nobleman, Durfedjibasov, was one of the characters in a play written in 1772. In fact this protagonist came from the family of the Crimean Khan, Girey. In a play *Finiks (The Phoenix)*, 1788) the Turkish Sultan Ahmet had a role. In 1783 an opera in two acts, *The Pasha of Tunis*, was written. A comic opera *A Caliph Only for One Hour* was written by D. P. Gorchakov in 1786.⁹ Figures connected with folk belief or custom appeared quite often on the stage, for example in another comic opera by Gorchakov, *Baba-Yaga (Witch)*, 1788).¹⁰

Between 1785 and 1787 the Empress Catherine wrote several plays against "impostors." In works such as *Obmanshchik, Obolshenniŭ* and *Semia rasstroennaia ostorozhnami i podozrenniami*, she attacked people who assumed false identities, whom she viewed as a danger to society. In *Obmanshchik (The Deceiver)* the main protagonist is called Kalifalkzherston, which is a kind of anagram of "Graf Cagliostro." One of the most famous adventurers of his time, the Sicilian "Count" Giuseppe Balsamo (1743–1795) travelled extensively in the Near East

⁸ See e.g. the excellent summary (with references to earlier literature) by Berkov (1977). The book was originally written in 1949, but later was shortened for publication by one-third (by pupils of the deceased author). It would be interesting to know whether the original manuscript went into more detail about *The Siberian Shaman*, which is treated very briefly in the published edition.

⁹ See Berkov 1977: 150, 263, 264, etc. The plot of the last opera is from the *Arabian Nights*, which was also used by Shakespeare (*The Taming of the Shrew*) and others. In the international tale-type index it has the number ATU 1531.

¹⁰ See Berkov 1977: 290.

and Europe, seeking rich patrons to whom he offered longevity, beauty elixirs and various positions in masonic lodges. He in fact visited St Petersburg (1779), but the empress had no contact with him, and ridiculed him in plays and letters. Cagliostro was a fascinating man (see the *Gross-Kophta* by J. W. Goethe, another *alter ego* and anagram of the impostor), whose capacity to escape from hopeless situations was admirable. Had he met her there is a chance he would have become one of the empress's favourites. But Catherine feared secret societies or groups, especially the freemasons, and in all her plays the swindlers meet with condign punishment. By all criteria *The Siberian Shaman* belongs to this group of plays.

Comparative literature has shown the influence of Molière on European drama at the time of the Enlightenment. In a number of plays a "healer" or "trickster" arrives on the scene, performs several tricks (good or ill), and is finally unmasked, like the famous Tartuffe. In *The Siberian Shaman* we find numerous traces of this dramaturgy.

Amban-Laï and his Shamanizing Practice

The figure of Amban-Laï is not as simple as might appear at first glance.

At the end of the play he is arrested because of his cheating and illegal activities organizing a secret school. In Act II he mocks his visitors openly by not communicating with them and by barking and miaowing. On the other hand, we learn about his successful healing, and, he evidently wants to help the love-sick daughter. In some conversations he gives clever answers. His ploy of not answering some questions is a typical device used by "real" Siberian shamans.

As for his audience, Bobin, the head of the family, believes in shamanic powers. He protects Amban-Laï and tries to explain his strange habits and "translate" his words. Some of the guests are critical or sceptical. Among the servants are some who are the shaman's enemies; these read his intentions rationally and try to cross his plans. Others express deep faith in all forms of magic and are much afraid of any kind of "sorcerer."

All this dramatizing follows the general practice in late 18th century theatre. But in showing a "living" Siberian shaman we find some specific motifs in the play. Without a thorough critique of sources, we do not know where the writer got her information about real shamans. In

the play, explanations are limited to the actual behaviour of Amban-Lai—as if it were supposed that the audience already knew that in the great Russian Empire shamans lived in Siberia; and that their mental capacities are held in extraordinarily high regard, and their magic is directed towards healing. The existence of shamanic schools seems to have been another generally known phenomenon. And in the play nobody needs to explain what the word ‘shaman’ means. The play’s title must have sounded familiar to the public—at least to the highbrow elite of St Petersburg.

As regards the more specific features: Amban was born in the Buriat borderland, on the Chinese side. He has contacts with China, and he uses a Chinese book for divination. His rank of “one-hundred-and-forty grades” (*сто сорок степенный*) is a total invention, “starting with a childish [way] and ending in a stupid [way]”¹¹; but it is nicely alliterative in Russian! Nevertheless, it is a fact that shamans had “grades.” Amban was enrolled into a Tungusian *dvoedanec*; the curious Russian word means ‘doubly perfidious’, and etymologically it is related to the Old Greek *Danaos*, whom the Trojans did not trust even if they were bringing gifts. There he was studying to become a *mungal'skiĭ shaman* (of course the first word is a variant of ‘Mongolian’). He is a member of the “guild of craftsman” (*remeslo*), and is himself a bootmaker by profession. He became an *Amban* in Urga (today Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia). According to the text of the play, *Lai* is the common name for many shamans in Siberia, and *Amban* is his honorific name.

Amban is a well-known Mongolian word. Originally it was an adjective, meaning ‘great’, but already in Manchu times it was used as a noun meaning ‘ruler’ or ‘governor’. It is not a shamanic term. As for *Lai*, here I do not suggest any etymology. In Mongolian a similar word means ‘trouble, difficulty, pain, bad luck’. In Old Turkic *-layu / -leyü* is a nominal suffix, meaning ‘like’.¹²

The somewhat conflicting biography of the shaman in fact reflects what was common knowledge in St Petersburg: China, Mongolia and the Tungus are mentioned in the play as areas that are connected with shamans. Such “priests/magicians” (*жреци*, as they were described in

¹¹ “Начинаются ребячеством а кончаются дурочеством”—a remark by Catherine, see Pypin 1901: 415. By the way, Catherine found the expression “one-hundred-and-forty grades” very apt, mocking the way the humblest addressed their rulers!

¹² See Clauson 1972: xl.

Act I, Scene 4) lived among many people in Siberia, and they undertook a special training. But Amban's literacy and his knowledge of Russian are definitely overstated in the play. In 1785 these would not have been a common feature among the shamans of Siberia.

Act II shows us the shaman's activity in detail. There is no doubt that this was the first occasion a shaman had appeared on stage. During the first few minutes little is said: the shaman, dressed in a half-caftan (i.e. in an oriental robe, though not in shaman's costume), is sitting on a chair, sewing a robe, most probably a shaman's costume. When the guests arrive and greet him he raises his hands slowly, places them on his hip, kisses his own hands, raises them to his forehead and lowers them to his chest, bowing slightly towards the guests. This is a stereotypical representation of any "oriental" greeting of honour, and has no direct connection with shamanism.

When Amban-Laï is asked to say something that will display his wisdom, he retreats to the wall, looking "nicely" and fixedly at the guests. In modern Russian the adjective *voshititel'niï* means 'charming', but in the 18th century its meaning was more probably 'enchanting' or 'in trance'. This behaviour is again intended to show the "strange" character of the shaman, but it is unrelated to anything that happens in an actual séance.

Bobin attempts to explain the shaman's behaviour: from time to time Amban-Laï is absent from our world. This may last one hour, two hours, or even several days. If he is wrapped up in enchanting thoughts (*въ думахъ восхитительныхъ*) he is out of his mind, which he feels is the happiest way of being, and he wants to reach this state as often as he can. The guests ask Bobin how the shaman attains this state of mind. Bobin's answer is that one can only guess at the means, but there is an "attractive power" (*притягательная сила*) behind the event. There is no doubt that this is a reference to ecstasy and to the existence of helping spirits.

When, after a while, Amban-Laï returns to the world of the guests (Act II, Scene 2) he does not move normally, and we see him making a bit of a "pantomime." One of the guests asks him if he needs crutches. The shaman turns his head right and left, refusing the offer. He bends over so far that his head touches his feet. Another guest shows him a purse and asks if he wants money. The shaman extends his hands to accept the money. This is one of the few instances in the play where the shaman's behaviour is explicitly signaled as false. In response to the

mocking observation by Sidor Drobin that “You do not resist such an occasion,” he starts to bark. This may be another signal to the audience that the shaman is an impostor whose apparently meaningless acts are in fact well controlled. From another point of view this scene is also a description, encoded into a theatrical performance, of the séance as regards its non-natural or acrobatic movements that are so characteristic of shamans.

The same could be said about the next part of the “shamanizing.” Amban-Lař utters “wou, wou, wou,” on which Drobin comments as follows: “Friends, you can hear now his voice, which essentially reminds us of the barking of a dog” (*собачий лай*). The Russian original is wittier because the verb ‘to bark’ is homonymous with the second part of the shaman’s name (*-Lař*). Another sceptical guest now asks, “How long should we wait for a real conversation with you?” to which the shaman responds by meowing. The guests surmise that it might be something said in the Chinese language, whereupon another guest expresses the (common) view that “Chinese is in fact a language for cats.” In response to the next remarks, that his speaking in animal voices might be hypocrisy, the shaman crows like a cock, and then, after another remark that “You are fooling us!”, the shaman repeats *Kudataktak!* If this is not an onomatopoeic word (as for its origin unknown to me), it is another good Russian pun meaning “What are you driving at in this way?” (See the Russian words *kuda* ‘to where’ and *tak* ‘so, in this way’.)

In this episode the séance phenomenon of speaking in other-worldly languages is presented, although here it is elaborated simply as an amusement for the theatre-going public.

Bobin closes the séance, and Act II, Scene 2, with a nice compliment (“One-hundred-and-forty grades Amban-Lař, regain your consciousness!”)—and the shaman awakes and leaves the room.

Scene 3 employs the theatrical device of having the shaman off stage so that the guests can discuss things freely. They say: “He is an idiot,” “I do not know what to make of it,” “He is like a village fool,” “It is not easy to decide what happened,” “People think he is a wise man . . . and a witch,” “He was acting childishly” and “He was acting the fool.” Once again Bobin comes to his defense, saying that the Siberian shamans are similar and, according to their “degrees,” they have the right to behave in an extraordinary way.

In Act II, Scene 4, the shaman returns with his drum. He circles around Drobin, imitating the sound of the tempest: *uu*. Drobin comments that “He is acting like an enchanted person.” Then follows the shaman’s song: *oo, ii, ee, aa*, and finally the shaman collapses unconscious. The sets of vowels simply exemplify the non-verbal language used by the shaman and have no real or secret meaning, in spite of the fact that the vowels are uttered in a reverse sequence.

In Act II, Scene 5, the guests exchange more remarks. We learn that the shaman has two pupils. If he loses consciousness, it may be for hours. Amban-Laï awakens and throws off his shaman’s costume. More questions follow: is he sick, tired or exhausted? The shaman does not remember what happened during his trance. According to him human feelings are higher than eating (“the stomach”). Asked what he is working on now, his answer is: “To keep silence.” “Is there such an activity?” asks Drobin. The shaman replies that “It has been, it is, and it will be.” “Where is this written down?”—“In this book.”—“What kind of book is it?”—“My book is the most important one in the whole world.”—“What does the book contain?”—“It contains everything, everything, everything.”—“Does it then include all of us in this room?”—“Knowledge was born together with mankind.”—“If we are included in that book, how does it describe us?”—“Our feelings are closely connected: enthusiasm, flow, nurture, movement, heat, bitter roots, love and hate have the same foundation as the pungent, the action, the liquid and the density.” The guests are not satisfied with this answer, so Bobin repeats the question: “Are the persons present inscribed in that book?” The answer is: “They are inscribed.”—“By their names and ranks?”—“It is a strange fact that I can tell you all without knowing your names or affiliations.” But the shaman does not want to disclose what he knows because he is afraid the guests will be embarrassed. After some hesitation, however, he characterizes Sanov, who is impressed by the accuracy of the description.

The summons to dinner ends the conversation (Scene 6).

In short, Scene 5 is a description of the shaman’s *séance* adapted for the stage. The second part of it, the discussion about the world order, is different from the routine of shamanism, somewhat resembling pre-Socratic or orphic wisdom. The instructions to the actors say that the shaman should speak in a low voice, and slowly or very quickly. Still, the vocabulary is far from that of a shaman. Nor is the characterization of guests a shamanic practice either, belonging to the art of professional

fortune-tellers. Amban's cryptic words represent a long tradition too: for the believers they are profound; to the sceptics all is falsehood and cheating.

In a word, Act II represents a mixture of shamanizing and fortune-telling. It might be that for the audience in St Petersburg the difference between the two forms of activity was not very important.

It is interesting to note that Amban appears as a person with a dual agenda: he is both a cheap swindler and a nature philosopher. In order to bring balance to the picture, at the end of Act II (Scene 7) we see the shaman drinking vodka and falling behind in his bootmaker's tasks.

Up to this point the shaman has been presented both as a sage and as a prophet. Now his third function, that of the healer, will be shown.

The audience has already been informed of Amban-Laï's healing powers. In Act IV, Scene 3, we learn more about his past healing success. Amban himself explains the theory of healing: the passions determine the behavior of different people, and thus they can be deciphered easily. In Scene 4 Amban is involved in the play's engagement plot—not in fact healing Prelesta but giving her the letter from her bridegroom. Then, in Scene 7, the yardgroom tells Bobin that more and more people are coming to the house to see the shaman, who is sitting in his shaman's costume behind a table, with his feet on a foot stool. By reading from his book he is making decisions about everybody who comes to him, and with his disciples he is organizing and writing texts for a shamanic school behind closed doors.

In Act V Amban-Laï does not appear, and we learn only that he has been taken into custody.

Concluding Remarks: Was Amban-Laï a Shaman?

We may stress two more features. The play is about the unmasking of "impostors," and the stage production follows that pattern. Not only the shaman, but also the trouble-maker Mashkina belongs to that group. Two kinds of people come into contact with the shaman: believers and sceptics. In the play there are no "self-explanatory family names" (which occur regularly in other plays by Catherine), so the characters cannot easily be distinguished on the basis of class. There are three "registers" that serve the same division: noblemen, women, and servants. Members of the last group do not believe in Amban, but

they do believe in magic. Members of the second group believe in both. The (noble)men oscillate between blind faith and scepticism. However, in the play there is no spokesman for the philosophy of the Enlightenment. The “philosophical” conversations with Amban-Laï include both wisdom and humbug. And they are not part of any belief system of real shamanism.

All this occurs on a general level, and it does not represent direct evidence for or against shamanism.

My second remark is closely connected with the first. The character of Amban-Laï was made for the theatre and not for scholars of comparative religion. The abrupt inconsistencies in his behavior speak for that. We should not see in any instance of his “shamanizing” a true description of the traditions of any Siberian people. But it conveys a general picture, and as such it is important. With its combination of Chinese, Mongolian and Siberian features, we see a stereotype of shamanism from the St Petersburg of 1785.

It would be interesting to find any further information about the performance of the play. At that time in Russia’s capital city the requisites of the shamans were already displayed in collections of ethnographic artifacts and curiosities.¹³ Act II Scene 4 features the shaman’s “kettle-drum” (*litavr*), but, as we know, this must have been more precisely a Siberian shaman’s drum. And, of course, not the Slavic Orthodox musical instrument *литавры*—this term is known also in Ukrainian and Bulgarian, deriving from the Medieval Greek *πολυταυρέα* (originally only: *ταυρέα* ‘a percussive musical instrument’). The first syllable of the word, already known in Old Russian, might be a haplogy from *бить по литаврам* ‘beat the musical instrument’ that was associated

¹³ There is a good literature on the history of Russian studies of Siberia, and of shamanism in Siberia, but I did not find any direct reference to the play *Shaman sibirskoi*, so I will not list it here. On the general treatment of Siberia in the Russian empire, see the excellent book by Forsyth (1992). As for Catherine’s particular role in Siberian affairs, it is a well-known fact that Abbot Jean Chappe d’Auteroche wrote a negative travelogue: *Voyage en Sibérie, fait par ordre du roi en 1761; contenant les mœurs, les usages des Russes, et l’état actuel de cette puissance; la description géographique et le nivellement de la route de Paris à Tobolsk*. In two volumes, Paris, 1761 (second edition 1768). In Catherine’s court an anonymous refutation was soon published in French: *Antidote* (1770, St Petersburg), and we know the Empress took an active part in compiling it. The Russian work praises the actual situation in Russia and in Siberia, but does not pay too much attention to shamanism there.

with the Orthodox Church—and that harp was of course not in the hands of Amban-Lai.

This first theatrical presentation of shamanism deserves our attention even today.

Scholars of shamanism have recently given some attention to Catherine's play from the point of view of the European history of ideas.

Gloria Flaherty, in her renowned book *Shamanism and the Eighteenth Century*, describes the German text of the play using a famous copy of the St Petersburg edition, sent in January 1787 by the Empress to the famous German physician and philosopher Johann Georg Zimmermann (1728–1795), which is now at the Firestone Library of Princeton University, comparing its ideology with the French Enlightenment and especially with Diderot's views of faith and false faith.¹⁴

Kocku von Stuckrad in several publications combined data on esoterism with early European references to Siberian shamanism. In his epistemological book¹⁵ he describes the play (from a Berlin edition of 1788, reprinting also the only illustration) in the context of the Enlightenment.

Lurana Donnels O'Malley (1998) has edited an English translation of the play. Recently (2006) she wrote a summary work on Catherine's dramatic works, with detailed descriptions.

Today the *Sibirskoi Shaman* is generally viewed as a work that uses the character of a shaman to mock primitive spiritual practices.¹⁶ Scholars have used the German translation of the play and letters by the Empress to German intellectuals (published in German books about the Empress by Hans Jessen and others).

These recent views are correct, but their authors have not used the "critical" edition of Catherine's works, with her own, primary remarks.

We know from her often quoted letter to Zimmermann about the inspiration for the play. When on 22 (or 21) April, 1787, Catherine thanked Zimmermann for his favourable review of the play, she also explained her concern about the spreading of "absurdity":

Je suis fort aise que vous disiez du bien du Schaman de Sibérie, car j'aime beaucoup cette pièce, mais je crains bien qu'elle ne corrige personne, les

¹⁴ See Flaherty 1992: 119–121.

¹⁵ Von Stuckrad 2003: 58–66. And more briefly in many of his other papers.

¹⁶ See e.g. Znamenski 2007: 8. For a more general view see Znamenski 2004.

absurdités sont tenaces, et ces absurdités-là sont devenues de mode. La plupart des princes d'Allemagne croient que c'est du bon ton que de donner têtes baissées in alle diese Gaukeleyen, ils sont las de la saine philosophie. Je me souviens que l'année 1740 les têtes les moins philosophiques affectoient d'être philosophes, à cela du moins la raison et le sens commun ne se perdoit pas. Mes ces nouvelles erreurs ont fait devenir fou chez nous plusieurs personnes qui ne l'étoient pas avant cela.¹⁷

In their correspondence the Empress and the German scholar returned to the subject of the *Siberian Shaman* several times. On 1 July, 1787, Catherine compared the “magnétiseurs de Strasbourg” with the Shamans of Siberia. On 7 April, 1786, Zimmermann praised the play *Obmanshchik* (in German *Der Betrüger*), in which the impostor Kalifalkzherston's name is an anagram of Cagliostro.

In the correspondence between Catherine and Baron Friedrich Melchior Grimm (1723–1807)—the famous “literary agent” in Europe, the editor of an information leaflet for the rulers of the entire continent, and who twice visited Catherine in St Petersburg (in 1773 and 1776)—we learn about theatre performances of *Sibirskoï Shaman* in September and October 1786, and about details of the genre and of the German translation. The Empress refers to the Shaman simply as an impostor. On 15 February, 1787, she wrote:

Il y a encore sur le métier Fevey, opéra comique, et le Chaman de Sibérie, comédie. Tout cela sera gai au possible: le chaman est un théosophe qui fait toutes les charlataneries des confrères de Paracelse. Voyez l'article Théosophe de l'Encyclopédie, et auez le secret de nos comédies, de la maçonnerie et des sectes à la mode.¹⁸

Catherine and her circle saw as a common feature in her three plays for the theatre the unmasking of cheaters like Cagliostro, the magnetists, shamans and religious extremists and making them look ridicu-

¹⁷ Pypin 1901: 409; the translation by Flaherty (1992: 119) is somewhat different. Von Stuckrad's translation (2003: 60) quoted by Jessen (1978: 331) is closer to the original. First published in Bodemann (1906: 43). In my essay I give my own English references, and I did not use the words of O'Malley's English translation.

¹⁸ See Pypin 1901: 411–412.

lous. It is interesting to notice that she does not add any further feature of shamanism as it actually was in Siberia. In one of her letters to Zimmermann (1 July, 1787) she recalls her journey to the Crimea, where it was impossible to rest because of the loud cries of the muezzins, and she saw people who for no apparent reason danced and shouted themselves into a trance. That is all we learn about her own experience of ecstatic religious practice.

At the end of the corrected copy of the manuscript there is a page on the “characteristics” of the shaman, followed by a short summing up of his “Doctrine.” She describes only the figure of Amban-Laï, and not as a stage director might but as the observer of an existing and strongly disliked person. Her remarks are more interesting for scholars of religion than some scenes of the comedy because the author explains here her ideas about religious behaviour and philosophy.

Caractère du ШАМАНЪ (Shaman)

Il se croit inspiré et il est fou.

Ses accès sont précédés d’une espèce d’abrutissement qu’il régarde comme l’état de l’homme sous la condition de nature dépravée.

Il donne des principes pour s’acheminer artificiellement à cet état d’orgasme et d’ivresse, où il se trouve au dessus de lui-même.

Stupide dans le repos,

fatigué,

accablé,

ennuyé,

il a pris la vie commune en dégoût;

il soupire après le moment d’exaltation, d’inspiration, d’aliénation;

il fuit le commerce des hommes; il est insupportable à lui même et aux autres.

Il attend l’illumination passive, il est l’apologiste du silence, de la suspension des sens, le détracteur de la philosophie et de la raison.

Il a une langue qui lui est propre.

Des arcânes particuliers.

Il est réformateur des moeurs, de la science. Il connoit le passé et prédit l’avenir.

Il est entêté, rapporte tout à son livre.

Il défend avec une stupide jalousie son livre.

Il rétrécit autant qu'il est en lui l'empire de la raison.

Il réduit toutes les lectures à son livre, il y voit tout ce qui n'y est pas et rien de ce qui y est; il a pris en aversion les gens instruits, l'esprit de découvertes, de recherches, et voudrait tout réplonger dans la barbarie, si le gouvernement l'appuyoit.

Doctrines et principes du Шаманъ.

Les connoissances ne naissent point dans l'homme du dehors l'homme en naissant en apporte les germes innés.

Il soumet la destinée aux influences des astres.

Il donne dans la magie,

la cabale,

l'astrologie. NB. Il est pâtre et cordonnier.¹⁹

Tout cela est si bien brouillé que personne n'y comprend rien.

Il n'y a d'autres facultés que celles de s'élever,

de couler,

de s'insinuer,

de pénétrer,

de mouvoir.

L'amer, l'acide, le chaud. NB. L'amour et la colère ont le même principe.

Le sel est l'action, le souffre la matière.

NB. Il n'y a point de fou, qui ne trouve un plus fou qui l'admire.

L'entendement a son siège à l'orifice supérieur de l'estomac.

La mémoire a son siège dans le cerveau.

Le moyen d'atteindre à l'abstraction pure et complète est qu'il faut être séparé de l'attention de toutes choses créées; il faut que l'activité de l'âme soit abandonnée à elle-même, qu'il n'y ait aucune discoinure ni intérieur ni extérieur, aucune action préméditée, aucune contemplation déterminée; il faut que l'âme n'agisse point, qu'elle attende dans un profond de silence l'influence gratuite, et en un mot qu'elle demeure absorbée dans une inexistence, un oubli, une sorte d'anéantissement, qui le rende inerte et passive. (Pypin 1901: 416)

It is noticeable that the characteristics have a dual aspect. On the one hand they are a description of the actual behaviour of the shaman. On

¹⁹ Лапти плететь 'making a kind of footwear'.

the other hand they are directed against his falsehood and stupidity, showing him up as boastful and generally rather hopeless. But all these accusations are still about the shaman as a living person. The criticism is psychological and ethical. Moreover there occurs a third context of the characteristics, where the Empress describes the “philosophy” of the shaman, who is against reason, education, research and exploration, against the progress of mankind. In this “philosophical” criticism it is easy to see the direct influence of the “Théosophes” entry in the *Encyclopédie*.

Eminent scholars (both Flaherty and von Stuckrad) have stressed the general importance of Diderot’s famous (and not too opaque) encyclopedia entry, but they did not compare its text with what Catherine wrote.

When in Act II Scene V Amban-Laï awakes from his “absence,” the guests ask him whether he remembers what happened to him while he was in a trance. The shaman answers with some strange sentences, such as: “To remember is to sit here forever.” . . . “Do you feel what you have not eaten?” . . . “Human feelings are all above the stomach.” Pointing to his stomach, he says: “here it is . . . and there it is not.” To the next remark: “Such a judgement is quite new!” he replies: “What is that . . . to judge . . . to think . . . to speak?” To the next question: “What should one do to exercise?” his answer is: “To exercise the silence.” Which means “. . . to reach something . . . non-existence.” Then, in response to the remark: “What new science is this, which never existed before?” he says: “It existed, it exists, and it will exist.” After that the conversation turns to the shaman’s book, which “includes everything.”

The discussion I have outlined above seems to be meaningless only at first glance.

Diderot’s *Théosophes* (*Encyclopédie* vol. 16, 253–261) begins with the following sentence: “[the théosophes] être l’espèce de la philosophie la plus singulière” [who] “se prétendirent éclairés par un principe intérieur, surnaturel et divin qui brilloit en eux, et s’y éteignoit par intervalles, qui les élevoit aux connoissances les plus sublimes . . .” Diderot then traces a line from Socrates to Paracelsus, with rich references to their mystical utterances. Then he turns to other “théosophes,” for example on page 258 to Boehmius, the German mystic Jakob Böhme (1575–1624), who was “successivement pâtre, cordonnier, et théosophe”—exactly like Amban-Laï! Another well-known person Diderot mentions was the Belgian Jean-Baptiste Van-Helmont (born in 1474), and among his teachings we find the following statements:

“L’âme a son siège particulier à l’orifice supérieur de l’estomac; la mémoire a son siège dans le cerveau” (260). “L’intelligence qui naît de l’invention et du jugement, passe par une irradiation qui se fait de l’orifice de l’estomac au cerveau” (260). The mind reaches abstraction by eliminating almost everything: “absorbée dans une inexistence, un oubli, une sorte d’anéantissement qui la rend absolument inerte et passive” (260). There silence is the supreme form of profound adoration. Diderot lists more recent théosophes too, in a mild and descriptive way. But, at the end of the entry he attacks them: they have an ardent imagination, they corrupt theology, they make philosophy obscure. They are semi-educated and reject philosophy, and thus they push mankind back into the barbarian age—that is, if the state permits their activity, as the theosophes demand (261).

Of course, some of the statements I have quoted are very general and vague. However, it is clear from the comparison that not only the commonplaces about human nature and philosophy, but whole sentences of Diderot have influenced the text of Catherine’s play. Some statements by Amban-Lai (or about him) are quotations from Diderot’s article. And in fact the entire French text in Catherine’s notes (see above) consists of excerpts from Diderot.

This play by Catherine offers us the first description of a Siberian shaman—although he turns out to be not so much a shaman as a “theosophe.” The “Characteristics” and the “Doctrine” are in fact the first description of a shaman from the perspective of the phenomenology of religion. In writing the play the Empress made a substantial contribution to comparative religion. It is a pity that it was not written about a real shaman but about a deceiver, one who could have posed a threat to the Empress. Why the author chose a “Siberian Shaman” to fill this role is a question to which we can only guess the answer: a penchant for *exoticism*.

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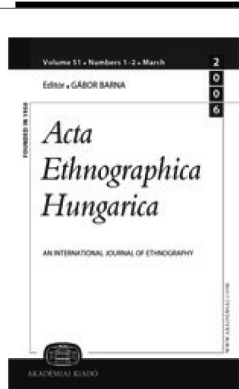
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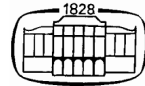
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A Note on the Word ‘Shaman’ in Old Turkic

PETER ZIEME

BERLIN

The aim of this article is to introduce two Old Turkic text passages in which the word šaman < Sanskrit śramaṇa ‘monk’ (Prakrit samana, Gāndhārī śamaṇa) occurs. While the word was borrowed into several Central Asian languages like Tocharian, Parthian and Sogdian, it has not been found so far either in Old Turkic or in Mongol. As the sphere of the Old Turkic culture is closer to the Tungusic world, the etymology of the term ‘shaman’ should be discussed in the light of these new data.

There is a vast literature, which cannot be reviewed here, on the etymology of the word *shaman*. As far as I can see, there are three main theories about its origin. The first claims that it originated directly from the Indian term *śramaṇa* ‘monk’. Others believe in a derivation from Tungusic *saman* (*samān*), which comes from the verb *sa-* ‘to know’.¹ The third position holds the view that the Indian *śramaṇa* was borrowed into Tungus and spread from there into the world.² The modern word forms of *shaman* started with Russian in the 17th century. N. D. Mironov and S. M. Shirokogoroff (1924) summarized the positions best as early as 1924; recently V. Voigt (1984) added his ideas. R. A. Miller and N. Naumann (1994) also provided valuable data, as did G. Kara (1997) in his review of their study.

K.-H. Menges and others followed the third theory, but J. Janhunen expressed his strong doubts (Janhunen 1984, but cf. Miller and Nau-

¹ Tsintsius 1977: 59ab (*samān*). Hultkrantz 1993: 6–7; 1993/2007: 8: “‘Shaman’ is possibly a Tunguzian word for ‘magician’ and ‘conjurer’, and early it became a *terminus technicus* for the ecstatic performer among the Siberian peoples.” And “The endless discussion of the origin of the word shaman is still going on.” (1993, 7, fn. 6)

² Boyle 1972. Several scholars have pointed out that the gap between Indian/Tocharian and Tungus is nearly unbridgeable, already Schott 1842, and cf. Kara 2001: 111.

mann 1994: 19). R. A. Miller and N. Naumann proposed an etymology but this needs further clarification.³

One can follow up the history of Sanskrit *śramaṇa* (Prakrit *samaṇa*, Gāndhārī *ṣamaṇa*) to Tocharian A *ṣāmaṇ*, B *ṣamāṇe*, to Parthian *šmn* (Sims-Williams 1983: 134; Durkin-Meisterernst 2004: 318b–319a) as well as to Sogdian *šmn* (Gharib 1995: 375a, No. 9287) and further to Chinese 沙門 *sha-men*. But so far the word has not been found in Old Turkic sources. While the ‘nun’ is known to be a borrowing from Sogdian *šmnñč* also in Old Turkic *šamnanč*, the ‘monk’ is always translated as *toyın*. Thus there is a gap between these data and the “Altaic” world of the shamans, especially the Tungusic word *saman*. S. M. Shirokogoroff (1935: 270b) wrote: “As a matter of fact, we have no direct evidence for showing exactly at which historic moment and who could have carried it so far away and how its other function was substituted to its original one.” Usually the word Sanskrit *śramaṇa* = Chinese 沙門 *sha men* was translated into Old Turkic by substitutes such as *toyın*⁴ or others.

My sole purpose here is to show that the word *šaman* entered the Uighur language, too, either via Tocharian or Parthian/Sogdian. In the following I present two examples to illustrate this.

First Example

In the fifth book of the *Xuanzang Biography* there is the following statement on a gathering at a ceremony in the monastery of Kanyākubja (Taishō shinshū daizōkyō 2053, Vol. 50: 247b20): 雖六齊之舉袂成帷 三吳之揮汗為雨 *sui liu qi zhi ju mei cheng wei san wu zhi hui han wei yu*: “It was said that the region of the Six Princes of Qi was so thickly

³ Miller and Naumann 1994: 139, fn. 71: “Chin. *sha-men* 沙門 stellt eine spätere, re-sanskritisierte Entlehnung desselben Originals dar (= NJ *shamon*). Es ist indessen in beiden Fällen, bei Chin. *sha-mi* wie *sha-men*, schwierig zu ermitteln, ob Buddh.Skt. *śramaṇa* oder *śramaṇera* die ihnen letztlich unterliegende Form ist; in jedem Fall liegen zu viele zentralasiatische Zwischenformen (Prakrit, Sogdisch, usw.) zwischen dem (den) indischen Original(en) und den chinesischen Entlehnungen.” The question if *shamen* goes back to Sanskrit *śramaṇa* or *śramaṇera*, for the time being, cannot be answered. However, it seems, that *shamen* reflects the first form, while *shami* reflects the second.

⁴ One might note the function of Yakut *toyon* ‘lord’ (? < Old Turkic *toyın*) in the shamanist terminology of the Yakuts, cf. Marazzi 1994: 77, 78.

inhabited that when the people raised their sleeves they might form curtains, and that in the area of the Three Wus when the people wiped their sweat, it would rain like a shower.” (Li 1995: 145–146)

This sentence was translated by Šinǰo Šäli Tutuñ into Uigur as follows: *altı šaman üzä [t]arutup yñ učların bintavir kulturdaçı üč liñ üzä boşurup tärlärin yağmur kultaçılar* (HT V 13, 23–26, Tugusheva 1991: 38, ll. 22–25). L. Iu. Tugusheva (1991: 179) translated this phrase only partly, leaving several words without translation, so that the sentence as a whole remained unclear. I suggest the following translation which is rather far from Li’s rendering of the Chinese text: “[Suppose] that six *šaman* narrow their sleeves forming a curtain, that three *liñ* shed their sweat and make rain.”

The Chinese city names *qi* and *wu* were not translated into Old Uigur; rather they were reinterpreted by the translator. He chose equivalents with which he was more familiar. In the second case, *liñ*, it might be that he either misread the Chinese character or interpreted it as 令 *ling* in the meaning of a “Geist, der über Regen gebietet” (Bauer 1971: 144). The special character should be 靈 *ling* ‘Zauberkraft’, a character which was explained by E. Hauer (1925: 32) as follows: “Zwei Leute 人人 verrichten eine Arbeit 工, indem sie, wie es heute noch die sibirischen Schamanen tun, bis zur Erschöpfung um einen Pfahl herumtanzen, daher das ganze Schriftbild 巫 *wu* = Zauberer, Beschwörer. Die Zauberer schreien (drei Männer 口口口 als Ausdruck des lauten Geschreis) nach 雨 Regen, der natürlich fallen muß, wenn das Beschwören beharrlich fortgesetzt wird. Daher die Grundbedeutung ‘Zauberkraft.’” (Hauer 1925: 32)

If this is true, the other word may also have been interpreted in a similar way. 齋 could easily be misread for 齋 *zhai* ‘feast’ and then replaced by a word designating religious people, namely ‘monks’, not, however, using the term *toyın*, but *šaman* < Sogdian, Parthian *šmn* < Sanskrit *śramaṇa* ‘monk’.

Second Example

The Berlin fragment U 5618 (T II D 296)⁵ has on one side, which is regarded as the verso⁶, the following text:

⁵ Turfan Collection of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften: U 5618.

⁶ The recto side contains a *böz* document and was described in Raschmann 2007, no. 254, p. 245.

01 [at]ı küsi yadıltı ištilt[i]
02 -larka ayag(l)g čiltäglig boltı . öt[rü]
03 sakıntı amtı mäniñ arvišım sidi []
04 ulug ögrünčülüg bolup takı adın ’[]
05 -ti dyan { } šamanlarag bışruntı []
06 tavrınu kečmädin ara kop nizvan[i]
07 arhant kutıña tägdi . arhant kutın [bultukta]	
08 ärt[iñü sä]vinčlig bolup upaguptı []
09 kälip ⁷ adakıña yinčürü töpün yükü[nüp]
10 []g bašl(i)g ’[]

“His [name] and fame spread and was heard [everywhere,] by [all people] he was respected and honoured. Th[en . . .] he thought: Now my spell *siddhi* [. . .], he became very joyful, then other [. . .]. He practised the *šamans* in the *dhyāna*. [Thus . . .] striving in the meantime [he overcame ?] all *kleśas* and reached the arhatship. [Having reached] the arhatship, he became extremely joyful, Upagupta⁸ [. . .] came and fell at his feet [. . .] at the top [. . .].”

This small fragment refers to the legends surrounding Upagupta⁹, a famous meditation master. As the fragment is too small, establishing an exact location is impossible.

Conclusion

So far these are the only two examples in which the word *šaman* appears in Old Turkic. In the second example it clearly refers to monks. But the first occurrence shows that the word *šaman*—which

⁷ With lesser probability one could read *k(a)šip* ‘Kāśyapa’.

⁸ Strong 1992: 71: “Upagupta himself, it should be remembered, was the head of the Nāṭabhaṭika monastery on mount Urumuṇḍa, which Śāṅakavāsin founded. Not enough has been made yet of the fact that this monastery, in our texts, is repeatedly called ‘the foremost of all the Buddha’s forest-haunts [aranyāyatana], where the lodgings [seats-beds] are conducive to meditation [śamatha]’. (. . .) And there, too, he instructed monks from all over India who came to seek him out as a meditation master. In fact, at one point, the *Aśokarājāvadāna* even declares that the Buddha predicted that Upagupta would be ‘the foremost of all those who are instructors of meditation’.” New insights in Deeg 2007.

⁹ HT VII, 1999–2006.

must be regarded as rare—was chosen to designate a kind of shamanic person, thus increasing the possibility of establishing a bridge between Inner Asian Shamanism and the Indian/Buddhist world. But even if we find more examples and further bridges can be built, it remains a fact that this bridge can be only a linguistic one because the original concepts of shamanism and Buddhism were very distinct at the beginning. It was only in Tibet and Mongolia that some fusion between the two occurred.

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PETER ZIEME, born 1942 in Berlin, worked for many years at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. His scholarly activity focused on the edition of Old Turkic texts from Central Asia (Turfan, Dunhuang, and other regions).

An Uighur *Baxši* from the Ile Valley, Kazakhstan

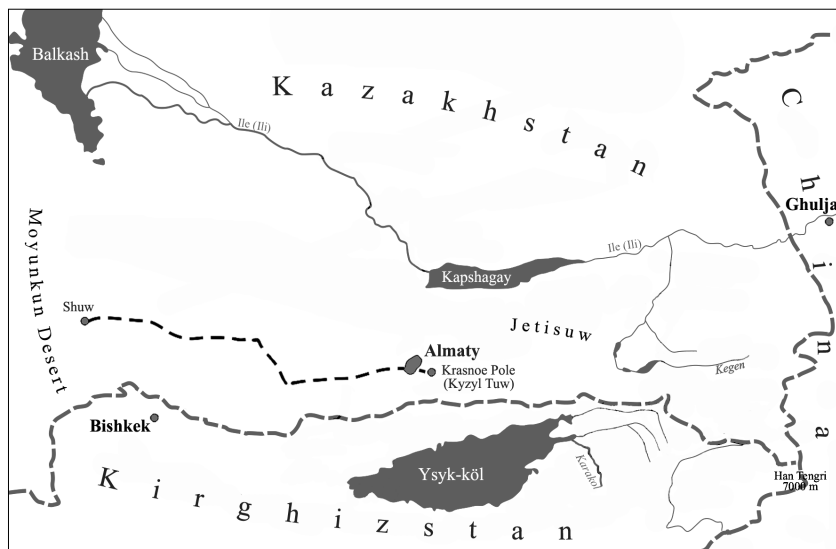
DÁVID SOMFAI KARA and LÁSZLÓ KUNKOVÁCS

BUDAPEST

The present field report contains data collected on two field trips. The first field trip was made by László Kunkovác̄s alone during his first expedition to Kazakhstan in May 1993. During that time he visited the village of K̄izil-tuw (in Uighur Qizil-tuḡ) about 15 km east of the former Kazakh capital of Almaty. He visited an old shaman by the name of Q̄ābil-āxun (or simply Q̄ābil), who was at that time in his nineties. The man had moved from Gulja in the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, China, to Jeti-suw, the “Seven Rivers” region of Kazakhstan southeast of Lake Balkhash, during a great famine in 1962 (see Map 1).¹

The second field trip was conducted by László Kunkovác̄s and Dávid Somfai Kara, the two authors of the present article, in Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan in April 1995. We were accompanied by the Hungarian Turkologist, and at that time the Hungarian ambassador to Kazakhstan, the late József Torma, together with his Kazakh friend Ötemis Salamat. First we wanted to visit the shaman in his home in the village of K̄izil-tuw, but the locals told us that he had moved to his daughter’s house in Shuw village 300 km west of Almaty near the Moyun-kum desert. So the following day the four of us traveled in the Hungarian Embassy’s jeep to Shuw village, where eventually we found the old Uighur *baxši*.

¹ Uighurs in the Ile/Ili Valley used to be called *taranči*. They started to migrate to the Jeti Suw (“Seven Rivers” in Russian *Semirech’ie*) Region at the end of the 18th century. Today there are about 200,000 ethnic Uighurs in the Ile Valley (Kazakhstan) spread between the border of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region and Almaty.



Map 1. Central Asia showing the geographical locations where Qābil *baxši* lived. The dark dashed line shows the route of our two expeditions in 1993 and 1995 respectively. Drawn by István Somfai.

The Field Trip of 1993

Kunkovács met Qābil *baxši* with the help of an Uighur teacher, Marat, who took him to Qābil's house in his red Zhiguli car and introduced him to the famous shaman. Kunkovács met Marat—who was the only person to help him find a shaman—at the Uighur Cultural Association in Almaty. After this first visit Kunkovács returned to the village because the *baxši* said he would let him to take part in a ritual (called *oyun* 'game' in Uighur²) two days later. It was a healing ritual, where a middle-aged woman was treated because apparently some demons (*jin*) were troubling her. She was the only real participant at the ritual, while Kunkovács, Marat, and the shaman's son and daughter were present just as witnesses.

When Kunkovács and Marat arrived in the morning the *baxši* was sitting alone because his helper (*dāpči*³), who usually played

² On the earlier Russian anthropological literature on *oyun*, see Malov 1918: 5 and Basilov 1992: 191.

³ See Malov 1918: 87: 5.

a drum during rituals, could not come. After their arrival the *baxši* prepared for the ritual.

(1) First, he took all kinds of objects out of his bag and put them on a big table. He also prepared a bunch of candles for the ritual which he had made himself. There were the following objects: (i) knives, some with little bells, (ii) two idols (called *qočaƣ* or *qorčaƣ* ‘doll’ in Uighur) with little bells, (iii) the bunch of candles (*šam*) (iv) feathers bound together, (v) two wooden birds, (vi) locks with keys, (vii) rosaries (*täswi*), (viii) twigs, (ix) a piece of thread, and (x) a mirror.

(2) The *baxši* cut accurate images of different demons from a newspaper with a big pair of scissors (Fig. 1). This process lasted for quite some time. The old man put the paper cutouts on the floor. There were the following images: (i) frogs, (ii) bats, (iii) rabbits, (iv) foxes, (v) different kinds of birds, (vi) weasel-like animals, and (vii) a human-like figure.

(3) The female patient arrived and sat down next to the *baxši*. He took the paper-cuts one by one and showed them to the patient (Fig. 2). Then he hung them on a string stretched across the room in front of the window.

(4) These were only the preparations, and the healing ritual itself commenced after that. The ritual began with a Muslim prayer from the *Qoran* (pl. 11 *a*). The *baxši* then took a Muslim rosary (*täswi*) into his hands.

(5) Then he began to revive his ritual objects, taking them in his hands and murmuring all kinds of prayers to call his helping spirits (*päri*). Uighurs call their shamans not only *baxši* but *pärixän* (from Persian *pari-xän* ‘the one who calls the spirits’, Malov 1918: 4) because they communicate with their *päri* helping spirits. His singing and moving became more and more intense, and at one point he started to chant his prayers with a strange voice that resembled the throat-singing of the South Siberian Turkic peoples.

(6) Despite his ninety years he was now running and jumping around. He sang and danced around the table and the patient and sometimes he stood on one foot.

(7) Then he sat at the table and touched the woman with the knives, feathers, twigs and locks. Sometimes he chanted with the Muslim rosaries (*täswi*). He also massaged the woman’s shoulders and showed her the mirror.

(8) The *baxši* wrapped up the paper-cuts and gave them to the woman. They chanted prayers again.



Fig. 1. The *baxši* cutting accurate images of different demons (bats, birds, foxes, frogs, rabbits, weasel-like animals, etc.) from a newspaper with a big pair of scissors. Photo: László Kunkovács, 1993.

(9) At the peak of the ritual his son brought in a metal stick which he had heated to a very high temperature. The woman had to spit on the stick, after which the *baxši* placed it in his mouth (*učuq*). This was to frighten the demons, demonstrating the power granted to the shaman by his helping spirits and also impressing the patient. He continued to touch her with his objects and walked around her several times.

(10) The *baxši* took his magic candle and used it to light some twigs standing in a cup (*piyalä*). Then he put the burning candle on the patient's head (Fig. 3). He stood behind the woman, touching the candle flame and singing prayers all the time.



Fig. 2. Qābil shaman displaying the image of a bat cut out of paper. It probably represents a demon that troubled the woman. Photo: László Kunkovács, 1993.

(11) He put the candle on the ground and threw the rosaries and demon cutouts down next to it. After that he picked up the still burning candle and walked out of the room with it in his hand.

(12) Then he returned with the burning candle and performed some kind of fortune-telling for the woman.

(13) At the end, the *baxši* struck her a couple of times with the rosaries. With the preparations that preceded it the ritual lasted about four hours altogether.



Fig. 3. The *baxši* places the burning candle on the top of the woman's head to collect the evil forces in its flame, after which they can be taken out of the room.
Photo: László Kunkovác, 1993.

The Field Trip of 1995

Two years later when we found Qābil *baxši* in his daughter's house (pl. 11 *b*) in the remote village of Shuw he looked old and tired. Nobody knew his exact age, but his children thought he might be about 95 years old. At first we thought he was not well enough to receive us, but he agreed to show us his ritual objects. We were especially interested in the "shamanic dolls," which cannot be found among any other ethnic groups of Turkistan. Gradually, as he spoke about his shamanic activities, he became more alert and decided that he would perform a purify-

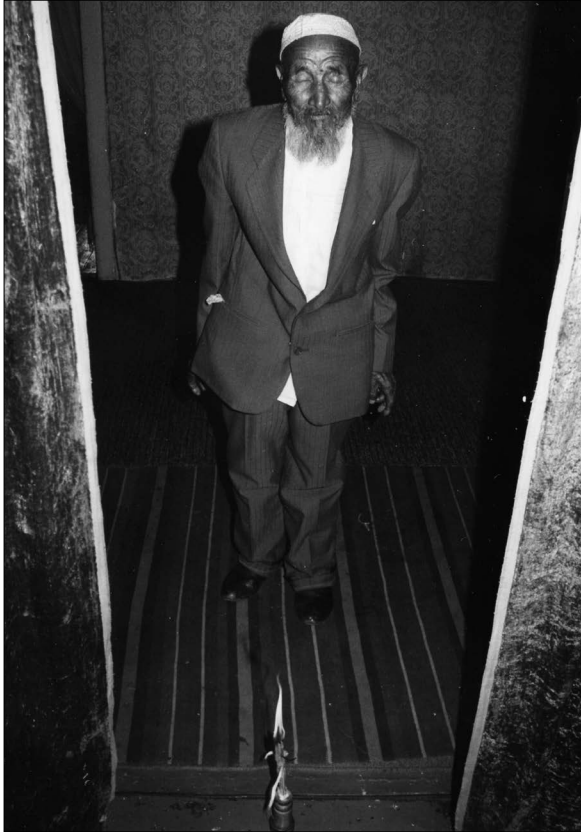


Fig. 4. The *baxši* places the candle by the threshold and chants magic words while taking the evil forces out of the room. Photo: László Kunkovács, 1995.

ing ritual for us. He slowly, but without mishap, put all his objects on the table and explained their ritual usage. We were able to glimpse his magic wooden dolls (*qoča*q), but on this occasion he did not use them. The ritual was performed with two kinds of objects, little painted sticks and a bucket full of water.

(1) All four of us who were present—Kunkovács, Torma, Salamat and myself—had to sit next to him holding our hands in front of our faces. This is the way Muslims say ordinary prayers (Arabic *du‘ā*’).

(2) The *baxši* murmured his prayers and touched different parts of our bodies with the painted sticks several times.

(3) Then he put the sticks in the bucket. After the sticks had soaked up some water they stood upright on the surface of the water. The *baxši* said that bad energy was passing into the water from the sticks, which had collected it from our bodies (*köčür*⁴).

(4) Later the sticks were removed from the bucket and the water, now full of “bad energy,” was poured away at the end of the courtyard.

(5) On this occasion the *baxši* again finished the ritual with a spirit-calling candle. This time he put the bunch of candles in a small wooden vase. He lit it and held the burning candle over our heads while singing his prayers.

(6) Then, with the burning candle in his hand, he walked to the first threshold of the room. There he stopped and sang his prayers again with eyes closed (Fig. 4). He repeated this at the threshold of the front door. By doing this he saw off the helping spirits that had been invoked by the flame of the candle. The spirits were gradually driven out from the ritual space where the thresholds were symbolic frontiers. This time the *baxši* also became quite active during the ritual, though he never reached the state of trance.

Idols of a Muslim *Baxši* (*Qočaq*)

The ritual wooden dolls of the Qābil *baxši* were very peculiar. During my ten years of research in Central Asia among the Kazakh and Kirghiz I have never encountered such objects. Shamans of the area almost never make images of their helping spirits, unlike in Siberia and Mongolia. Diószegi, in his article on the pre-Islamic religion of the Siberian Tatars of Baraba, also mentions the use of wooden dolls (*qurčaq*⁵). These wooden dolls have anthropomorphic heads with horn-like appendages, and two little bells are also attached to them on their two sides (pl. 12). One of the dolls even had another head on its middle. As far as I know this is the only instance in which a Muslim *baxši* from Turkistan is reported to have had these kinds of wooden dolls.

We can find data about the use of “dolls,” but these are only sacrifices to the spirits, not idols kept by the *baxši*. S. E. Malov wrote: “the time

⁴ See Basilov 1992: 192.

⁵ See Diószegi 1978: 91–92, 134–135, 155.

of the ritual is determined by numbers of *oyun* ('games', meaning 'rituals'), e.g. four, six, twelve, fifteen, sixteen or by the number of 'dolls' used during the praying. In Turpan it is called *qowčaq*, in Lop-Nor and Khotan *qorčaq* or *qoyčaq*. They use these dolls gradually during the ritual and finally burn them." (Malov 1918: 6)

The Method of Transferring Evil Forces from the Body to Other Things (*Köčürmäk*)

In both of the healing rituals described here the *baxši* used the same method based on transferring the illness to external objects, for example twigs or sticks. This healing method is referred to by the verb *köčür-* 'to cause to move' (Basilov 1992: 192; Bellér-Hann 2004: 643). Methods of forcing evil spirits out of the body by the use of sharp objects (e.g. knives, Bellér-Hann 2004: 644) and transferring them into other objects are well described in the literature on Uighur healers. The method of transferring evil things to water is not so common.

Burning the Magic Candle (*Šam*)

The reason for lighting the candle at the end of the rituals was to collect the evil forces in its flame. After that the *baxši* takes the candle out of the house to get rid of the harmful energies. He stops by the thresholds that symbolize the border between the inside and outside worlds and he says a prayer to assure the removal of the evil forces. Finally, the candle is taken outside and after the flame is extinguished the harmful energies leave the house. Unlike other rituals where the candle is used to call the spirits (Basilov 1992: 194; Somfai Kara et al. 2007: 57), Qābil *baxši* used it to chase the spirits away (Pantusov 1907: 40).

Qābil *baxši* had a great variety of rituals and ritual objects. He was the only person we know of who preserved the ancient tradition of using and worshipping wooden idols. It is a quite unique phenomenon that a *baxši* from a sedentary Muslim Turkic ethnic group should have had these kinds of idols. The newspaper cutouts were also quite peculiar. Of course, shamanism has no fixed code of rituals and every sha-

man has his or her own methods to incorporate the different concepts of native religion in their own practice.

About the Recording

Kunkovács also made a tape-recording at the time of Qābil baxši's healing ritual. The one-hour recording, which is not continuous, consists of several extracts from the Uighur teacher Marat's dialogue with Qābil *baxši* and the shaman's songs of invocation, along with verbal notes by Kunkovács.

The ritual itself starts at 32 minutes into the recording, when the shaman has a conversation with the patient (a lady). He asks several questions about her life.

Then at 36 minutes the *baxši* starts to sing an Arabic prayer from the *Koran*.

(2) After 37 minutes the first spirit-invoking song begins. The *baxši* mentions different kind of spirits, e.g. *qirq čiltän, päri, ezitqi, ziyan, alp-qara quš, ärwax*. He sings some magic words without meaning: *qum-qum, kántinamu, ayanamu*. Most likely during this time he was reviving his shamanic tools and idols.

(3) About six minutes later (42'') he begins to make strange sounds, like swallowing his breath, which probably indicates some kind of trance. Then he prays to Allah for hope and healing (*mädät, šifā* or *šipa*).

(4) At 46 minutes a new shamanic invocation song begins, probably during the time when the *baxši* started to touch the patient with his revived shamanic tools. Then we hear the sounds of spitting on the heated metal stick (*učuq*), and probably the noise made by the rosary (*täswi*) that was thrown on the ground. He sings to the silver-headed Sun spirits and golden-headed Moon spirits (*kümüš bašliq kün pärilär, altun bašliq ay pärilär*), and he also mentions the prophet Dāwud (David). After another six minutes he starts to sing at a faster pace, which also indicates a kind of trance. During that time he sings meaningless magic words (*atabu, lalamin, käppäku läbikän*, etc.). Spirit-invoking and Arabic prayers mix during his singing.

(5) After yet another six minutes his voice begins to change. It now resembles a kind of throat singing used by the southern Siberian Turks (the Tuva, the Altai Turks and the Abakan Turks). This must have

been during the time when the shaman was putting the candle on the patient's head.

(6) At 58 minutes he starts to hit the patient with the rosary and says *köčkün* 'go away'. We hear him spitting and he talks to the *päri* spirits.

(7) At the end he sings a kind of farewell prayer in Arabic, which suddenly turns into clear throat singing that, to the best of my knowledge, is practically unreported from among the Turks of Central Asia.

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Shamanism in Present-day Mongolia and a Review of Some Related Books*

MÁTYÁS BALOGH

BUDAPEST

Over the past two decades large numbers of shamans have appeared in Mongolia and the concepts of shamanism have gained increasing popularity. Along with the revival of genuine shamanic traditions, a kind of Mongolian neo-shamanism came into existence in the 1990s. This neo-shamanism is not a result of a movement, united efforts or a common will; rather, it is the outcome of a set of activities by individuals and, in most cases, by profit-oriented enterprises. Neo-shamanic activities differ from each other both in content and in form as much as each of them differs from the traditional way of shamanism.

Neo-shamans do not call themselves neo-shamans, but they tend to claim that their way of practising shamanism is traditional and that others' ways are not. They never cooperate with each other to promote shamanism, for each is busy promoting his or her own interests. There is no mutual benefit in the world of modern Mongolian shamans, since what is good for one person is a disadvantage for another. Under such conditions has evolved this new and gradually consolidating segment of Mongolian society, which is full of conflict and rivalry.

A number of modern Mongolian shamans have their own offices and staff, like any other enterprise in the major towns of the country. In Mongolian these are usually called *Böögijn jan üiliin töw* (Center of Shamanic Activities). In most cases the head of a center is said to be a shaman, and most probably a great proportion of them are self-appointed shamans. Many who used to be folk artists during the communist

* Similar overviews of Japanese and Chinese shamanism have been published in previous issues of this journal: "Topics in the Anthropological Study of Shamanism in Japan" by Seiichi Matsumoto in *Shaman* 2(1): 67–78; revised and expanded second edition 1994/2007: 137–148; and "Some Recent Chinese Works on Shamanism" by Gábor Kósa in *Shaman* 9(1): 77–81.

era started to practise as shamans after the fall of the regime. Performers of any kind of folk art which they believe to have something in common with shamanism often feel predestined to become shamans, and they claim that their artistic activity was a manifestation of their shamanic power, suppressed by the communist ideology. According to Mongolian traditions, however, one who is predestined to practise shamanism never feels this predestination and is unwilling to accept the fearful task of communicating with the spirits. It is believed that they become shamans only when they are forced and tortured by the spirits to such an extent that they cannot bear it any longer.

The largest and best known of the shamanic organizations is the Golomt Center in Ulaanbaatar. The Golomt is not quite like other shaman centers in the country. Its main goal is to unify those shamans who follow in the path of their ancestors and practise the genuine traditional way of their faith, hence the organization's full name: *Mongol Böögiin Golomt Töv* (The Hearth of the Mongol Shamans).¹ Organizations with similar aims can be found in other parts of northern Asia, such as the Dүngür Center in Tuva or the Xese Xengereg Center in Buriatia. Golomt members also have their own offices, and they certainly make some profit from doing their job, but the costumes they wear, the tools they use and the songs they sing are all parts of the heritage passed down from their shaman ancestors. Possessing this heritage is the main factor that differentiates the Golomt from other organizations. Studying Mongolian shamanism, though not at an academic level, is also within the scope of the Center's activities. As a result of their research several papers and a few books have been published in Ulaanbaatar.

Mongolian Authors on Mongolian Shamanism

Due to political changes, since the 1990s a steady stream of books dealing with Mongolian shamanism has been published in Mongolia. The increase in the number of publications is directly proportional to the appearance of shamanic organizations. Books on shamanism can be divided into two groups according to their authorship, namely,

¹ For more information on this shamanic center, see their web site at www.owc.org.mn/tivdelhii.

publications by shamanic organizations, and academic works. The first group—books written by the heads of shamanic organizations, who in most cases are shamans—is the larger. The main purpose of these books is to introduce their authors and to delineate the scope of their activities while drawing the readers' attention to the authors' alternative ways of practising shamanism, which they usually claim to be genuine. These books are popular works written for the larger public; they have no scholarly value, although some—very few in number—contain useful information for the study of Mongolian shamanism. Four such works that have little use for academic purposes can be mentioned: Baljinyam 2005 (pl. 13); Byambadorj 2004, 2005² (pl. 14) and Jorigtbaatar 2003 (pl. 15).

Shamaness Batbayar's slender book (2004) is not an academic work either but may be of use to those researchers who wish to collect materials on present-day Mongolian shamanism for their academic publications. The author is a female Darkhat shaman, a native of Xöwsgöl province in northeastern Mongolia. Unlike the authors mentioned above she became a shaman according to Darkhat traditions. The book contains Batbayar's biography (mentioning her shaman ancestors), lists of her apprentices and helping spirits (*ongon*), a number of her invocations, her opinions concerning many issues of Mongolian shamanism, and an interview she gave. Some of this information is suitable for analysis in academic publications, as well as answering many of the questions a field researcher would otherwise have to put directly to a shaman.

The same can be said of Süxbat's book (2002). The author is the head of the Golomt Shaman Center, which boasts more than 300 shaman members from all over the country. Many of these shamans are in daily contact with their boss. Süxbat himself is not a shaman but, as he claims, a researcher of Mongolian shamanism who seeks to promote its revival and the preservation of its traditions. It is also worth noting that his daughter was initiated by one of the Center's renowned Buriat members. The book itself is a collection of valuable data gathered from shamans of various fields and origins. Regrettably, these data are very poorly organized. Moreover, like many Mongolian publications, the book has no table of contents, making it difficult to use. The data,

² Byambadorj 2004 is almost the same as Byambadorj 2005 having a different title and cover.

which are indeed precious for those researchers who can read Mongolian, lack any kind of analysis or interpretation. However, reading this book we have the feeling that the author is generously sharing his collection with us.

Süxbat's other book, *Böö* (Shaman) (2003), is an introduction to the Center's most important members and to some other shamans Süxbat has met and interviewed. It also contains some Buriat and Darkhat shamanic legends. The Darkhat legends are either identical to those published in Dulam (1992) or are updated forms of them.

Sendenjawiin Dulam's *Tradition of Darkhat Shamans* (1992)³ is a collection of Darkhat shamanic texts accompanied by the author's explanations and an introduction that takes up one-fifth of the entire book. This introduction (5–49) gives a more than satisfactory summary of the main historical and ethnographic features of Darkhat shamanism. The collection of texts represents the following two genres: (1) legends of shamans who were once famous among the Darkhat; and (2) pieces of poetry (*tamlaga*) attributed to some of these shamans. Texts concerning the shamans follow each other in sequence, forming one group of texts. Each section is followed by the author's explanations. Nevertheless, a careful analysis of these unequalled texts remains a task for the future. A number of legends throw light on such issues as for example the relationship between the shaman and his wife, human beings changing into animals, rivalry between shamans, and the ability to levitate, to mention but a few. Every legend and piece of shamanic poetry is full of symbols, figures, actions and allusions which are not elucidated or analyzed in the book. This collection could be used as a basic source for further research and analysis. Three not strictly relevant pieces of shamanic poetry, a song of praise (*magtaal*), a petition (*öčix üg*) and a drum-training proverb (*xengereg surgax xelleg*) are included in the collection. More texts of the same kind could have formed a separate chapter while creating a balance between the different genres.

Dulam's son, Dulamiin Bum-Očir, is the author of a bilingual book in Mongolian and English (Bum-Očir 2002). Use of the two languages is not well-balanced, the English part of the book being far less extensive than the Mongolian. The first and dominant part titled "Types of Mongol Shamanic Songs," which discusses the genres and character-

³ Reviewed by Birtalan (1994).

istics of shamanic poetry, and the first few pages of the second part, the “Degrees of Ritualization,” are written only in Mongolian, while another section, the “Types of Mongolian Shamanic Ritual Language,” appears only in English. The table of contents is far from complete. Nevertheless, the structure of the first, Mongolian part of the book is logical and well composed. It not only classifies pieces of shamanic poetry but also analyzes each genre in the context of shamanic practices. Bum-Očir’s explanations are essential for an understanding of the significance of the words, actions and gestures of shamanic rituals which would otherwise be barely comprehensible for those not born and bred in a shamanic society.

Probably the best known book on Mongolian shamanism in Mongolia is that by Pürew (2002). It contains only sporadic data on the shamanism of the Buriat, the Barga and the Uriankhai ethnic groups, but it often goes into great detail when discussing Darkhat shamanism. Pürew adverts equally to each of the main topics, notably the history of Mongolian shamanism, the ideology of shamanism, the spirits and the spirits’ world, shamanic practices and rituals, the way of becoming a shaman and, finally, the shamanic paraphernalia. The book is not merely a set of descriptions and familiarizations of these issues but also a means of making comparison, deduction and analysis. It abounds in vivid accounts of rituals and various shamanic activities the author has observed. Another book by Pürew (2003) purporting to be a dictionary of terms in Mongolian shamanism is too short to be a complete collection of such terms. Darkhat terms there are in plenty, but those of other ethnic groups which also play an important role in Mongolian shamanism are scarce. Even the names of the most important Buriat deities are missing. Compiling such a dictionary would require teamwork, a cooperation between scholars each of whom was familiar with the shamanism of a particular ethnic group. It is to be regretted that one has to be fortunate to find a term one wants, unless it is the name of a Darkhat guardian spirit, a Darkhat shaman, or something very general in Mongolian shamanism.

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Book Reviews

VLADISLAV M. KULEMZIN, NADEZHDA V. LUKINA, TIMOFEĬ A. MOLDANOV and TAT'IANA A. MOLDANOVA. *Khanty Mythology*. Encyclopaedia of Uralic Mythologies 2. Edited by Vladimir Napolskikh, Anna-Leena Siikala and Mihály Hoppál. Budapest and Helsinki: Akadémiai Kiadó and Finnish Literature Society. 2006. ISBN 9 630582 84 8. 241 pp.

The book reviewed here represents one stage of a great enterprise. At the beginning of the 1990s a demand rose for a book series with a unified structure to be published on the religion of the peoples who speak Uralic languages. The series that is being compiled in response to this need is titled *Encyclopaedia of Uralic Mythologies*, and the editors are among the most prestigious experts in the field.

The editors of the series are the co-ordinators of the work, and the individual volumes are prepared on location, so to speak, as the chapters and articles are written by the researchers and representatives of the peoples in question. This welcome principle can at last, at the beginning of the 21st century, be put into practice since a generation of scholars capable of working on projects of such a comprehensive nature has finally arisen among the Uralic peoples of Russia. According to the original plan, the individual volumes are first published in Russian (or in the language of the particular country, i.e. Finnish, Estonian, etc.) followed by an English version. This method particularly helps the introduction of the Eastern Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic religions, enabling fresh and authentic information to reach the audience of professionals in the field even outside Russia.

There is another reason for preparing this new summary, however. The great enterprise of Uno Harva (Holmberg), the series *Suomen suvun uskonnot* (The Religion of the Finno-Ugric Peoples) was based on old Russian sources and materials collected by Finnish and Hungar-

ian researchers at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries.¹ The century that has elapsed since brought many changes in the subject and in the methods and conditions of research.

The first volume of the *Encyclopaedia of Uralic Mythologies* introduced the Komi mythology (Konakov et al. 1999), the English version of which appeared in 2003. The subject of the second volume is Khanty mythology, which has still to be reviewed (Russian original: Kulemzin et al. 2000). The Mansi (Gemuev 2001) and Selkup (Tuchkova et al. 2004) volumes have also been published, though as yet only in Russian.

In every volume of the present series the authors introduce the people in question along with their history and that of the research carried out on the topic, followed by a comprehensive study of their religion. This introductory part constitutes one-third of the volume. The remaining two-thirds of the book contains a lexicon of the words and expressions related to religion in the particular language, in alphabetical order with linguistic and ethnographical explanations. The volumes are complemented by a rich set of visual material as well as folklore texts in the original language and in translation. Prestigious institutes are listed as supporters of the publication of the volumes: the Academy of Finland and the University of Helsinki, the Russian Academy of Sciences and its Institute of Udmurt History, Language and Literature, and the Institute of Ethnology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In the Khanty volume these institutions are complemented by the Council of the Northern Ethnic Minorities of the Russian Federation, the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District, the Research Institute of the Ob-Ugrian Peoples, and the Department of Archaeology and Regional History of Tomsk State University.

The religion of the Khanty people, but more widely of the Ob-Ugrian peoples, has been the subject of research for more than one hundred years. Until the middle of the 20th century it was primarily known through the works of Finnish and Hungarian scholars. Among them was *The Religion of the Yugra Peoples* by the outstanding K. F. Karjalainen (published in Finnish in 1918 and in German in 1921, 1922, 1927), which was the starting point for all further research. In fact, Edit Vértes also based her mythological summaries on sources collected

¹ Some volumes of this work have also been published in German in the Folklore Fellows' Communications series, 1. <http://www.folklorefellows.fi/comm/comm.html>, followed by an English summary (Holmberg 1927 [1964]).

at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Her studies were published first in Hungarian in 1990, then in two volumes in the *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*, the German encyclopaedia of mythology, in 1997.

Two authors of the volume under review are Russian and two are Khanty. V. Kulemzin and N. Lukina, experts on the Ob-Ugrian peoples, completed their studies and are researchers at Tomsk State University. They have carried out several field expeditions over the decades, sometimes together. V. Kulemzin did fieldwork primarily among the Khanty people in the area of the rivers Vakh and Vasiugan, with shamanism as his main focus. N. Lukina has achieved great distinction for bringing on a group of national intellectuals. She has supervised several doctoral dissertations and started scholarly workshops, forums and a series of publications. She recognized that the difficulties facing research in Russia arise from a lack of knowledge of folklore texts, as the texts in question were collected and published by Hungarian and Finnish (as well as German, thanks to Wolfgang Steinitz) researchers. Together with the Hungarian scholar Éva Schmidt, who between 1991 and 2002 lived among the Khanty people, she published an outstanding selection of the prose genre of Ob-Ugrian popular poetry (Lukina 1990) and translated several German works into Russian, among which the most significant was Karjalainen's above-mentioned monograph on Ob-Ugrian mythology (1994, 1995, 1996).

The Khanty researchers are representatives of the people of the River Kazym region. Timofeĭ Moldanov grew up in a reindeer-herding family and became a researcher in the 1990s—a career change in which Éva Schmidt played a significant role. His wife, Tat'iana Moldanova, was born of a Khanty father and a Russian mother. She started out as a mathematics and physics teacher and became a leading personality of the Khanty national awakening, a scholar, a research organizer and the organizer of community feasts.

It is not made clear which part of the book is the work of which author. The introductory chapters are probably the result of cooperation between the authors, who divided the different fields among themselves. In the lexicon that follows each article its author is indicated, according to which more than 80 percent of the 150 entries was written by V. Kulemzin, whereas only 20 articles are credited to N. Lukina. The three mythical songs were collected and written down by the Moldanov couple.

In the first chapter (“The Khanty,” 15–29), apart from basic information (names of the peoples, where they live, the population and dialects), the historical circumstances, society and material culture of the Khanty are described. In connection with the introduction of how the Ob area became inhabited, the authors discuss the question of the folklore as a historical source. The chapter deals with Khanty kinship, the structure of settlements, occupations, meals, dress and ornamentation, and the genres and topics of folklore. Concerning the Khanty religion, the authors conclude that it is, like all other religions, syncretic: the Ugrian layer of the religion, which also contains Iranian influences, is mixed with elements of Christianity and materialism (which is also a religion!). In the past two decades a revival of the traditions has been experienced, albeit in somewhat changed circumstances. The reevaluation of the role of fire and iron is interesting. Earlier these were clearly positive elements, but recently they have become threatening forces in the eyes of the Khanty: the derricks and the constantly burning oil or gas flares are the enemies of the indigenous peoples of a traditional culture. The authors emphasize the community-forming and culture-preserving role of the association “Rescuing of Yugria,” which was formed at the end of the 1980s.

In the chapter on the history of science, “Written Sources and Studies of Khanty Mythology” (30–38), an account is given of the long history of research on Khanty mythology, from the reports of the first Russian travellers to the listing of the research results of today’s young national intellectuals. In finding one’s way through the literature, the extensive bibliography at the end of the volume is of great help.

At the beginning of the chapter titled “The Traditional Khanty World View” (39–70), the author considers it important to mention that the Khanty people live in a close relationship with the surrounding world and do not differentiate between the phenomena of this world and those of the supernatural. According to the author, to distinguish between sacred and secular, and rational and irrational, is only of significance to scholars. Although this is partly true, the Ob-Ugrian peoples clearly separate the sacred and the profane zones in space, time, and also activities (cf. e.g. Anttonen 1990). The reason for the author (probably V. Kulemzin) not realizing this fact might be due to the confusion of two words—as seen in the lexicon—which are (in approximate transcription) *jem* ‘good’ and *jim* ‘sacred, untouchable, under taboo’, thus setting up a non-existent contrast between good and bad—incorrectly

in my opinion. Some of the prohibitions listed in the entry for *atem* 'bad' belong to the *jim* category—not included in the present lexicon—especially those concerning women, whereas others are related to the ethics of hunting and are valid throughout the world. This mistake has also been mentioned earlier by Anna-Leena Siikala (Siikala and Uliashev 2002:160).

The chapters describing religion are subdivided into the following subchapters: “Relations between Man and Objects” (39–43), “Relations between Man and Society” (43–46), “Relations between Man and Nature” (46–49), “Beliefs about Vital Forces” (49–53), “Ideas about Living and Non-Living” (53–56), “The Surrounding World” (56–61) and “Man and his Life” (61–70).

The lexicon, which consists of 150 entries and makes up two-thirds of the volume, contains much valuable information. It is difficult, however, to give an extensive overview of an area which shows such diversity of linguistic and cultural forms and to give an account of all of them. It is not clear to me on what basis an expression has been made an entry. Concerning animals, the bear and the elk have separate entries, whereas the beaver, which is also a totemic animal, is missing. The frog can be found, but not the snake. As far as objects are concerned, the pot is an entry, but the house is not, although it has an important role in the Khanty religion. There is also a general need for cross-references in such a culture, where everything is connected to everything. Edit Vértés's lexicon (1997), which has a similar purpose, employs 319 cross-references complementing 118 entries. Here the end-of-volume index could serve such a purpose by giving these references; however, the index entries do not indicate all the page references that might be made. Unfortunately, too, the book is not characterized by linguistic precision, although this should not be expected of a publication of a non-linguistic nature. The Russian authors do not speak the Khanty language, and their Khanty colleagues know only their own dialect, the spelling of which they are unsure of.

At the end of the volume there are three mythical songs, which might be interesting for both linguists and folklorists. The first is a 176-line tale about the hunt of a small *mos* man, when he kills the six-legged elk. The next is a 573-line “plenty bringer song” about the spirit of the River Kazym, which is performed at bear feasts. The song describes the journey of the goddess from her home on the River Ob to her other home on the island on Lake Numto, near the upper reaches of the River

Kazym. The third is a 199-line song about a forest spirit, the Old Woman of Many Houses, who lived in the area of the river before the goddess of the Kazym arrived. The two latter songs were included in the Moldanov couple's book introducing the pantheon of the Kazym area, though only in Russian translation (Moldanov and Moldanova 2000).

Fortunately, when editing the English version the lyrics reached Anna Widmer of Hamburg, thanks to whom the lyrics of the mythical songs appear with consistent, reliable spelling in the phonetic transcription of the Kazym dialect created by Wolfgang Steinitz. Widmer also translated the texts into German; thus, these translations are published next to the English and are provided with notes in an impressive way.

The English version on the whole has a better structure, is linguistically more accurate and somewhat extended (there are an extra 20 entries) compared to the Russian edition, and the index allows searching for those who do not know the Khanty expressions.

The greatest merit of the series and the volume is that it exists and, thus, provides a point of reference from which research can be continued. The data included in the series can be added to and, on some points, corrected. The English edition makes the mythology of the Uralic peoples known all over the world. It is for this that we have to thank the authors, editors and the sponsors of the publication.

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BUDAPEST

MÁRTA CSEPREGI

TAT'IANA MOLDOANOVA. *Arkhetipy v mire snovideniĭ khantov* [Archetypes in the world of Khanty dreams]. Tomsk: Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo Universiteta. 2001. ISBN 5-7511-1414-0. pp. 354.

Research carried out in the field of dreams draws on a thousand-year-old tradition, and Tat'iana Moldanova's book is a special result of the work in this area. It is indeed special since no one yet has carried out such in-depth research in the field of the dream narratives of the West-

ern Siberian Khanty, the closest linguistic relatives of the Hungarians.² What makes this work even more special is that the author includes her own dreams in her study.

Tat'iana Moldanova, who is one of the authors of *Khanty Mythology* (Kulemzin et al. 2006), another book reviewed in this issue, grew up in a reindeer-herding family that still preserved their traditional culture near the head of the River Kazym, which flows into the River Ob from the east. It was a custom in the family that during breakfast the grandmother would ask each of the children what they had dreamt, and together they would try to interpret the dreams. Occasionally, when the grandmother rocked a grandchild into a hypnotic trance, she would hold the child's little finger and ask it questions in order to find lost objects. The reason for this was that, according to Khanty beliefs, before losing its baby teeth a child is in contact with the spiritual world and that with its help one can obtain information which is concealed from adults. No wonder the author retained her curiosity about dreams and their various meanings. Since the age of eighteen (1969) she regularly wrote down her dreams, and from 1985, in the course of a fifteen-year research project, she collected dreams from a circle of relatives, acquaintances and colleagues. From a total of almost two thousand dreams collected in this way, more than 500—those which have an explanation according to Khanty beliefs—form the basis of this book. The appendices contain 140 full dream descriptions, and certain details of the rest are only referred to in the main body of the text. 20% of the informants are Khanty from a traditional culture, 70% are Khanty-speaking people with secondary or higher education, and 10% are Russianized contributors who were born from mixed marriages. The details given about the informants are their initials (though not their names), their gender, nationality, age, domicile, and level of education.

Moldanova's approach is not psychological but ethnographic. From this standpoint dreams are not a reflection of psychological processes (although in the explanations the dreamer's circumstances are often taken into account), they are messages from the world beyond reality. According to Khanty beliefs, while sleeping the shadow soul, or just

² Among Finno-Ugric peoples only the dreams of the Mari and the Mordvin have so far been the subject of study, see Sebeok 1950 and Deviatkina 1995.

the eyes, leaves the body and what the soul or eyes encounter is reflected back to the sleeper in the form of dreams. Sometimes the souls of the deceased visit the living in a dream in order to bring information from the other world.

Based on content and meaning, dreams can be divided into four groups. The first group consists of simple dreams with no meaning. The second group of dreams are those which will later come true in reality. These are useful for obtaining information—in finding out, for example, where lost reindeer have wandered. The third group of dreams needs explaining or decoding by a dream-reader. The fourth kind is the so-called “true dream”; these are the privilege of those in close contact with the supernatural and cannot be dreamed by everybody.

The Khanty of the traditional culture learn to deal with these dreams. For example, they free themselves from nightmares by telling them to older people or to a decayed tree trunk. However, they do not speak of good dreams since this would risk them not coming true. Elderly people tell juniors their dreams with a sacred content so as not to take them to the grave. One also learns to control one’s dreams. Since the Khanty believe that flying in dreams means health, they practise flying consciously while dreaming. The well-known expression of Ob-Ugrian folklore, “their head could be cut off in deep dream”, refers to the state of deep sleep without dreaming.

The most extensive part of the work is Chapter 2 (“Typical interpretations of dreams,” 53–256), which contains the informants’ accounts of their dreams and the explanations. The interpretations included here are those on which at least two dream-readers agree.

The most frequent images in Khanty dreams can be categorized as follows: parts of the body (hair, beard, teeth, nails, hand, foot, blood), emotions (fear, anger, crying, laughing, drunkenness), human actions (travelling, falling, flying, transformation, berry-picking, house building, murder, killing an animal, dying, funerals), people (men and women in different coloured clothes, strangers, children, relatives), the deceased and death (that of different relatives and their own), supernatural beings (souls, gods, shadows, idols), buildings and other human artefacts (an old or new house, bathing house, ladder, horse stable, sleigh, boat, ski, clothing, shoes, scarf, hat, fireplace, road, grave), food (raw or cooked meat or fish, cembra seed, berries, bread), animals (squirrel, diver, snake, cow, horse, dog, cat, swan, fox, elk, frog, bear, mouse, magpie, wagtail, worm), plants (birch, cembra pine—the Swiss

or Arolla pine, *Pinus cembra*—a tree cut down, wood shavings, flower, hay, berry, moss), and natural phenomena (cliffs, clean/dirty water, waves, storm, soil, stone, fire, green woods, dark sky, abyss, river, snow, red sun), and man-made objects (road, grave).

These dream images are interpreted by experienced dream-readers and are richly illustrated by the dream narratives collected in the book. The interpretations occasionally differ across the expanded area of the Khanty-speaking people, who occupy the almost 2,000 km long valley of the River Ob. However, there are certain general beliefs that characterize all the Khanty people. Losing teeth, hair or nails carries a bad meaning, dreaming about raw meat means sickness, and cooked meat has a positive connotation. Dreaming about red- or black-coloured berries is bad, but other colours are harmless. Travelling downstream or downhill means something bad, sickness or death, since the Western Siberian plain slopes towards the north, where on the shores of the Arctic Ocean lies the land of the dead. Conversely, travelling upwards means health and well-being. Wood shavings predict the birth of a child as the Khanty use these to line their cradles.

According to Khanty beliefs, in the other world everything is the other way around, and this is why one has to explain things by their opposites. If someone laughs in their dream, they will cry when they wake, and if they are sad, this means joy in the real world. A new house or clothing means something bad, the old means good. If someone commits murder in their dream, they will kill a big animal, but if they dream about killing a bear or an elk, this portends either their own death or that of a close relative. However, there are things that are interpreted the same way both in dreams and in real life: clean water, a green forest and white snow are good signs, whereas dirty water, a dark sky, a fire going out or a grave are all bad.

Khanty gods and goddesses are clearly recognizable in dreams from their attributes. The goddess of fire wears a red dress; the goddess of Kazym wears a frilly scarf, although sometimes she takes the form of a black cat or a Nenets women. The father of the Sky (*Torum iki*) sits on a white or grey horse, and his son *As tyi iki* (the God of the Upper Ob) sits on a white horse. The Spirit of Illnesses and Death (the ruler of the Underworld) wears a black garment. He appears as a Russian man too, or a black dog or wolf. The Old Man of the Holy Town (*Jem wač iki*, spirit of the village of Vezhakary) sits on a colourful or black horse. The swan is the incarnation of the goddess *Kaltesh* (“the one who gives

life with one hand and takes [it] away with the other”), whereas the fox is that of the protective spirit of the village of Tek.

Some Khanty dreams may only be understood by knowing their beliefs and customs. From the point of view of the researcher, the interpretation of dreams serves as means to familiarize oneself with the Khanty world view. Hence, the empty boat and the broken sleigh mean death, images that are readily understood because the Khanty used to bury the dead in boats and place a broken sleigh on the grave. Anyone can fly in their dreams, but flying as a bird is only possible for someone with shamanic abilities. Northern flora and fauna also feature clearly in dreams. Of the plants of the taiga and tundra the cone of the cembra pine and reindeer-moss mean plenty, the frog means successful fishing, and the worm means health. If someone kills a squirrel in their dream, this means that they or a close relative will die because the squirrel is the symbol of the human soul. However, if a Khanty dreams that he or she becomes a parent, they will soon kill a bear since at the bear feast the hunter and his wife appear as the bear’s parents. But the belief that the magpie means gossip and the raven news can be considered general human conceptions.

These archetypal images appear even in dreams of young people who have grown up in orphanages or Russianized adults who have little contact with the traditional life style and world view. Research on the collective unconscious might have a lot to offer in this area.

The four extensive appendices at the end of the volume will help the reader to a better appreciation of the book. The first appendix contains the Khanty expressions related to dreams and dreaming, along with explanations in Russian. The second appendix consists of the dream images discussed in the book, together with their interpretations. Here the reader can find out about more than 200 images, and whether they mean something good or bad or carry some other message. In the third appendix there are conversations with dreamers and dream-readers; some of these are in the original languages accompanied by a translation, while others are only in Russian. The 140 dream narratives included in the fourth appendix may offer fruitful ground for folklorists and psychiatrists. These are narratives that are only referred to in the main body of the text as a confirmation of the interpretation of the rest of the dreams.

We hope that Tat'iana Moldanova's pioneering attempt will be followed by others, and that dream research will be extended to other peoples in the future.

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BUDAPEST

MÁRTA CSEPREGI

JUHA PENTIKÄINEN. *Golden King of the Forest. The Lore of the Northern Bear*. Edited and translated by Clive Tolley. ISBN 978 951 97889 7 5. Helsinki, 2007. Etніка Oy. 154 pages with various maps, photographs and illustrations.

Juha Pentikäinen's—and, let us add, his editor, translator and, last but not least, his co-author Clive Tolley's—book is very rich in information, but much less so in the arrangement of data and interpretative power. Therefore, it is a demanding work that requires much effort from the reader while (s)he is trying to disentangle herself/himself from the web of data in order to get a clearer picture of the subject.

Of the nine main chapters the first one ("The Natural History of the Bear"), although it is informative, has nothing to do with the subject "the lore of the bear" since it places the bear in a perspective totally different from that of anthropology, i.e. into the perspective of palaeozoology. The second chapter ("The Archaeology of the Bear") pertains more to the subject with the author's words: "The archaeology of the bear is consistent with what is found in the richly recorded traditions of northern peoples in later centuries, and many of the key elements of

those traditions were probably already in place millennia ago. Among these may have been the primordial, totemic relationship between a founder of the clan and the bear, or, in other clans, the elk or reindeer (or the large forest deer, now hunted to extinction). The rock art, covering the whole northern Eurasian cultural area from Siberia to the shores of Finnmark, offers a new type of primary evidence for research in this area” (page 15).

The third chapter (“The Bear in Antiquity”), in spite of the numerous authors and the precious sources of antiquity (Callisto, Ovid, Homer, Pliny and the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* and *Metamorphoses*, respectively), does not add much to the subject. Indeed, it distracts from much of it instead. When it comes to the bear cult, the myths of ancient Greece and Rome should interest us not so much as reports on the cult itself but rather as interpretations of it as a ritual practised much earlier in the “barbaric” preclassical age. In a way the author does this with reports of the various types of bear cult in Northern Eurasia (Siberia) elsewhere in the book, as other authors have done, like Claude Levi-Strauss and Károly Kerényi with respective rites centered around totem animals.

The fourth chapter (“The Bear in Scandinavia”) is co-author Clive Tolley’s own writing. Although highly informative and philologically well documented, it does not have much in connection with the subject of the book, “the lore of the bear,” in a Eurasian perspective. Nordic mythology, just like Greek, its southern counterpart, has only hidden references to a bear cult. By the time of its written records, the bear cult in Nordic mythology had become part of heraldic symbolism, a far distant echo of animal rites.

Chapters five, six, seven and eight, respectively (“The Bear among the Ob Ugrians,” “The Bear among the Sámi,” “The Bear among the Finns and Karelians,” “The Bear in Finnish, Karelian and Sámi Folklore”), form the core of the book. Based on centuries-old research and, partly, on Pentikäinen’s own fieldwork, the chapters describe rites, dramatic plays and tales with the bear as their focus. From a historico-folkloristic point of view these topics find their common denominator in Finno-Ugric (Uralic) folklore. The author, however, does not strive to detect the traces leading to the common source of all these traditions; instead he is satisfied with sporadic selection and impressionistic descriptions of the various traditions. No matter how wide this selection of traditions may be, the lack of a solid vantage point is a hindrance to proper perception of the subject for the reader, whose only consolation

may be the impression that *the lore of the bear in Northern Eurasia is extremely rich and very worthy of further investigation*.

The last chapter (“The Bear as National Symbol in Finland”) treats, again, something which belongs rather to a (fictitious) romantic past than to the real lore of the bear in Finland (and/or Northern Eurasia): the retrospective making of mediaeval heraldic tradition, which was not an uncommon practice in 19th century Europe.

In conclusion, I would say in defense of Juha Pentikäinen and the translator/co-author Clive Tolley that this book of theirs is not a scholarly study but rather a foretaste of what they are describing in it: the richness of a folklore tradition. The abundance of illustrations (engravings, maps, photos of various pieces of cultic value) as well as the general make-up of the book serve the aim of catching the eye of the curious reader well.

Among the subarctic peoples peoples of Eurasia, such as the Sámi, the Ob-Ugrians and the Samoyed—where shamanism has been, and still is, the dominant religious practice—fast-moving and/or large-bodied and/or powerful animals, like reindeer, elk, and above all, bear play an important or even central role as totem animals protected by taboo. That is why Juha Pentikäinen’s book is reviewed here in the pages of *Shaman*.

POMÁZ, HUNGARY

PÉTER SIMONCSICS

THE NINTH CONFERENCE OF THE ISSR, ANCHORAGE, AK (USA),
FROM MAY 27 THROUGH JUNE 1, 2009

On behalf of the International Society for Shamanistic Research (ISSR), the Organizing Committee from the Department of Anthropology of the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) invites you to participate in an international conference of the ISSR to be held at UAA in Anchorage, Alaska from May 27th through June 1, 2009. The official theme of the conference will be:

Traditional Belief and Healing Systems
in a Changing World: An Interdisciplinary Approach

This conference will encompass the traditional biennial congress of ISSR, in addition to providing a new forum for related research in cultural anthropology and medical anthropology, archeology, and linguistics. There will be special sessions on shamanism as reflected in rock art and other archaeological data; on the language of shamanism; on traditional shamanic practices; and on contemporary healing. There will also be a special focus on Alaskan materials. Prof. Margaret Conkey of the University of California, Berkeley has agreed to give a keynote address on archaeology and shamanism. A number of scholars have indicated an interest in presenting papers on such northern topics as the Dene-Yeniseic cultural and linguistics connection (Prof. Edward Vajda); Alaskan shamanism (Prof. Steve Langdon, Andrei Znamenski); and Eurasian religious traditions (Profs. Mihály Hoppál, Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer, and Lauren Kendall). Participating contributors will have a forum to present scholarly papers and video materials on ongoing anthropological, archeological, linguistic, historical, and medical research and perspectives on indigenous cultures of Eurasia and the Americas.

Arrangements have made on the UAA campus for meetings, inexpensive housing (about \$40 per night), and meals for conference participants. An opening reception is planned for the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, and a conference banquet at the Alaska Native Heritage Center that will include traditional Alaska Native singing, dancing,

and drumming as well as arts and crafts. Special arrangements are being made for charter airfare from Europe and the Russian Far East. Please let us know if you are interested in staying in Alaska for an additional week as a part of such a charter. We will be attempting to secure funding for some of our Russian colleagues.

May is the best time of year in Anchorage, with generally warm weather and long, sunny days. We believe that delegates to the ISSR conference in Anchorage will experience not only excellent international and local programs, but also a very enjoyable stay. Since the year 2009 marks the 50th anniversary of Alaskan statehood, we are planning a number of organized events to acquaint conference participants with Alaska's Native heritage, history, and unique beauty and nature. One day will be devoted to a cruise through Kenai Fjords National Park to observe whales, and other marine mammals, eagles, mountains, and glaciers in Resurrection Bay (which deserves its name) and the Gulf of Alaska. Special arrangements for tours to other Alaska adventures will be also available.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested in participating in the conference and submit a tentative topic. Our electronic address is as follows: *ISSR_09_Alaska@hotmail.com*. More information about a conference website and the official Call for Papers will be available soon. Please place the ISSR conference on your agenda for May 2009!

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The HARVARD ORIENTAL SERIES (edited since 1993 by Michael Witzel) is pleased to announce the recent release in 2008, of Volume 68:

Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts II (Bhujī Valley)

Compiled, edited, and translated by

GREGORY G. MASKARINEC

Cambridge, Mass and London, England 2008

Harvard University Press (Harvard Oriental Series), supplemented by a multi-media DVD of additional texts, photos, videos, and audio recordings of Western Nepalese shamans and their cultural context.

Documenting one of the world's oldest medico-religious traditions, this volume is a 1400 page bi-lingual collection of shaman oral texts from the Bhujī Valley of Western Nepal, in the original Nepali and with line-by-line English translation on the facing page. It includes, thanks to the kind permission of the late John T. Hitchcock, 8,000 lines of material recorded in 1962 and 1967 by Professor Hitchcock, and 12,000 lines of material collected by Dr. Maskarinec in 2000 and 2001 from two later generations of shamans of the same lineages. Consequently, this collection represents three generations of shamans spanning forty years. It extends to its geographical and geographical limits the previous collection of Nepalese shaman oral texts by Dr. Maskarinec published in the Harvard Oriental Series in 1998, and marks the culmination of 30 years of research by him in Western Nepal.

Two types of oral texts are used by Nepalese shamans, "mantras," invocations that do the real work of healing, cursing, protecting, binding: forcing the world into new patterns of meaning through the power of the words themselves. Shamans quietly chant or whisper mantras at key moments throughout every performance. Longer texts, narrative recitals, reestablish the appropriate context; mantras deliver the intervention. The narratives tell stories of the origin of the world, its

inhabitants, and its afflictions. In archaic but understandable language, these recitals clarify symptoms and provide explanations of the causes of afflictions, and they carefully describe the methods of intervention, detailing the proper ways to conduct rituals: the texts preserve the knowledge necessary to act as a shaman. Simultaneously, the texts offer their audiences a perspective on their misfortunes that provides hope of possible relief by suggesting external causes for their ills. Shamans' diagnoses of their patients' afflictions commonly involve some combination of seven categories of origin: (1) misfortunate astrological configurations; (2) curses and spells, particularly the actions of witches and other shamans; (3) the intrusion of alien substances and immaterial objects into the body; (4) weakened life forces, including soul loss, distracted wits, and madness; (5) social disorder, especially disputes within families and communities; (6) fevers of autonomous origin; and (7) the activities of spirits (such as angered local gods, invoked vengeance suicides, or troubled ancestors). Shamans intervene in each of these circumstances with ritual performances in which the stories of origin and the mantras of treatment feature prominently. The language of both recitals and mantras is sometimes condensed or obscure but their communicative purpose requires them to be discursively meaningful, an issue explored in Dr. Maskarinec's earlier volume, "The Rulings of the Night," University of Wisconsin Press, 1995.

Despite growing opportunities to consult western-oriented health care providers, and despite the surrounding political turmoil of a decade of the Maoist People's War, shamans continue to fill important diagnostic and therapeutic roles in Western Nepal. This material demonstrates that villagers continue to find that the mytho-poetic world expressed within the shaman recitals relevant to their lives. Shaman texts address issues as diverse as abuses of political power, caste relations, and the status of women; extending beyond therapeutic and linguistic concerns, these texts contribute to a better understanding of social issues in contemporary Himalayan societies.

Innovatively, this volume includes a DVD of audio recordings of the shaman oral texts, supplementary texts not included in the published volume, videos of shaman performances, and additional video and photographic documentation of the social context of these shamans, including short films of the diverse ritual and performative world of local oracles (*dhāmīs*), astrologers, Brāhman priests, and minstrels.

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Plates



1 (a) Tamang in the middle hills east of the Kathmandu Valley.
Photo: Dagmar Eigner, 1993.



1 (b) Tamang shaman in his ritual dress.
Photo: Dagmar Eigner, 1992.



2 (a) Group of Tamang shamans on a pilgrimage.
Photo: Dagmar Eigner, 1997.



2 (b) Shaman singing and drumming during a ritual performed for the
renewal of power. Photo: Dagmar Eigner, 1997.



3 (a) Invocation of deities in front of a small altar table with offerings.
Photo: Dagmar Eigner, 1990.



3 (b) The five coloured thread connecting the patient's head with the clay figure symbolizes the pathway for the illness-causing spirit.
Photo: Dagmar Eigner, 1990.



4 The witch and the spirit must promise that they will leave the patient and never cause troubles again.

Photo: Dagmar Eigner, 1990.



5 The patient is hit with a rooster that is offered to the spirit in exchange for the patient's life. Photo: Dagmar Eigner, 1990.



6 Raising the flag, called *shengdou*, an important ceremony in itself, prepares the sacred altar for *luowuyun*.
Photo: Shuyun Guo, 2007.



7 (a) The master shaman instructing the new students and demonstrating important techniques, such as drumming and using the waist bells, dances, and coordinating the drum with other instruments. Photo: Shuyun Guo, 2005.



7 (b) A master shaman in the midst of drill and demonstration. The master shaman and *zaili* drill the students repeatedly on each skill, both as a class, and one-on-one. Photo: Shuyun Guo, 2005.



8 (a) Studying the spirits' language is a very important part of *jiaowuyun*. In this picture Shi Clan leader Shi Wenyao and master *zaili* Shi Dianqi study how best to instruct new students in the Manchu language. Photo: Shuyun Guo, 2005.



8 (b) A master *zaili* offers his respects to the leaders during the *luowuyun* ceremony. Photo: Shuyun Guo, 2007.



9 (a) Nadezhda Sharakshinova's daughter, Erbaeva Margarita, showing some pictures made during Diószegi's fieldwork among the Bulagat Buriat (Sharakshinova's Memorial Museum, Bokhan). Photo: Dávid Somfai Kara, 2005.



9 (b) The sacred hill of Bokhan (Buriat *Böö-xuhan*) where the clan's sacrifices (*tailga*) were held. On the top of the hill sacred "shamanic" birch trees can be seen, which explain the etymology of the name of the village (Buriat *böö xuhan* 'shamanic or sacred birch tree'). Photo: Dávid Somfai Kara, 2005.



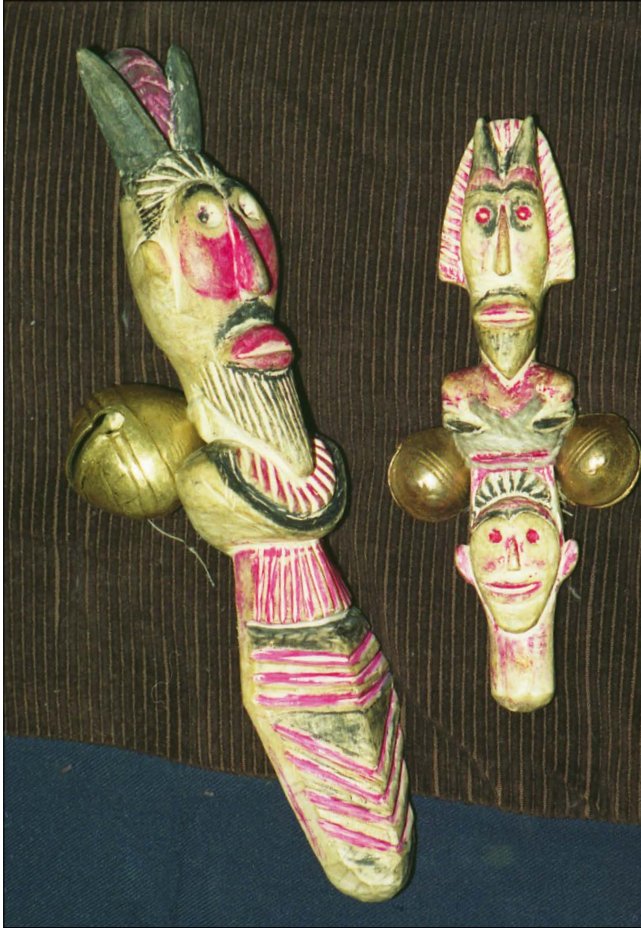
10 A shaman (*böö*) from Bokhan and his helper performing purifying rituals (Sharakhshinova's Memorial Museum, Bokhan).
Photo: Dávid Somfai Kara, 2005.



11 (a) The shaman starts the ritual with a Muslim prayer. The patient sits next to him by the table with the different objects used during the séance (rosaries, twigs, knives, a candle, a mirror, locks, etc.). Photo: László Kunkovács, 1993.



11 (b) Two years after the first visit we met Qābil *baxši* at his daughter's house in Shuw. Hungarian Turkologist József Torma (left) took notes as the shaman answered some of our questions. Photo: László Kunkovács, 1995.



12 Two mysterious wooden dolls (*qo'chaq*) with bells, the dolls probably representing some helping spirits (*peri*) of the *baxshi*. Qābil only used them when he threw them on the ground at the end of the ritual. Photo: László Kunkovács, 1993.

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13 The front cover of Darmagiin Baljinyam's popular book, *Mongol ugsaатnii бөө мөргөл, дег yos, шившлэгтэй яруу найраг* [The shamanism of Mongolian origin, its rules, traditions and shamanic poetry].

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14 The front cover of Dondogiin Byambadorj's popular book's *Burxan Xaldun Xairxan tengeriin taxilga, böögiin yos* [Heav- enly sacrifice to the Mountain Burkhan Khaldun and shamanic traditions].

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**МӨНХ ТЭНГЭРИЙН
ИЛДЭТ ШИД БӨӨ
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15 The front cover of Banjariin Jorigtbaatar Banjariin's popular book, *Mönx tengeriin ildet šid böö nomlol* [The magician shaman with a saber and the doctrine of eternal heaven].

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