

SHAMAN

*Selected Papers from the Ninth Conference of the ISSR,
Held in Anchorage, Alaska, USA, May 27–31, 2009*

Guest Editors

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Front cover: Portrait of man wearing fur cape and carved amulet necklace, holding raven rattle known as Tlingit shaman ca. 1900 named Berner's Bay Jim from Juneau area. Creator: Winter & Pond Photographs, Alaska State Library (P87-0243)

Photograph from Alexandra A. Kim-Maloney and David R. Yesner,
*Traditional Belief and Healing Systems in a Changing World:
An Interdisciplinary Approach*

Back cover: Based on a loon pendant from a Ket shaman costume,
personal collection of Edward J. Vajda.

Photograph from Edward J. Vajda, *Ket Shamanism*

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SHAMAN

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Introduction

“Traditional Belief and Healing Systems in a Changing World: An Interdisciplinary Approach”: The Ninth Conference of the ISSR, Held in Anchorage, Alaska, USA, May 27–31, 2009

Sponsors: Department of Anthropology and Dean’s Council, College of Arts and Sciences, UAA, the Alaska Humanities Forum (Grant M09-0012), and the National Endowment for the Humanities, a federal agency.

In May 2009 the Anthropology Department, University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), hosted the ninth biennial congress of the International Society for Shamanistic Research (ISSR), held for the first time in North America. Over a hundred people from around the world attended the conference, of whom 62 gave presentations on interrelated research in cultural, medical, and linguistic anthropology as well as archaeology.

The overall goal of the conference was to consider the widely varied traditions and healing practices that fall under the term “shamanism” from international, interdisciplinary, and cross-cultural perspectives, with a specific focus on traditional beliefs and healing systems in a changing world. It was clear from the presentations given at the conference that shamanism continues to thrive throughout the world in transforms modes. A major way in which shamanism has adapted to the current world is acceptance and/or institutional incorporation of shamanistic modes of healing as an adjunct to Western medicine. Another is the connection of shamanism to sacred places, and thence to environmental activism to protect those places, a theme of Marjorie M. Balzer’s important keynote address. Other themes of the conference in an increasingly globalized world culture were historical and cultural connections between Asian and American shamanism, and explorations of unique and specific practices around the world within a common framework of understanding about this universal human

phenomenon. The Conference highlighted the shamanic heritage of indigenous peoples in both traditional and contemporary contexts. Sessions were open to nonmembers, especially Native Alaskans and UAA faculty and students.

Before the opening of the conference, a welcoming reception was held at the Alaska Museum of Natural History on May 27. The UAA hosts professors David R. Yesner and Alexandra A. Kim-Maloney welcomed the participants from Germany, Russia, Italy, Japan, Korea, China, Mongolia, Australia, Hungary, Poland, and Greece, as well as from Alaska and other US states. Svetlana Daribazarova, a Buriat traditional healer, performed a welcome ceremony with the drum and organized a kind of round dance for all—conference participants and audience.

The Conference Opening Ceremony and Plenary Session were scheduled for the next morning, May 28. After a welcome from the Conference Committee (David R. Yesner, Alexandra A. Kim-Maloney, Phyllis Fast, Sergei Bogojavlenski, Morgan Grey), Dr. Kim Peterson, Associate Dean for Research, College of Arts and Sciences, UAA, opened this international forum. Dr. Stephen J. Langdon, Chair of the Anthropology Department, UAA, expressed his deep satisfaction in hosting the conference and wished all participants success in their work.

Mihály Hoppál, President of the ISSR and Director of the Institute of Ethnology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary, shared his thoughts concerning the history of the society and acknowledged the achievements of Society member Marjorie M. Balzer (Department of Anthropology and Intercultural Center, Georgetown University, Washington, DC). She received a special award from the ISSR and presented a paper on “Expanding Credibility for Traditional Belief and Healing Systems in a Changing World.”

The sections of the Conference were dedicated to specific aspects of the main topic: (1) healing rituals and techniques, (2) concepts of shamanism, (3) Alaska forum on repatriation and shamanism, (4) modern transformations in shamanism, (5) comparative studies in shamanism, (6) contemporary core shamanism, (7) language and paraphernalia of rituals.

The first section comprised four sessions facilitated by participants who have been members of the ISSR for at least a decade—Mihály Hoppál and Daniel A. Kister (Sogang University, Korea, and National Catholic Theological School, Beijing, China), and North American scholars participating in an ISSR conference for the first time—Carl M. Hild (Alaska Pacific University, Anchorage) and Jürgen Werner

Kremer (SRJC and Saybrook Graduate School, San Francisco, California). This section embraced observations of specific ceremonies and techniques of healing from old traditions—for example, “Shamanic Origin of Healing and Music” by Mihály Hoppál; “Healing Response and Traditional Belief” by John J. Pilch (Georgetown University); “Symbolic Representation of Shamanic Healing among the Kavalan and Amis (Taiwan): Gender, Locality, and Historical Memory” by Pi-chen Liu (Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan); “Essence and Power of the Shaman’s Chant” by Hu Tai-Li (Institute of Ethnology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan)—and contemporary variants, as exemplified by “Shamans and Italian Healers of Today from a Comparative–Contrastive Viewpoint” by Carla Corradi Musi (University of Bologna, Italy).

The section “Concepts of Shamanism,” facilitated by Gilah Yelin Hirsch (California State University) and Andrei Znamenski (University of Memphis, Tennessee), focused on exploring altered consciousness (presentation by Diane Hardgrave, University of Nevada), “bio-theology” (by Gilah Yelin Hirsch), the role of prototype (by Atsushi Hatakeyama, Hirosaki Gakuin University, Japan), and traditionalism (by Andrei Znamenski) in shamanism, as well as other related questions.

The section “Alaska Forum on Repatriation and Shamanism” on Tlingit and Inupiaq shamanism was truly exceptional. Several presenters with in-depth knowledge of historical shamanism and its contemporary meanings gave excellent, powerful presentations about a topic that is not often, if ever, discussed in a public forum. The contemporary vitality of this healing and belief system was clearly demonstrated, and the sacredness of shamans’ objects was also emphasized, with clear implications for repatriation. The session was organized by Steve Langdon and facilitated by Phyllis Fast (Anthropology Department, UAA). Among the presenters were Steve Langdon, Tlingit Natives Kyle Wark, Bob Sam, Rosita Worl, Elaine Abraham, and Judy Ramos, and Yupik Natives Kathleen Graves and Rita Blumenstein, a tribal healer (fig. 1).

The section “Modern Transformations in Shamanism,” facilitated by M. Diane Hardgrave, Marjorie M. Balzer, and John J. Pilch, observed shamanism as a dynamic phenomenon that has survived in many societies, for example, Dakota (presentation by Daniel Zielske, Minnesota State University and South Central College), Hulun Buir, Inner Mongolia (by Minna Sa, Minzu University of China, Beijing),



Fig. 1 (and front cover). Portrait of man wearing fur cape and carved amulet necklace, holding raven rattle known as Tlingit shaman ca. 1900 named Berner's Bay Jim from Juneau area. Creator: Winter & Pond Photographs, Alaska State Library (P87-0243).

Sakha-Yakuts and Evenki (by Maria M. Koško, Adam Mickiewicz University of Poznań, Poland), Belize (by Grant J. Rich, University of Alaska, Juneau), Batek and Jahai (by Diana Riboli, Panteio University, Athens, Greece), and Dena'ina Athabaskan (by Aaron Leggett, Alaska Native Heritage Center).

International perspectives included a session comparing traditional Athabaskan and Siberian Ket spiritual culture. The papers given by Edward J. Vajda (Western Washington University), Alexandra A. Kim-Maloney (UAA/Tomsk State Pedagogical University, Russia), James K. McNeley (Diné College, Cortez, Colorado) and Olga Kazakevich (Moscow State University, Russia) united findings from recent fieldwork with new comparative analyses of data gathered by earlier anthropologists. Attended by thirty participants, the session helped unite the study of shamanism on disparate continents.

The section "Contemporary Core Shamanism," facilitated by Morgan Grey (UAA), presented an experiential workshop "Shamanic Journeying" under the guidance of Marcia Weare from Anchorage, Alaska. Using core shamanism, participants were shown how to explore the hidden universe usually known only through myths and dreams.

Last but not least, the section "Language and Paraphernalia of Rituals," facilitated by Sergio Poggianella (Rovereto, Italy), included presentations on "Shamanic Dress and Regalia in Northernmost America" by Patricia R. Anawalt (Center for the Study of Regional Dress, Fowler Museum at UCLA), language use in Mongolian shamanic ritual by Bumochir Dulam (National University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar), shamanic artefacts by Sergio Poggianella, and cosmological images on Temoq shamanic ritual drums by Peter F. Laird (USA and Malaysia).

The conference activities included an exhibition of ethnographic films related to shamanism and interaction with the ongoing cultural, educational, and research activities of the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

The central part of the last conference day was a presentation by the Keynote Speaker David S. Whitley (Tehachapi, California) entitled "Cave Paintings and the Human Spirit: The Origins of Creativity and Belief."

We thank all of the participants for their participation in a conference that surely helped to define the place of shamanism today in a rapidly changing world. We believe that the papers in this volume reflect the continued importance of shamanistic activities.

The following papers in this volume are derived from the Ninth ISSR Conference. They include papers dealing with East Asian shamanism

(Bumochir Dulam, Hu Tai-Li, Hyun-key Kim Hogarth, Daniel A. Kister, Peter Knecht, and Diana Riboli), Siberian shamanism (Edward J. Vajda), and New World shamanism (Grant J. Rich, Kyle Wark). All, however, help to place contemporary shamanistic practices within the framework of the survival and transformation of this universal phenomenon, the basic theme of the conference.

ANCHORAGE, AK ALEXANDRA A. KIM-MALONEY and DAVID R. YESNER

Degrees of Ritualization: Language Use in Mongolian Shamanic Ritual

BUMOCHIR DULAM

ULAANBAATAR

Based on present shamanic societies, the article identifies types of Mongol shamanic chants and their characteristics and distinctions, where previously these have been understood as a single long chant uttered during shamanic rituals. Next, by developing the characteristics of the types of chants, an explanation is suggested for the opposing Euro-American theories of ritual. The article proposes that ritualization has four inseparable degrees, starting from everyday actions with full propositional and intentional characteristics and then progressively losing propositional force and intentionality through the degrees of ritualization until the highest nonintentional and nonpropositional degree is reached.

Introduction

Anthropologists try to explain and define ritual in different ways. They do this by bringing out their own theories about performance, initiation, quality, symbol, text, inscription, language, code, communication, and so on, which sometimes contradict each other. I will not argue that any given approach is either right or wrong. Instead I will follow the idea that each is right in its own case. I suppose before presenting any theories about ritual that we first should deal with the classification and typology of ritual—what we may call the *degree of ritualization*. In doing this we imply that most theories of ritual are likely to be non-universal. This is because rituals are manifest in different contexts and consist of various kinds of cultural, natural, and supernatural things (e.g. symbols, actions, speech, and other communication). As such, several kinds of explanations of ritual are necessary.

This article deals with two general aims which are related to each other. In the first phase, pursuing some anthropologists' ideas about

rituals I will present two general types of ritual, which can be called liturgical and nonliturgical. Some anthropologists made a similar classification for ritual types using different names. One of the first to mention similar ritual types in this way was Edmund R. Leach in his *Rethinking Anthropology* (1961). In his work ritual types were qualified as “ascetic” and “ecstatic” (Leach 1968: 526). But Roy Rappaport titled similar types of rituals “indexical” and “canonical” (1974: 11–12). Recently Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw (1994) made a similar classification whereby they classified “ascetic” and “canonical” types as “liturgy-centred rituals,” and “ecstatic” and “indexical” variants as “performance-centred rituals.” In qualifying the Jain *puja* ritual as “liturgy-centred,” they also claim that there are other types of rituals, like “performance-centred rituals,” and briefly mention their differences. They maintain that liturgy-centered types are highly ritualized and tend to occur in literate societies, whereas performance-centered rituals are weakly ritualized and tend to occur in nonliterate societies. An example of the latter is an inspirational shamanic ritual. Following this classification, I compare the degree of ritualization found in performance-centered rituals with that of liturgy-centered ones.

Most anthropological arguments on ritual can be divided into the two types outlined above. Many anthropologists present various evidences to demonstrate the differences between them. The first part of this article focuses on the different characteristics of these two types. In it I also propose that public and private orientations are qualities that distinguish liturgical rituals from performative ones. I argue that liturgical rituals are more public and performative shamanic varieties more private. Because of this, liturgical rituals are more representative of a public dimension and subsume the self, while performative rituals represent the self (individual).

Next, I define ritualization by degree, with an exploration of intention in ritual language. Then, I will show the thin and flexible border between the liturgical and performative types of rituals. Finally, I will illustrate the fine line between performative ritual and nonritual. In other words, when we examine rituals, there are three types of actions which belong to liturgical ritual, performative ritual, and the ordinary form. In addition to these types, I will present three degrees of ritualization: nonintentional high degree, between intentional and nonintentional middle degree, and intentional low degree. The last of these comprises nonritual actions of performative ritual. It is the case

that any ritual can have elements of all degrees in different proportions. This occurs, for example, when a certain part of a ritual is highly ritualized while another part is little ritualized. However, on the basis of the proportion we can decide what kind of ritual it is as a whole. I suppose that most liturgical rituals consist of high and middle degrees, while performative rituals mostly consist of middle and low degrees and even can contain some nonritual language. This is discussed in the second part of the work.

In the last part, I try to confirm my idea presented in the second part by discussing the propositional force of ritual language. As I see it, this occurs in relation to intention. By presenting a discussion of text and inscriptions, I argue that the propositional force of ritual language can be subject to the same degrees of ritualization as those defined in the second part.

As I mentioned earlier, the degrees of ritualization will be discussed mostly in terms of shamanic performative ritual. However, a degree of ritualization can also be found in other types of rituals. Here I have used the facts of intention and proposition in ritual language as a basis for classification, but other degrees of ritualization based on other aspects and elements of ritual could be used in a similar way.

Types of Mongolian Shamanic Ritual Language

Mongol shamans use different types of chants, prayers, phrases, and sayings that differ from each other according to their meanings and purposes and their implementation by an individual shaman. In this article, I deal with certain fixed types among them. These are “universal” in that all shamans perform them. But only in a very general sense they are fixed and nonvariable. All shamans convey similar meanings and purposes in songs as detailed below, but they use different poems and phrases to express them. In particular I focus on the shaman’s invocation song for ancestral spirits and all other deities, and other kinds which continue until a shaman moves in and out of trance. As such, what I describe below is not a complete ritual. More precisely, it constitutes a particular part of the shamanic ritual which can be found in several different shamanic rituals. In this section on shamanic per-

formance I explore eight songs with different meanings and purposes in the following logical order.¹

These start with the “shaman’s praise for all the deities” (*böögiiin ongodyn magtaal*). Shamans imagine their rituals as a feast, and through this chant they offer an invitation to all deities to join in. Unknown spirits and masters of lands and waters also are invited so as to avoid receiving curses from envious spirits. This is particularly apparent during bigger shamanic rituals. Shamans characterize the situation as a crowd of spirits, some of whom try to possess the shaman and talk to people. Notwithstanding, this type of chant is not for the purpose of possession, but to invoke spirit participants. Every shaman bestows his own praise on his deities and sings these every time he starts a ritual. As such it is fairly straightforward that, compared with other types, this song is more stable and pre-existing.

Second, from all his deities a shaman must choose one to enter him and induce a trance. The choice of spirit corresponds with the purpose of a ritual. This is called the “shaman’s invocation for a particular spirit” (*böögiiin ongodyn duudlaga*) and is sung immediately after the first type, so that in many cases it appears to be a part of the first type. However the meaning and purpose of singing it is quite different. Because this song refers to a certain spirit, it indicates that shamans have different invocations for each of their spirits. As such, the invocation describes only certain characteristics, personal behavior, and stories about the spirit.

Third, once this type is manifest a shaman is excluded from the ritual scene. In trance, the possessed shaman is taken over by spirits who talk to people. Immediately after exiting the trance a third type of language is used: “greetings between participants and the spirit” (*mendiin üg*). This is reminiscent of the ordinary custom wherein a guest arrives at a house and greets the people there. Many forms of greetings exist in long poem form, as single sayings or sometimes even as everyday greetings.

¹ The materials I have used in this article were collected during my fieldwork in 1995 and 2000. In 1995, I did fieldwork among the Buriats in the Eastern Mongolian Dornod Province. My main informant was shaman Ch. Tseren and his disciplines, such as Ts. Bazar and D. Bayar. I have met Ch. Tseren and Ts. Bazar several times since 1995 to collect more information. In 2000, I collected some more materials for this article from the Northern Mongolian Darkhad shaman Ch. Batbayar, who lives in Ulaanbaatar.

Fourth, greetings usually are followed by a “spirit’s demand” (*ongodyn nekhel üg*). Objects which the spirits demand usually are an extension of the greeting. Drinks such as milk tea, yoghurt, mare’s milk, water, vodka and tobacco, pipes and so on are demanded. In addition, certain spirits demand idiosyncratic and special things. Often people already know what these are and so prepare them in advance for a spirit. These kinds of objects can be fruits and jam, playing cards, fried fish, fire and so on.

Fifth, the “animal voices” (*amitny duu čimee*) made through shamans could occur anywhere. But this is rare and not necessary like greetings and demands. There are different animal voices which refer to different signs or emotions of spirits. According to shamanic sources, these animals can be classified into four kinds. In the first are the messenger and servant (*zarč, zardas, medeeč, ugtlaga*) of a spirit, which are usually birds like the cuckoo, crow, kite, and boreal owl. The second include spirits’ beasts for causing harm, curses or protection (*khandlaga, tukhiralga*), wolf and lynx. Mounts of spirits (*khölgö, unaa*) comprise the third kind of the doe, reindeer, and horse. Finally there is the category of metamorphosis (transformation) (*khuvilгаа*) of spirits, which includes the owl, eagle, bear, and bull. Every spirit has different animals for these purposes, and these are spirit-specific. Because of this there is no exact animal voice category. Thus the crow not only must be a messenger, it also can be a metamorphosis of another spirit.

Sixth, the “spirit’s story-telling” (*ongodyn tamlaga*) is a presentation by an inhabiting spirit. Whatever spirit inhabits a shaman presents himself and chants about his human life time, describing the landscape where he lived. Every spirit has either a heroic or a tragic individual life story. The chant about it, then, is more like a “text” and does not change a lot.

Seventh, the “testimony” (*öčil, öčig*) can come from the spirit, interpreter, or participant. It is a dialog framed in poetic images. Clients or an interpreter tell the spirits why they are holding a ritual and calling them. Often clients inform spirits about their life problems and ask the spirit about the cause of their troubles and how to fix them. Spirits then provide a cause and treatment for problems. They tell clients the spiritual reasons for their troubles and misfortunes.

Eighth, “phrases of the seeing-off” (*ongod morduulah üg khelleg*) can come from a spirit, interpreter, or participant. This completes a trance by announcing its ending. It proclaims two types of conclusions. The first is the end of the trance of one spirit and indicates only that the spirit who has taken control of the shaman is leaving the scene. This is followed by

the trance of the next spirit and all the above types of language are used except the shaman's praise for all deities, which is resumed, but not with the same words and phrases. The second is the announcement of the end of the entire ritual and making the spirits return whence they came, because many spirits want to possess shamans and enter the human world. This is an absolutely necessary conclusion. A shaman must end a ritual by force without letting other spirits possess him.

Because these songs involve different levels of participation in the ritual they constitute types of communication. According to Mongol belief, such songs establish communication between three agents: shamans, participants, and spirits. Emphasis on variation and communication in shamanic rituals at once make their context determined and unstable. The sequence of the types given above is only a logical ordering and not a compulsory one. All that is involved in the eight songs of shamanic rituals simulates, embodies, indeed is the same as an everyday event whereby a guest visits a house, greets people, drinks tea, makes conversation, and departs. In the following section of this article, I show why this qualifies as a ritual and how it differs from ordinary life.

It is difficult to place these songs within a single anthropological theory of ritual. In terms of oral tradition they do not remain the same; all three participating agents afford change and variation in each part of the ritual. Moreover, the eight songs differ greatly from each other. Each could be analyzed within a different anthropological theory of ritual. Rituals are always complex in that they contain many different and changeable actions. From this we can deduce that Mongolian shamanic rituals have a certain fixed overall order inside with unfixable changeable elements. For each of these I find that a different explanation may be necessary. Rituals like shamanic ceremonies always are complexes of acts and rules subject to innovation. In order to articulate relationships between them, then, we must bear in mind several theories of ritual.

Public and Private Aspects of Ritual

Following the emphasis on ritual type and degree laid out above, I compare some private aspects of Mongolian shamanic ritual with public. I take it that public and private characteristics of ritual stand as reason enough to employ classifications of rituals or their parts. Anthropologists present different notions and cases for how religion and ritual

represent various aspects of public or private life. Roy A. Rappaport (1974: 34) maintains that liturgical orders are public, and participation in them constitutes a public acceptance of public order, regardless of the private state of belief. Similarly, Gilbert Lewis (1980: 21–22) argues that there is a public social aspect to ritual, which exists independently of the particular individual in a particular situation who performs it. Moreover, he suggests that rituals have private aspects. He describes the ways in which the execution of rituals or their rules is explicit, clear, public, and social, while their meanings are implicit, indeterminate, various, private, and individual.

There is another obvious way to examine the public and private aspects of rituals. I propose that there are public rituals as well as private rituals. In contrast with liturgical types of rituals such as Humphrey and Laidlaw's (1994) Jain *puja* ritual in India, shamanic rituals are of the private type. Humphrey and Laidlaw use the term liturgy-centered ritual in the sense of strict and rule-governed through written texts and highly ritualized variants. These contrast with performance-centered rituals that predominate in inspirational cults and life-cycle ceremonials of nonliterate societies. The main difference between these two types is whether they are high or low in ritualization and more or less rule-guided or literary and oral. Rappaport (1974) states that the term 'liturgy' comes from the Greek for 'public work'. Following what is connoted by this translation, I illustrate ritual characteristics as public and private as a means of drawing the distinction between liturgy-centered and performance-centered rituals. I propose that liturgical rituals are more public and shamans' rituals more private in terms of participation, participants' purpose, and shamans who represent deities.

Participants, Clients and their Purposes

Christian church and Jain *puja* rituals are open to all members of a community. In contrast, shamanic rituals are often concerned with a specific family's affairs and as such are accessible only to its members or close relatives and friends (they are not strictly "closed," the main reason for restricting access being that usually one is not keen to let others participate in rituals held to address private problems). Through such rituals one aims to determine the cause of life's troubles or illnesses and to fix or cure these. People believe that during trance sha-

mans communicate directly with ancestral spirits and tell them about the problems they are facing. Ancestral spirits then impart information about the cause of their troubles and advise one how to solve them. Among the eight types of songs and sayings vocalized during trance, what is called the testimony (*öčil*) is sung in reference to the situation of discussing one's life crisis. This way of approaching private problems in shamanic rituals is common in many other shamanic communities. For example, among the Kaluli people in Papua New Guinea there is a similar procedure in the medium's ritual, illustrated by Edward E. Schieffelin (1985). If someone falls ill, his or her relatives often seek out a medium and ask him to enter the invisible world (go into trance or possession) to see what happened to the spirit of a sick person to cause the latter's illness. When the spirit enters the medium, people discuss the problem and try to find out how to deal with it.

Sometimes Mongol shamans divine for clients during a ritual and tell them both what happened and what must be done to fix a problem. For example, in summer of 1997 a young Mongolian businessman who did not want me to know much about him visited my informant (a shaman called Tseren) and told the latter about the tragedies that had befallen him during the previous three years. The businessman had sustained three serious car accidents, the last of which was the most serious, injuring him nearly fatally. Because of this the man decided to see a shaman to find out what was happening. The shaman reported that some time prior to the last three years this man went to Ulan-Ude, Russia (Buriatia), where he met with the first accident because he had not offered anything during his trip to the spirits of that area.² One of the spirits residing where the accident took place was very jealous and angry that the rich man had not offered him something and so wanted to take the man's life as compensation. The shaman therefore advised the man to make a sacrifice especially to that spirit to pacify it. Nowadays in Mongolian cities there are many other clients like this man who occupy different positions and professions and have begun to seek out shamans to help solve their problems. Notably, this type of client prefers not to allow others to participate in his or her private rituals.

² As I have seen, en route to Ulan-Ude there are many sacred trees and places where people make offerings.

In accordance with the above cases, I assume that therapeutic rituals held for a particular family or person are classifiable as private rituals that contrast with public ones. However, I should stress that I am not arguing that all shamanic or performance-centered rituals are private. Some public performance-centered rituals are held by shamans. Mongol shamans also hold rituals or make sacrifices on behalf of whole communities. These can be done for a spirit of a particular mountain, lake, or river who, as such, becomes a supreme deity for people in a particular area. Participation at these is not restricted. Every member of a community (except in certain cases where it is forbidden for a woman or for someone who has had a death in the family to attend) is welcome to partake in the ritual and receive luck and blessings. Accessibility to the public makes performance-centered rituals similar to the liturgy-centered ones. This is because in both types people experience similar ritual situations. In public performance-centered shamanic rites, it is held that participants should act similarly and repeat acts as they do in liturgical rituals. For example, in almost all cairn (*ovo*)³ worship, whether a cairn is an object of shamanic or lamaist (Buddhist) veneration, everyone has to place three stones on the cairn and circumambulate it clockwise three times, without knowing the explanation. This I find constitutes a more or less ritualized action.

However, even when performance-centered rituals are public and thus become similar to liturgy-centered rituals, they are not as highly ritualized as what can properly be called public liturgy-centered rituals. I assume that there can be private liturgy-centered rituals, but these are not as weakly ritualized as performance-centered ones. This simply means that a public or private quality in terms of participants is not what distinguishes liturgy-centered rituals from performance-centered ones. Notwithstanding, we cannot conclude that the public and private aspects of rituals are irrelevant. In general, most shamans' performance-centered rituals deal with private aspects, while most liturgy-centered rituals deal with public ones. In the next section, I will offer another example of public and private ritual regarding shamans and deities.

³ Cairns are erected as a shrines or dwellings for local deities.

Shamans as Representatives of Deities

Probably in the case of liturgy-centered rituals public and private distinctions are not critically definitive, but in the case of shamanic performance-centered rituals they play an important role. Liturgy-centered rituals do not vary in regard to their public versus private or performance-centered ritual qualities. This is because of the deities involved in the rites themselves. Liturgy-centered religions do not have private gods, but nonliturgical religions do. Thus if there is such a thing as a private liturgy-centered ritual, I presume that it follows written textual orders just as in public ritual. By default, this would make the former the same ritual since the latter would probably not change in accordance with variation in the kinds of participants attending (public or private). For this reason the salient characteristic of a shamanic public ritual is the deities invoked. In liturgical religions such as Christianity or Buddhism deities are public, that is, familiar to the populace at large, and do not vary quantitatively according to the number of families in any given locale. Shamanic performance-centered rituals involve these kinds of deity. When shamans perform public ritual for common deities, they exercise less authority and intention. This is because every shaman who worships public deities must follow the latter's rules and publicly recognized order. Thus, even when shamans hold private rituals and invoke public deities, they follow the fixed orders of engagement found in liturgical rituals. Nonetheless, in nonliturgical religions like shamanism, public deities and private ancestral spirits found in each family vary widely and correspond with the number of families in a given community. Where this is the case, during the ritual shamans follow their own inclinations to a greater degree because they are the authorities on and figureheads for them. Thus, as I see it, the main difference between liturgical religions and nonliturgical ones is that in the former there is no interaction between private deities and private performers, whereas in nonliturgical religions private deities actively engage with ritual performers. Moreover, in liturgical and nonliturgical religions public rituals are more ritualized on account of the invocation of public gods. Only in nonliturgical religions are private rituals less ritualized. As such, private ancestral spirits are represented by their own shamans.

Shamans' individualization and variation in private rituals are also suggested by Manduhai Buyandelger (1999: 227). It is evident that Mongolian shamanic systems in every community vary widely on

account of logistical divisions into small family units and household activities that influence rituals. This argument takes up Emile Durkheim's idea of religion and ritual as phenomena that establish social solidarity. William Robertson-Smith is one of the first thinkers who invoked religion and ritual as related to the preservation and welfare of societies. He emphasizes how religions bear upon social groups rather than, as with Edward B. Tylor, seeing religion as a form of speculative thought. As such he interprets rituals primarily in terms of how they bind people together in a community. He succinctly states: "Religion did not exist for the saving of souls but for the preservation and welfare of society." (Morris 1987: 113)

Following Robertson-Smith, Durkheim in his *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1995) claims that rituals establish solidarity in communities. Thus rituals are public actions relevant to every member of a society. On Durkheim's approach, Brian Morris says ". . . rituals function not only to strengthen the bonds attaching the believer to the god, but they strengthen the bonds attaching the individual to the social group of which he or she is a member; through ritual the group becomes conscious of itself." (Morris 1987: 120) Taking Durkheim's approach further, Veena Das maintains that initiation rituals create social solidarity via shared traces of pain on one's body. She holds that ". . . the law which is written on their bodies is not the law of the king or the law of the state, but the law of the society. Initiation rituals establish a triple alliance between writing, law, and the body, which achieves a consubstantiation between the individual, the group, and the law of society." (Das 1995: 179)

What I have pointed out is that the distinguishing quality of liturgical and nonliturgical religions corresponds with this idea of solidarity. But I do find that in these there also are some aspects of anti-solidarity. The present situation of Mongolian shamanism involves conflicts between families about ancestral spirits among the clan. There are some old spirits and deities who are relevant for entire clans, and probably most shamans of these worship them. In this sense, we can say that these deities afford solidarity in clans and bring their members together. Notwithstanding this, shamans' families are related more closely to ancestral spirits who are held to be their grandparents or great-grandparents. The latter are private deities. Thus, in cases where they are publicly worshipped at the same time as they are privately invoked, they first serve their families and then the public or whole clan. Shamans in clans

usually compete with each other via their ancestral spirits. Manduhai Buyandelger (1999: 223) demonstrates this in her idea about “the web of power relations, not only by choice, but also out of the necessity to protect others and themselves.” Nowadays people care more about private deities than public ones. This reinforces divisions into small family or household groups and increases disregard for broken clan solidarity.

Each shamanic unit affords a small group reckoned by family in relation to one’s ancestral spirits. The shaman as an individual decides how to conduct rituals, and he learns these from his ancestors and teachers. Moreover, every shaman is both successor to and at the same time author of a ritual. He can invent new rituals or their constituent elements. As such, in their private rituals shamans do not follow the strict directions they follow in public ones. Often their work is very privatized and only slightly ritualized.

From Intention to Nonintention

Extending my idea about private aspects of performative ritual to the level of the family, in this part of my article I deal with the individual as a unit of shamanic ritual. As mentioned, some rituals or parts of them present or refer to whole communities, while others are related more closely to the smaller family groups. Moreover, inspirational rituals usually show individuals’ (the smallest units of ritual participation) ideas and intentions. Here I demonstrate how shamanic rituals express self-intention through language used by shamans, interpreters, clients, and participants. In illustrating these, I argue that private performance-centered shamanic rituals provide examples of every high and low degree of ritualization in addition to some nonritualized actions.

Among ritual theorists an argument arose that ritual is “less ambiguous and more precise and effective than ordinary language; or more ambiguous than ordinary language” (Bell 1992: 111). Valerio Valeri presents two different examples whereby ritual language is alternatively seen to be ambiguous or unambiguous. “Dialogic communication” in the case of ritual is unambiguous ritual language because it allows one to exercise self-intention. By contrast, in other cases such as ritual language in the form of written or a frozen oral text (as in ritual) the author becomes detached from what he states. Here language does

not yield an element of self-intention and as such is ambiguous (Valeri 1985: 341–342). Similarly, as mentioned in the introduction, Rappaport (1974) presents two different cases of language use in ritual. He argues that ritual language can be “indexical” where it is “immediate and has variations,” and “canonical” when it is “enduring and has no variations.” “Indexical” information is analogous to Valeri’s “dialogic communication,” which emphasizes self-intention of the speaker. The “canonical” variant echoes Valeri’s ambiguous “written or frozen oral text,” seen to be devoid of any self-intention on the part of the speaker.

Some ritual theorists argue that rituals are nonintentional, frozen, and tend toward ambiguity. Stanley J. Tambiah for one maintains that “rituals as conventionalized behaviour are not meant to express the intentions, emotions, and states of mind of individuals in a direct, spontaneous, and natural way.” He thus holds that any “cultural elaboration of codes consists in the distancing from such spontaneous and intentional expressions because spontaneity and intentionality are, or can be, contingent, labile, circumstantial, even coherent or disordered” (1985: 132). Tambiah’s notion about ritual only refers to the canonical, more ambiguous, and written or frozen oral text types, and as such excludes other kinds of rituals. In other words, his tenets hold true only for liturgy-centered ritual types. Humphrey and Laidlaw (1994) point this up through their argument that in highly ritualized actions performers do not have or follow intentions in their acts but by executing ritual actions “people have still done it, whatever they were dreaming of.” Through this, the importance of performance-centered rituals and the possibility of acting on self-intention are underscored. Thus, they conclude that where ritual is more ritualized performers hold less intention so that ritual repertoires become more ambiguous and vice versa.

Rituals can have varying degrees of intention. Rappaport (1974: 16) states: “indexical messages are dependent for their acceptability on their association with the canonical messages, and to say that canonical messages are without force, or even sense, unless accompanied by certain indexical messages is to say that ritual is not merely a mode of communication in which two sorts of information may be transmitted, but a very complex form in which the two sorts of information are dependent on one another.” Along other lines, Susanna Rostas develops Humphrey and Laidlaw’s idea that whereas intentional actions refer to performance, nonintentional ones denote ritualization. She suggests

that “they can occur separately or alternately (more or less rapidly), but that predominantly they occur together” (Rostas 1998: 85).

Following this approach, I show alternately how shamanic rituals express or do not reveal self-intention under different circumstances. I also demonstrate how the two can occur together. Second, I show why language in inspirational rituals is not the same as ordinary language and affords the weakest degree of ritualization.

Shamans’ Use of Language

In the case of Mongolian shamanic rituals like those presented in the introduction, intentional and nonintentional songs, phrases, and dialogs are manifest. From these it is evident that some are less intentional and more ritualized than others. For example, the shaman’s praise for ancestral spirits and the shaman’s invocation for particular spirits are the most ritualized examples of shamanic ritual language and in comparison with other cases are stable and change relatively little.

Every shaman has his/her own forms of praise for his/her deities and ordinarily sings these every time he/she starts a ritual. For example, a shaman called Ch. Batbayar⁴ sings the following praise:

Khökh möngön tengeriin yazguurtan bolson khairhaduud
Khörst altan delkhiin tulguur bolson khairhaduud
Baga gert mini bagana bolson tenger mini
Balčir khuukhded mini ölgii bolson tenger mini . . .

*Khairhads*⁵ who are the lords of silver blue heaven
Khairhads who are the support of golden earth with fertile soil
 My heavens who become a column of my small home
 My heavens who become a cradle for my baby children . . .

On the one hand, in terms of a song, this praise does not change much between rituals. On the other hand, as an oral chant it does not have to follow a strict repertoire, i.e. praise words do not need to be the same

⁴ Quotation from an interview of August 1, 2000, in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

⁵ Respectful term referring to the deities.

in every ritual. Thus, some of the lines or phrases can be missed out in one ritual and retained in the next one.

As with praise, every shaman has certain invocation songs for each spirit. These identify spirits and are sung every time a specific spirit is invoked. Both in praise sung to all deities and in invocations for certain spirits, one can say that shamans evince self-intention. But alternately it can be said that songs are ritualized, nonintentional, and constitute previously fixed texts. In the latter sense, it can be likened to the example of dance explored by Susanna Rostas. She claims that at another level performativity (intentional) and ritualization (nonintentional) can act together, and this becomes especially the case as an enactment proceeds or builds up. So for example, when, after years of dancing the ability to act nonintentionally can be achieved in the way a dancer dances, a further state of intentionality then comes into play that emanates from that earlier ritualization state and merges with it: this could be the desire or intention on the part of the dancer to put more effort into the activity, or to change the direction of what he or she is doing, or to add new flourishes or steps (Rostas 1998: 91).

This means that intention and nonintention can be found together in the case of song as in dance. There is, I find, more evidence of shamans' intention in songs. Shamans change the meaning of song invocations when spirits do not come. They slowly change these into coaxing. This implies that shamans in fact are conscious while singing and decide what to sing according to the contingents of a given situation. Alternately, sometimes spirits enter shamans and initiate trance just at the beginning of an invocation song for them. Where this takes place shamans do not need to coax. In general, invocation songs for certain spirits do culminate with certain words but last until a spirit inhabits a shaman. How long it takes for a spirit to induce trance is dependent upon the dynamics of a given situation. As such the overall process is highly contextual.

Moreover, in terms of the singer (author), shamans' songs also are intentional. This is clear when compared with liturgical rituals. In highly ritualized liturgical rituals, performers or speakers are both authors and not authors of their own speech. According to Humphrey and Laidlaw, (1) performers are authors of their actions because they perform them, but (2) they are not authors of their actions because actions are "constituted not by the intentions which the actor has in performing them, but by prior stipulation" (1994: 97). However, in

the case of shamanic ritual shamans are the authors of songs in both senses—that is, as performer and author of songs. Thus, even where previously composed the shaman still is author of his song. In terms of oral language use versus that in liturgy, shamans compose their songs and are free to change them whenever they sing.

Language Use among Ritual Participants and Spirits

In the above section I examined the intentions of shamanic ritual language by use of a highly ritualized song. I will now turn to focus on the intentionality among other ritual participants, such as the interpreter (*helmerč, tulmaaš*), client, and also spirits' intentions (through the shaman). Their intentions are explored through: (1) greetings between spirits and participants, (2) spirit demands, (3) spirit story-telling, (4) spirits and clients' testimony, and (5) the phrases of the seeing-off. These types of language can occur after the shaman's praise for all the deities and the invocation for certain spirits; however, they usually occur sequentially in the above order. Within them exist many varied dialogs between participants and the spirits who take control of the shaman.

As a rule, during trance shamans have to be possessed by a spirit, whereupon they enter a nonintentional state. In other words, after the above two songs have been sung, the shaman is excluded from the ritual context. Schieffelin (1985), in his essay on Kaluli performance, explains a similar example. He states that the medium ascends to the invisible realm while the spirits descend to the human plane (1985: 713). Following Schieffelin's example, a shaman's speech is wholly nonintentional because as a performer he does not place any of his own intention and emotion in his actions. In this sense, the ritual situation could be characterized as highly ritualized. I would argue, however, that during trance the shaman's speech *does* contain certain meaning and intention, and thus that sometimes being hardly distinguishable from ordinary language it is both highly ritualized and nonritualized. Following Rostas (1998), ritualization (nonintentionality) and performativity (intentionality) occur together, as in the above-mentioned Mexican dance and also during the shaman's song. In both cases the actors place their self-intention through performance into the ritualized action. However these two cases of Mexican dance and Mongol shaman's song differ from one another. During trance where the shaman supposed to be excluded from the scene, still performs an intentional action as an addi-

tion to ritualized characteristics. In such a case, nonintentional actor's intentional performing acts seems paradoxical. Therefore, I suggest we separate and view the actor as distinct from his actions and transfer intentionality to the actions of other performers present. Acting with intentionality, the other performers present must be the spirits who have possessed the shaman. The actors place their self-intention into the ritualized action. In this case, the action is ritualized while the actor is adding performativity. During trance, however, the actor (shaman) is involved in ritualized characteristics, while his action is performative. A nonintentional actor, performing intentional acts, seems paradoxical. I suggest we separate and view the actor as distinct from his actions and transfer intentionality to the actions of other performers present. Acting with intentionality, the other performers present must be the spirits who have possessed the shaman.

In the following section, I explore weakly ritualized cases, which are only marginally different from ordinary action. These cases are intentional and transmit the emotions of their speakers. Therefore, the argument of intention is no longer the main problem. The main question is: Can these songs and phrases be characterized as ritualistic, and what characteristics of ritualization and nonritualization do they have? I will argue that a few of them could be characterized as nonritualized, but that most of them are weakly ritualized by maintaining intentional acts.

While the shaman is possessed by a spirit, people hold that the spirit talks to the interpreter, the client, and other participants. In most cases, the language in which the spirit communicates with participants and vice versa differs from ordinary language. Usually an interpreter speaks to the shaman in trance on behalf of the participants. Some short greetings and expressions by all present use ordinary speech. For example, when the spirit enters the shaman, first of all it greets the participants in various ways, sometimes in ritualized and sometimes in ordinary speech. Some Buriat spirits in Mongolia say *Mend ee*⁶ (literally "how are you?") and the participants return the greeting *Mend ee*. (literally "fine"). These kinds of speech are not ritualized but are part of everyday language, so that performance-centered, inspirational rituals can have elements of nonritualized actions.⁷

⁶ The general meaning of the word is 'healthy', and Buriats use it as a greeting.

⁷ Humphrey and Laidlaw also noted that liturgical rituals also may have "non-ritualized" moments of action, for example when people walk around during a ritual, speak to one another, prepare offerings, etc.

Many of the other dialogs and speeches however, can be characterized as ritualized language use and in that way differ from the everyday. The spirits (through the shaman) and the clients (through the interpreter) communicate with each other using poetic and “literary” forms of speech. For example, a Buriat spirit called *Modoon*⁸ presents herself in the following way:

Khaan tsold diildeegui
Gombiin khüivüün Modoon bi
Ezen khaand diildeegui
Erkh duraaraa Modoon bi

I am Modoon, the descendent of Gombo,⁹
 Who was not defeated by the power of the empire,
 Who was not defeated by the ruling king,
 I am the arbitrary Modoon.

In order to simply say “I am *Modoon*” she sings the above poem in a melodic way, ritualizing her speech in a particular way. In addition, her language is respectful and consists of old terms, using special phrases for different objects. The use of poetic, archaic language differentiates the speech from ordinary language, and thus the spirit language becomes ritualized.¹⁰

During shamanic performance-centered rituals, most linguistic utterances are intentional, making them similar to ordinary speech. However, there are some elements which make them ritualized. Different

⁸ The story about the spirit says that she was a shaman who helped poor people by fighting against *noyod*, rulers and governors. Finally, she was arrested and burned in public, along with her shamanic costumes and drum. However, after the fire she flew out by drumming under the embers and ashes. After that time she became a sanctuary shaman. When she enters the shaman she always mentions her heroic story through the above song.

⁹ *Gombo* is the name of her ancestor.

¹⁰ For example, spirits may demand different things such as tobacco, vodka, mare’s milk, yoghurt, tea, water, fried fish, cards, etc. When demanding these things during the ritual, instead of saying ‘tea’ (*tsai* in Mongolian), they say ‘strong yellow’ (*aagtai šarga*), ‘yellow-red which is thick as ladle could be stuck in’ (*čandaga šavardam šar ulaan*), or for tobacco ‘red of greetings’ (*mendiin ulaan*), ‘green of the king of Taiwan’ (*Taiwan khaany nogoon*), etc.

from liturgy-centered rituals, where the main question is whether the action is intentional or not, in performance-centered rituals this is no longer a paramount question.

To conclude, I shall comment on a few aspects of performance-centered rituals. Rostas (1998) suggests that intentional/performance and nonintentional/ritualized can occur together in a ritual. In the above case, I shall suppose that we can find three variable degrees of ritualization and nonritualization (table 1).

Table 1. Types of rituals and degrees of ritualization

Ritual types (conditions of action)	Degrees of ritualization (including nonritualization)
Liturgical ritual	First degree of ritualization
(Border ^a)	Second degree of ritualization
Performative ritual	Third degree of ritualization
(Border ^b)	Fourth degree of non-ritualization ^c
Ordinary condition	Ordinary level

Main line	—————
Sub line	-----
Border line	~~~~~

^a The second degree of ritualization is the border between liturgical and performative ritual.

^b The fourth degree of nonritualization is the border between performative ritual and the ordinary condition.

^c Both the fourth case and the ordinary level refer to everyday action; here, however, I have used them to specify the small difference between these two, which the fourth case refers to some speeches used in ritual, while the ordinary level refers fully to everyday situations.

The first degree is that of nonintention and ritualization, which occurs in liturgical rituals, but can also be found in performative shamanic ritual. The example shown is that of the shaman during trance where he is possessed by spirits and is unconscious. The second degree is that between intentional and nonintentional acts. The degree of ritu-

alization in this case is neither as high as the first one, nor as low as in the weak one. Examples of this include the songs sung by the shaman, which are fixed (as Tambiah 1981; Levis 1980; Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994 and other anthropologists mentioned), while at the same time the intentionality of the performer is included (as Rostas 1998 argued for the case of dance). The third degree of ritualization is the one closest to everyday actions. The performers' actions in this case are fully intentional (there is no room for question about this), but his actions are ritualized in that they are different from everyday action. We can see this in the dialogs where poetic speech and special phrases (consisting of archaic words) for different objects are used with intent to convey respect (table 2).

I turn now to a fourth case which does not concern degrees of ritualization, but the origin of ritual. Humphrey and Laidlaw state that "ritualization begins with a particular modification of the normal intentionality of human action" (1994: 71). That is the ordinary and everyday action. I suggested that some performative rituals mostly involve the third degree of ritualization and can sometimes have small elements of nonritualized action. For example, in the above case there were some greetings or short statements which do not have ritualized characteristics. Thus some anthropologists question whether shamanic rituals are in fact rituals. Humphrey and Laidlaw comment on Atkinson that ". . . the *mabolong* shamanic rituals are part of the same process as non-ritual political contest, the authenticity of shamanic possession is not separate from non-ritual experiences of magical power" (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994: 11). Similarly, Schieffelin (1985) underlines the importance of reality, in relation to ritual performance, in his essay about Kaluli mediums. He argues that the source of performance-based rituals is conditions in everyday life and states that the compelling quality of the *séance* begins long before the performance itself (Schieffelin 1985: 712).

Returning to the discussion of ritual degrees, shamanic rituals mostly consist of the last two degrees and include nonritual components. I would suggest that the distinction between everyday action and performance-centered ritual is found in the fourth case of nonritualized acts. Liturgical rituals on the other hand consist mainly of the first and second degrees of ritualization. Distinction between performance-centered ritual and liturgy-centered ritual is based on the second degree. In general, then, there are three main conditions of action: (1) the liturgy-centered ritual condition, (2) performance-centered ritual, and (3) the

Table 2. Degrees of ritualization and their qualities

Degrees of ritualization (and nonritualization)	Main qualities	Other qualities	Examples of language use in the case of shamanic rituals
First degree of ritualization	Nonintentional Nonpropositional Text	Melodic Poetic Ancient terms	Shaman himself during trance Animal voices Shaman's praise for all deities
Second degree of ritualization	Between nonintentional & intentional Between nonpropositional & propositional Between text & inscription	Melodic Poetic Ancient terms	Shaman's invocation for particular spirit Spirit's story telling
Third degree of ritualization	Intentional Propositional Inscription	Melodic Poetic Ancient terms	Greetings Spirit's demand Testimony, phrases of the seeing off
Fourth degree of nonritualization (in ritual condition)	Intentional Propositional Inscription	Nonmelodic Nonpoetic Ordinary language	Greetings People talking to one another
Ordinary level (in everyday condition)	Intentional Propositional Inscription	Nonmelodic Nonpoetic Ordinary language	

ordinary condition. The distinctions between them are not always clear and often make them inseparable from each other. In addition, according to the above example a ritual may contain all the degrees in different proportion. Analysis of the proportion of degrees in a ritual can determine its liturgical or performative quality (table 1).

The Propositional Force of Ritual Language

A prominent feature of intention in rituals is the use of propositional force which confirms ritual language as intentional. The propositional force of intentional ritual language use differentiates performance-centered ritual from liturgy-centered ritual. Thus propositional ritual language is only found in the second and third degrees of ritualization (and in the fourth case). In this section I will show how propositional force relates to intention. I claim that linguistic propositional force occurs in different degrees according to the degree of intention and ritualization of particular actions.

It has been argued that rituals communicate through particular messages, texts, codes, signs, and symbols. For example, Humphrey and Laidlaw (1994: 73) argue against the idea that ritual is essentially communicative and expressive (in the sense of liturgical rituals), as has been suggested by anthropologists such as Maurice Bloch, Mary Douglas, James Fernandez, Clifford Geertz, Max Gluckman, Edmund Leach, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Sherry Ortner, Roy Rappaport, S. J. Tambiah, and Victor Turner. These anthropologists claim that ritual is expressive and communicative through many means, some of which are not linguistic. With these ideas in mind, I turn to the propositional force of ritual language.

Among the above different approaches to ritual communication, some are of particular concern for my theme. Rappaport (1974: 16) proposes that "canonical messages are without force, or may even seem nonsensical." Similarly, Bloch asserts that linguistic propositional force is weakened in formal ritual. He argues that as formalization of the uses of language increases, the nature of semantics changes because ordinary linguistic semantics depend on the possibility of choice, and as a result the ability of language to signify by expressing propositions is diminished. As this is diminished, the fact of using language becomes what matters, rather than what is said. Therefore according to him rituals cannot form a true argument, because they imply no

alternative (Bloch 1986: 181–182). Rappaport (1974) uses the term “canonical” for ritualization and formalization, and implies a similar idea to that of Bloch. Also, Humphrey and Laidlaw present a similar point. According to them, ritualized acts may include linguistic acts, such as saying a prayer or chanting a *mantra*, but we see no reason to accord primacy to the propositional ideas expressed in these, especially since ritualization very often obscures such ideas (the prayer may be in Latin, the *mantra* formalistically reduced to a single sound), rather than to attend to the evident fact of their being acts (of praying, of chanting, and so on) (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994: 74). All four writers refer to the nonpropositional quality of high ritualized liturgy-centered rituals. There is however another explanation for rituals which are performance-centered. For example, Bloch says “ritual language is on the way towards losing propositional force,” which implies that there are different “degrees” of the propositional force of ritual language. In comparing the degrees of ritualization defined in the previous section, the communicative character of ritual and its propositional force (in a linguistic sense) can easily be analyzed.

In this section, before I illustrate the degrees of propositional force, I will explore the propositional force of language used in shamanic performance-centered rituals. In order to show how shamanic ritual language uses propositional force, I use the work of Levi-Strauss (1963) and Carlo Severi (2000), who examine the American Indian shamanic ritual for difficult childbirths among the Kuna. Kuna people believe that the mother’s soul is captured by a bad spirit called Muu: “Thus the [shamanic] song expresses a quest: the quest for the lost *purba* [soul] which will be restored after many vicissitudes, such as the overcoming of obstacles, a victory over wild beasts, and finally, a great contest waged by the shaman and his tutelary spirits against Muu and her daughters.” (Levi-Strauss 1963: 187) The curing ritual consists mainly of chanting rather than other actions, and according to Levi-Strauss and Severi, the shaman does not even touch the patient, healing her only through chanting. Severi writes about the ritual that “action seems to play a less important role, and is replaced, through the recitation of chants, by a special use of language” (Severi 2000: 7).

The two authors examine the same ritual in different ways. Levi-Strauss, for example, connects healing in the ritual to psychology; entitling his essay “The Effectiveness of Symbols,” he argues that ritual symbols affect people. In his view, the song constitutes a *psychological*

manipulation of the sick organ, and it is precisely from this manipulation that a cure is expected (Levi-Strauss 1963: 191–192). Schieffelin argues against this through the example of the Kaluli medium’s ritual. Here we see that in order for a patient to be cured he must be asleep; thus, the chant cannot affect the patient. However, Schieffelin does not argue that the chant is meaningless and without propositional force. He claims that the chant is sung for the patient’s community (other ritual participants) rather than for the patient. Thus both Levi-Strauss and Schieffelin agree that the chant has a certain propositional force.

In contrast, Severi (2000) emphasizes the importance of the metaphorical transformation of ritual objects during the shaman’s chant—as in the case of the mother “becoming a tree,” or of the baby being transformed into a fruit (Severi 2000: 19). In addition Severi, like Levi-Strauss, writes about the “reflexivity of ritual” which “can be described as a way, for ritual action, to represent itself: its effectiveness as well as its meaning” (Severi 2000: 10). Moreover, particularly in terms of ritual language use, Severi talks about a *perlocutionary* effect, which he refers to “any effect on feelings, thoughts and actions of the recipient realised through the enunciation of a Speech Act.”

Both Levi-Strauss and Severi focus on the question “How does a ritual cure a patient?” in Kuna shamanic ritual. They do not focus explicitly on the propositional force or intention of ritual language because they take it for granted that a shaman’s chant has propositional force and can affect people, thus establishing a communication.

Shamanic ritual language has been shown to have propositional force.¹¹ We can explore the degree of propositional force in relation to the degree of ritualization. In this section I discuss language use through degrees of intention and ritualization, using the same example as in the previous section, to show the similarity between degree of proposition and intention.

In the first degree, of high ritualization in liturgy-centered ritual, as Rappaport, Bloch, and Humphrey and Laidlaw have argued, language does not have intentional or propositional force in the normal linguistic sense (excluding the idea by Bloch that a little propositional force can

¹¹ Those metaphorical forms of language such as “bleeding fruit” (birth in Kuna ritual) and “red of greeting” (tobacco in Buriat ritual) used in shamanic rituals, I suppose, have propositional force. Obviously they do not give information like ordinary language. However, they usually have fixed meanings which are publicly recognized in prior rituals.

be left as signs and symbols which are not linguistic). For example, animal voices in Mongol shamanic rituals are nonpropositional and do not express linguistic meaning, but in special circumstances—such as through signs (messenger and servant animals' voices becoming a sign that spirits are coming) or expressions of emotion (metamorphosis animals' voices expressing spirits' happiness or anger)—they do. The second degree of ritualization is characterized by both intentionality and nonintentionality. I argue that the language used in this form of ritual exists between propositional and nonpropositional form. For example, the shaman's invocation for a particular spirit illustrates this point. When the shaman sings a pre-existing song, which participants have heard before and already know, then the song is nonintentional and nonpropositional and does not provide any new information for clients. This is correct in the case of the shaman's praise for all deities, which does not change in relation to the temporary situation and has more characteristics of the first degree of ritualization. However, in the case of the shaman's invocation for a particular spirit the above idea is not completely applicable. Some parts of this kind of song can be said to be intentional, providing clients with new information, while other parts are not. Shamans change the songs, placing different emphasis on meaning and line according to the current situation (for more details see the previous section). Sometimes, the shaman has to give more information in order to make the spirit come. If the spirit is reluctant to come, the shaman informs it of the names of the clients and their problems and begs the spirit to help them. Thus, he uses intentional and propositional language, while implying nonintention and nonproposition in the chant. Comparing this example with distinction of the first degree, the song has both intentional and propositional force.

The third degree of low ritualization contains intentionality as in ordinary language, but differs from ordinary language with its other qualities of ritualization. I suggest that its propositional force should be the same as its intention. As mentioned in the previous section, dialogs in the form of chants or poems¹² illustrate this degree of ritualization. One of the main differences between chants in the third degree and in the first and second degrees is that in the first degree chants are like

¹² Here I separate chant from poem because participants (interpreter or client) talk to the spirit (the shaman) not by singing but talk in the form of a poem.

“text,” in the second degree chants are somewhere between “text” and “inscription,” and in the third degree chants are like “inscriptions.”¹³ As mentioned in the previous paragraph, most chants that take the form of the second degree do not give new information. But chants in the third degree are not in any way “pre-existing” and contain new information. In this sense, they are similar to Leo Howe’s explanation of “inscription”:

The translation of the saying into the said produces cultural objects of diverse kinds (myths, cockfights, jokes, widow burning, etc.) which are the texts to be “read” for the meaning inscribed in them. However, this formulation appears to freeze the text and endow it with a fixed meaning. But inscription is a process, and its importance lies in the fact that it is continuous. Therefore, its products are always provisional and always in the process of change as they are inscribed anew. (Howe 2000: 65)

It is helpful to make a distinction between text and inscription in order to distinguish between chants and poems in different degrees of ritualization. I suggest that the chants of the second degree are more like a text, having no or little intentional and propositional force, while the chants and poems of the third degree are more like an inscription, being wholly intentional and propositional (table 2).

We can distinguish inscription and text among Mongolian shamanic chants and sayings by using the example of ‘testimony’ (*öcil* or *öčig*) given by the client or interpreter or by the spirit through the shaman (the client informs the spirit of his trouble and asks the reason and treatment for the trouble, and the spirit tells him what to do and what happened). A client, who is himself a disciple shaman, informs his ancestral spirit through the following testimony:

¹³ Following some approaches made by Clifford Geertz and Leo Howe, I have used terms ‘inscription’ and ‘text’ in a metaphorical sense referring to ritual or part of it “held only once” and “ritual acts held more than once.” Rituals based on pure oral traditions can be classified as an ‘inscription’ (held only once) in contrast to the liturgical rituals like ‘text’ (held more than once).

I'm the youngest son, Bayaraa, of Ulaadai Dorj (*Ulaadai Dorjiin otgon khüvüün Bayaraa*)
 Here I am your red wise descendant (*Ulaan mergen khüvüü n' end bainab daa*)
 Stretching like a leader rope (*Hur met hunaja*)
 Reddening like a tamarisk (*Huhai met ulaij bainabdii*)
 Drying like wood (*Mod met khataja*)
 Molting like a snake (*Mogoi met zulmaja bainabdii*)
 Sacrificing to you as the only protector (*Tanye geje takhija*)
 Praying to you expecting that it is you (*Mön geje mürgej bainab dii*),
 Welcoming, gently like a lord (*Noyon šinjeer nomkhonoor*)
 Welcoming, warmly like a king (*Khaan šinjeer khaluuhanaar moriloj khairlagti*)
 Testify everything (*Coo khelj*)
 Reprimand with precision (*Cokhon dongodytee*).
 We have black water-eyes (*Uhan khara nüdetei*)
 We have red bloody-hearts (*Šuhan ulaan zürkhetei*)
 There was illness and suffering, and (*übdeje zovojo yavaad*)
 Good times came to my country Mongolia (*Mongol orond mini hain cag ireje*)
 Give us a chance to meet you (*Tantaigaa učirči*)
 Give us a chance to respect you (*Tanyгаа khündelje*),
 I have re-related to my ancestral spirits and (*Igeed uгаа bariad*)
 In 1990 I took my first initiation¹⁴ (*Yeren ond zalaaluulaad*),
 In 1993 I took my second initiation (*Yeren gурvan ond khojr čanaraa hiilge*),
 In August 1994 (*Yeren dörvön ony naiman harada*)
 Led by my teacher Zaarin¹⁵ Tseren (*Zaarin Tseren baavaigaaraa*)
 I made my sixth initiation (*Zurgaa dahi šanaraa бүтеелгеје*)
 This is how we met (*Ta бүгдтеігее uулзaj bainab dii*).
 Goods have become very rare nowadays (*Odoo yum khu, khovordoj*),
 We have bad clothes and goods (*Khuvtsas khunar muutai*).
 Can we postpone the next initiation for one year? (*Čanaryгаа neg jileer khüleelgevel*)
 We have gathered here to ask you about this (*Yamar ve khemeen khurnaa*).¹⁶

¹⁴ Buriat shamans do 13 initiation rituals (*čanar*) once in one or two years. Every initiation has a title, and shamans receive a certain power from their deities during each initiation.

¹⁵ After the 13th initiation shamans become the *Zaarin*, which is a title.

¹⁶ Bayaraa is a Buriat from the Eastern Mongolian province of Khentii. This quotation is from a conversation between himself and his ancestral spirit Baldakhov, through the shaman Ch. Tseren. This testimony was recorded during my fieldwork in the summer of 1995 in Dornod province, Mongolia.

Compared to the chants in the second degree, which are more between text and inscription, I suggest that this testimony is an inscription. It is provisional and contains new information for the recipients (spirit through the shaman, and other participants), information which was not mentioned before and will not be mentioned again. Therefore, like ordinary language it has propositional force. In addition, it is important to note that this inscription is part of a dialog, and the answer to the given passage is another long poetically framed statement. The poetic and melodic characters of this inscription distinguish it from nonritual language use. Having similar propositional force to nonritual language use, it is still ritualized in terms of action but not in the sense of intention and proposition; rather, in terms of being like a poem and a chant it can be classified as ritualized (table 2).

To conclude, the propositional force of ritual language can have different degrees according to degrees of intention. Intentionality and propositional force are dependent on one another for use. Moreover, intention becomes the basis of proposition. By this I mean that language cannot be nonintentional while it is propositional, or the other way around. Degrees of intention and proposition in ritual language use are dependent on and influence each other (table 2).

Conclusion

An interpretation that classifies rituals into two types does not help us to analyze Mongol shamanic rituals. Mongol shamanic rituals neither completely match type one nor type two. Therefore, instead of describing two different types of rituals, it is useful to think of different ritual actions that are in different degrees of ritualization. Degree of ritualization is therefore the fundamental motivation that makes rituals different—or, more precisely, that makes ritual actions different from one another. This is because rituals are manifest in different contexts and consist of various kinds of acts. As such, several kinds of ritual explanations are necessary to interpret a single ritual. I would like to quote a paragraph from Humphrey and Laidlaw, who define ritual as a quality, like the colour red:

In our view “ritual” is a quality which can in theory apply to any kind of action. Ritualization begins with a particular modification of the normal intentionality of

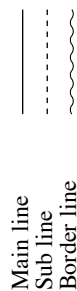
human action. Action which has undergone this modification is a ritual action. Action can be relaxed, ecstatic, communicative, or repetitive, quite independently of whether it is also a ritual; just as an object can be red, and also spherical, wobbly, expensive. Ritual action can also be religious, or not; performed by specialist, or not; performed regularly, or not; “express the social order,” or not. Just as different objects, though red, can be otherwise different, different actions, though they may be all ritual actions, need have nothing else in common. It is true that when a sequence of institutionalized actions is ritualized this is usually one of the most interesting and significant things about it, and it is natural then to call it a rite, or, “a ritual.” It will nevertheless always be a ritual “something” and what this “something” is can be very various indeed: thus there are life-cycle rituals, rituals of rebellion, imitative rites, rites of office, rites of commemoration, rites of purification, rites of affliction, worship, divination, sacrifice, naming, inaugurations, and so on. These “rituals” are as various as the action operations of which they are ritualized versions. (Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994: 71)

Exploring the variation (such as ritual action and form) and quality (such as red) of ritual, I would like to offer a small contribution to the above variational distinctions. My final comment applies to the variation of ritualization, in other words, to its variation of quality and “redness.” According to the differing degrees of ritualization, I propose that there are different *qualities* of ritualization, similar to the different qualities of redness. This variation applies both to a single ritual and to different rituals, whereby a specific ritual could contain different degrees of ritualized actions within it. Expressed in terms of redness, a ritual has a deep red somewhere and also a dull red, and elsewhere it might have shades between deep red and dull red; it could even have small white spots which represent a nonritualized action (table 3). Every ritual contains different qualities of ritualization in different ways. There can be rituals which contain only one or two of the qualities, or maybe all. Thus, rituals can be differentiated according to their qualities of ritualized actions which exist within them.¹⁷

¹⁷ For a summary of the article see table 3.

Table 3. Ritual types, degrees of ritualization, and their qualities and examples

Ritual types (conditions of action)	Degrees of ritualization (and non-ritualization)	Main qualities	Other qualities	Other qualities (metaphorical)	Examples of language use in the case of shamanic rituals
Liturgical ritual	First degree of ritualization	Nonintentional	Melodic	Deep red	Shaman himself during trance Animal voices Shaman's praise for all deities
		Nonpropositional Text Public (common)	Poetic Ancient terms		
	Second degree of ritualization	Nonintentional & intentional Nonpropositional & propositional Text & inscription Public (common) & private (individual)	Melodic Poetic Ancient terms	Deep & dull Red	Shaman's invocation for particular spirit Spirit's story telling
		Intentional Prepositional Inscription Private (individual)	Melodic Poetic Ancient terms	Dull red	Greetings Spirit's demand Testimony, phrases of the seeing off
Ordinary condition (in everyday condition)	Fourth degree of nonritualization (in ritual condition)	Intentional Propositional Inscription Private (individual)	Nonmelodic Nonpoetic Ordinary language	Rose	Greetings People talking to one another
		Intentional Propositional Inscription	Nonmelodic Nonpoetic Ordinary language	White	



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Chants and Healing Rituals of the Paiwan Shamans in Taiwan

HU TAI-LI

TAIPEI, TAIWAN

The female shamans of the Austronesian Paiwan perform in a wide spectrum of individual and communal rituals. The Paiwan shamans are characterized by chanting (marada) while in a state of ecstasy. Chanting makes it possible for a shaman to meet ancestral spirits and to be possessed by them, so that she utters their words. The chants of Paiwan shamans from the southern Taiwanese village Kulalao consist of a basic structure as well as a fixed and ancient oral text. Shamans chant in more advanced and important rituals which are often combined with the killing and offering of pigs. The various stages of Paiwan Kulalao healing rituals, for example, reveal the causes of illness, exchanges between human beings and the spirits, and the essence and power of chants. Due to the strong effect of the Paiwan shamans' ritual chants on enhancing spiritual power to overcome illness and other evil influences for the individual and the village, Paiwan leaders of the noble class rely on shamans to maintain their authority and strive to maintain the tradition of shamans and their ritual chants.

Roberte N. Hamayon (1994: 76) states that shamanism is only present as an all-embracing system in archaic, tribal, or non-centralized societies, while in centralized societies shamanism is peripheral or even opposed to the central authorities. In Taiwan there are around 494,000 indigenous people of Austronesian linguistic stock—about 2% of the total population (2008 statistics). Currently, 14 indigenous groups have been recognized by the government of the Republic of China. Shamanism was once prevalent in many indigenous groups such as the Paiwan, Amis, and Puyuma, but it was suppressed by the Japanese colonial government from 1895 to 1945 and has continued to be suppressed by Christian churches in recent decades. Nonetheless, I find that in the stratified society of the Paiwan, shamanic ideology and practices have

persistently occupied a central position, affecting all aspects of Paiwan culture in some contemporary villages. My field site, the Kulalao village in the Pingtung County of southern Taiwan, is one of them.

Paiwan society is divided into nobles (the chiefs and their families) and commoners. Succession in the Paiwan family is through the eldest child, whether male or female. Although male priests (*paraingan/parakalai*) practice rituals concerned with hunting and village defense, they recite prayers only to spirits and have no direct connection with gods or ancestors. Only female shamans of the Paiwan can communicate directly with spirits. One cannot become a shaman without learning the chants (*marada*) and without being initiated into the chanting of other shamans. As such, northern Paiwan shamans are called *marada* 'those who chant'; among the central and eastern Paiwan, she is called *piringau* (*ringau* means 'souls', so she is the 'one who communicates with souls').

In some societies, such as the Wakuenai in Venezuela, the main function of shamans is healing the sick (Hill 1993). In others, such as the Siberian Nenets, the work of shamans extends from healing and prophesying to searching for lost things (Khomič 1978: 245). In Taiwan, healing is the most common task of shamans in all indigenous cultures. In addition to healing, Paiwan, Amis, and Puyuma shamans also perform rituals dealing with everyday life and the village. Paiwan shamans, however, are responsible for performing the most extensive activities at both the individual and communal levels. In Kulalao village, shamans practice a wide variety of rituals, from the magnificent communal five-year ceremony (*maleveq*), the yearly seeding and harvesting ceremonies, the headhunting ritual (which has been replaced by the military service ritual), to individual healing, growth, and funeral rituals.

Toward the end of the 1980s, only two shamans, Muakai Tjakivarit (born in 1923) and Laerep Pasasaev (born in 1927), were left in Kulalao village. Although Muakai carried out rituals for the chief family Tjiluvekan and Laerep for the chief family Girhing, they also performed rituals for other villagers. It is said that under Japanese colonial rule the government prohibited the initiation of shamans, but the Kulalao elders continued to do so in secret. Muakai was one of those initiated. Laerep's initiation was performed after the Chinese Nationalist government took over rule of Taiwan in 1945. There was a long period in the 1970s and 1980s when no new shamans were initiated. In 1994, Laerep suddenly stopped performing rituals for the chief family Girhing because Chief Serep of the Girhing family did not support Laerep's son's bid

to become town mayor. Serep was so concerned that she financially supported the initiation of Keleng Tjadraqadian (born in 1936) as a shaman. In 2003, Muakai fell very ill. The Tjiluvekan chief Kalaikail persuaded and assisted Keleng Tjapalai (born in 1942) to arrange an initiation ceremony. Muakai passed away in 2006. In 2008, Keleng Tjadraqadian's daughter Lau Ringtau (born in 1964) became a shaman after being initiated. At present Kulalao village has four shamans who perform rituals. Chanting can still be heard quite often.

In this paper I will examine the Paiwan Kulalao shamans' chants, exemplified by healing rituals, to illustrate the power and main characteristics of the chants of Paiwan shamans, the causes of illness, the concept of exchanges between human beings and spirits, and the symbiosis between chief and shaman.

Chanting with Ecstasy

When a Paiwan shaman from Kulalao performs a ritual, she always starts with the first part (*qemizing*), reciting the text (*tjautjau*) to dispel evil. As she enters the second part (*rhemasuj*), if the ritual is more advanced and important, she chants the text. While both the recited and chanted texts are ancient and rather fixed, the latter is more elaborate in structure and content. The Kulalao shaman's chant consists of a fixed main text called the "*jajuratan*" and a changeable text known as the "*patideq*" inserted into certain locations of the fixed text to describe the main purpose of that specific ritual.

The basic structure of Kulalao shaman chants is called "The road of the shaman chants" (*jaran nua rada*) and consists of eight chapters:

- I. *Si patagil = tjesazazatj* (beginning)
- II. *Papetsevutsevung* (meeting)
- III. *Vavurangan* (creating and founding spirits)
 1. *Qumaqan* (house)
 2. *Lemej* (the founder of rituals)
 3. *Drumetj* (the founder of the first house)
 4. *Naqemati, linamuritan* (the life creator and the assisting female creator of life)
 5. *Tjararhaus* (the first male priest)
 6. *Qinalan* (village)
- IV. *Dravadrava = saraj* (ancestral shamans)
 1. *Nametsevutsevung* (meeting)

- 2. *Sisuararap* = *Sarhekuman* (dispelling)
- 3. *Tsatsunan* (exhorting)
- V. *Lingasan* (announcing)
 - 1. *Kumali* (connecting)
 - 2. *Qumaqan* (house)
 - 3. *Puqaiqaiam* (the bird)
- VI. *Puqaiqaiam* (the bird)
 - 1. *Tjakuling* (the hunting ancestor Tjakuling)
 - 2. *Druluan* (the stammering ancestor Druluan)
- VII. *Marhepusausau* (farewell)
- VIII. *Kauladan* (ending)

When the Paiwan Kulalao shaman chants, she is on the “road” where she meets ancestral figures and falls into a trance. Paiwan shaman chanting is characterized by chanting while in a state of ecstasy.

It should be noted that the chanting performances of Paiwan shamans are not as dramatic as those of Siberian (Diószegi and Hoppál 1978) or Korean shamans (Walraven 1994). When the Kulalao shaman begins to chant, she sits quietly with a cluster of mulberry leaves in her hand. In the first chapter (*si patagil*), as the shaman chants “*Ui pa ki tajarani aken; pa ki taveraki aken*” (Yes, come to the road that I am on and teach me), she closes her eyes and shakes the mulberry leaves. She then goes on to chant: “*A qadau, a ki puravan, a ki vusukan, a ki patengetengi anan, a na metsevtsevang anga itjen, na ma pazazukezuckerh anga...*” (The sun, makes me drunk, causing me to be intoxicated, to chant, and to fall into a trance. We have met, we have faced each other...) She then enters a state of ecstasy referred to as *tjetju tsemas*, literally, ‘inhabited by the spirits, to deliver the spirits’ messages’. The shaman stops shaking her hand and opens her eyes after she finishes the last chanting chapter “*kauladan*.” Although the voices and tempo of the shaman’s chants reveal various characteristics of the possessed spirits, the spirits do not express strong emotions in chanting, nor do they interact or dialog with the audience, except in the calling back of the dead ritual (*zemara*). A Kulalao shaman told me that when she undergoes *tjetju tsemas*, she can’t see or hear anything outside of herself. If several shamans chant together, they chant the first and second chapters together, then divide into two or three teams chanting different chapters in the middle to shorten the time, and again chant together during the final two chapters (pl. 1 a).

The Paiwan Kulalao shaman, unlike the Puyuma shaman (Cauquelin 2004, 2008) or the Korean shaman (Walraven 1994), doesn’t have to get

sick to become a shaman. She is either born with a sacred bead (*zaqu*),¹ indicating her selection by ancestral spirits, or is simply from a family with shamans in its history. The process of finding a shaman teacher for an apprentice is similar to that of finding a wife. The apprentice has to offer expensive betrothal gifts, including several pigs, two jars of wine, and betel nuts, to the teacher to learn the knowledge and practices of the shaman (Hu 1999). If an apprentice is already married, she has to temporarily “divorce” her husband and perform a “remarrying” ritual after she has become an independent shaman.

When undergoing initiation rituals, if the Kulalao shaman apprentice proves that she can chant while in a state of ecstasy and a sacred bead appears during the chanting ritual (*kipatengeteng*), then she is allowed to undergo the formal initiation ritual (*remingejel*). Of the eight chanting chapters, the most difficult and valuable is chapter five (*lingasan*). Before her formal shaman initiation ceremony, the apprentice has to buy *lingasan* with three to five bunches of hemp from the Qamulil, the family of the founder of rituals Lemej. Hemp (*rekerek*) represents the spiritual road, linking this world to the ancestral world.

According to Kulalao legend, Lemej, the younger brother of the founder of Kulalao, Drumetj, met the woman Drengerh descending to this world from the life creator Naqemati’s abode and made several appointments with her to visit the ancestral world, which he would do by following the smoke of burning millet stalk. Lemej not only learned all the rituals, but also married Drengerh, who gave birth to four daughters and one son. Later, Lemej brought all his children to this world and built a house called Qamulil. The girls Lerem, Saverh, Jengets, and Lian learned the shamanic chants from their mother Drengerh and became shamans themselves. The only son, Tjararhaus, became the first priest. Origins such as these are strongly emphasized in Paiwan culture. The spirits that appear and speak in shamanic chants are mostly creating and founding spirits, along with two personified and protective figures—the house (*qumaqan*) and the village (*qinalan*). The ancient and fixed chants using these spirits’ names and words serve as strong evidence of their origins.

On the day of the formal shamanic initiation ritual, all the village shamans gather, chanting and shaking mulberry leaves and hemp fibers held

¹ The sacred bead (*zaqu*) is the nutlet of a *Sapindus saponaria* plant.

in their hands. The apprentice crawls on the floor, making five circles under a bridge made by two piles of baskets connected by sugarcane and hemp cloth. Near the end of the last circle, the apprentice faints and is awakened by her teacher. In the process, if another sacred bead appears in the hemp cloth under the apprentice's arm, it indicates that she has indeed been chosen by the ancestral spirits to be a shaman. During the final outdoor *pakiarharh* ritual, a third sacred bead appears on a ceremonial plate. The three sacred beads serve different functions. One is for divination in village communal ceremonies, another is for divination in healing rituals, and the third is a charm used in the ritual for accidental deaths (pl. 1 b).

Chanting, Pig Offerings, and Healing Rituals

In each category of rites performed by Kulalao shamans, there are both basic and advanced rituals. The shaman chants in more advanced and important rituals which often require the slaughter of a pig and offerings. For example, in the growth ritual series, the shaman only recites the ritual text in the first newborn baby ritual (*seman qinatian*) and the second childhood ritual (*seman vuruvurung*). Only in the final youth ritual (*patseqelap*) is chanting performed. The series of healing rituals (*seman saqetjuan*) in Kulalao village provides another example. Likewise, ritual chanting and the killing of pigs appear in more advanced stages.

The first and simplest stage of healing rituals is known as *patsevung* and is used to expel the evil. In it, only reciting is performed. The shaman moves her hand over the patient's body from head to foot to remove bad things and puts them on the mulberry leaves on the floor in front of the patient's feet (*semuarap*). The bad things appearing in the shaman's hand in the form of items like a small stone, a piece of wood, or a piece of wood coal are removed and placed on the mulberry leaves, and suggest the reason for the illness. If the bad thing resembles human skin, it is quite likely that the patient is loved by someone in the ancestral world and this causes an entanglement of sorts. The shaman also scratches the patient's body with a small ritual knife to expel evil. She then recites ritual text and makes offerings to the ancestral spirits. Finally, she places a set of offerings containing pieces of pig bone and mulberry leaves on the patient's head to enhance his/her spiritual power (*ruqem*).

The second and more advanced stage of healing rituals is known as *tsemevul* 'to call back the soul'. In it, both reciting and chanting

are performed. The night before the soul-calling ritual, the shaman performs a simple ritual (*temaga*) to awaken the patient's lost soul. At dawn, she first recites the text indoors, then goes outdoors waving a burning millet stalk three times in a beckoning motion to call the soul back. When the patient's soul returns, it enters the pork fat on the ritual plate. The shaman scratches out the soul, which shows up as a black dot on the pork fat, with a small ritual knife and moves her hand over the patient's body from head to toe three times to replace his soul. The shaman then starts chanting, while shaking an offering of mulberry leaves and pork bones in her right hand above the patient's head. She chants to reunite soul and body, enhance the spiritual power of the patient's body and soul, and request good fortune.

The third and more effective stage of healing rituals is *patje ringau*. It is used to enhance a patient's spiritual power (*ruqem*). For example, an old man by the name of Qavas continued to feel ill after undergoing an appendectomy in a hospital. His family told me that it was because he was the last living sibling of his generation and the deceased members of his family missed him so much that they caused his spiritual power to decrease, making him sick. Furthermore, wandering bad spirits had further weakened his spiritual power, causing him to "lose his life colors." His family asked the Kulalao shaman Muakai to perform the advanced healing ritual (*patje ringau*) for Qavas.

A large pig was killed as an offering and the shaman performed the chant. Once the parts of the dead pig needed as an offering were prepared, the patient was seated in front of it and the shaman started the first ritual section, reciting the text to expel evil. Laerep then performed the main ritual section, chanting all eight chapters in their entirety.

During the fourth chanting chapter (*dravadrava*), when the shaman chanted the second section (*sisuaraarap/sarhekuman*), the double-faced ancestral spirit Sarhekuman—who helped the creator Naqemati to create human beings but sometimes created bad things—appeared with the ancestral shamans, the dog, and the sacred bead to expel the bad. After chanting "*Ui arhadai anan aia ken, la rhesadan Sarhekuman dremekaian tja si uralingan, tja si ligedevan kinuda tsu ni mamarau ni makurung, ni masepel . . .*" (Yes, we have to go and see through this channel that the unwise, amazing, and lonely Sarhekuman will drive out the bad . . .), the shaman moved her hands forward three times while chanting "Hu! Hu! Hu!" to expel the bad and evil. Toward the end of this healing ritual, Laerep put an offering consisting of mul-

berry leaves and important portions of the pig bones on the patient's head to enhance his spiritual power (pl. 2 *a*).

Another advanced stage of healing rituals is called *pakivadaq* and involves using a sacred bead to divine reasons for illnesses and the offerings needed for them. The Kulalao shaman chants three sections (*qumaqan*, *lemej*, and *qinalan*) of the third chapter *vavurungan*, then asks the reasons for the illness by moving the sacred bead on a calabash gourd. She asks if the patient or any family member has offended the ancestral figures in certain locations, including (1) the house (*qumaqan*), in which the most sacred place is the millet storage area or other important parts of the house; (2) the village (*qinalan*), along with several significant components; and (3) forbidden places (*lerem*), fields or the mountains where certain ancestors dwell. If the sacred bead does not stop on the gourd for any of these reasons, the shaman asks whether the patient is loved by someone in the ancestral world. Illness resulting from this cause is called *mapusujusuju* (pl. 2 *b*).

After learning the reason for an illness, the shaman continues to ask through the sacred bead what kind of offering should be prepared: a small living pig, a large pig, or preserved pig bones. For *mapusujusuju*, the illness caused by a patient being loved by someone in the other world, the shaman has to prepare extra offerings of a pair of small cloth icons (*kakakaka*, representing the patient) with floral loops (*velangau*), small rolls of clothes and beads, and certain parts of a pig. This is then taken outside of the village to the eastern and western sides for the good and the bad spirits, respectively, because they do not know whether the entangling spirit is good or bad.² Using this ritual, they hope that the spirit who has fallen in love with the patient will accept the offerings and be shamed (*masiaq*) into leaving the patient. After the ritual of separation, the shaman performs the ritual once again to enhance the patient's spiritual power.

The Power of Chant

Paiwan Kulalao shamans both recite and chant. But why is chanting more powerful and effective than reciting? It is only while chanting

² The bad spirits in Paiwan are those that died in accidents outside their village. Offerings for bad spirits are placed on the west side.

that Paiwan shamans arrive on the road connecting this world to the ancestral world and become possessed by the creating and founding spirits who can provide defensive spiritual power and good fortune to human beings. For example, in the chanting chapter entitled *vavurungan*, the ancestral male priest Tjagarhaus chants that he has very strong spiritual power and can give it to people. The unique male ancestral figure Sarhekuman shows up along with ancestral shamans, the dog, and the sacred bead in the *dravadrava* chanting chapter to expel evil. In the most difficult and valuable *lingasan* chapter, three ancestral figures of the same soul and language announce that they can bring abundant amounts of animals to the people.

As a matter of fact, all Paiwan rituals, including the healing rituals, are aimed at obtaining spiritual power and good fortune. Chanting with expensive pig offerings gives one a better chance of obtaining spiritual power and good fortune. Laerep, a knowledgeable Kulalao shaman from ritual founder Lemej's family Qamulil, explains that spiritual power (*ruqem*) originated from the creator Naqemati. A person with strong *ruqem* has it bestowed on them by the creator at creation. Ordinary people have to pray constantly in rituals to obtain *ruqem*. Once they obtain it, they can resist bad spirits and repel all external invasions. Without *ruqem*, they "lose their color" and energy and become weak. They are easily invaded, ridiculed, and controlled by bad spirits.

In some communities, such as the Baruya, the shaman has to accumulate within himself powers and free his own spirit in a trancelike state to find the patient's spirit and reintroduce it into the patient's body or to discover and extract magical objects placed there by evil spirits (Godelier 1986: 116–117). The Paiwan Kulalao shaman neither builds up her own power nor operates her own spirit to heal patients or harm others; rather, she relies on creating and founding spirits to bestow and enhance defensive spiritual power to achieve healing.

As long as she knows how to chant, the Kulalao shaman doesn't have to worry too much about the efficacy of rituals, unlike Korean shamans (Kendall 1996) or Siberian shamans (Hamayon 1994: 81). The Siberian shaman's power is strictly dependent on his efficacy, and he will be replaced by the community if he fails to obtain game from the animal spirits. The Paiwan shaman is not blamed, nor does she lose her position or authority, if a ritual she performs does not produce the hoped-for results. In Kulalao chanting rituals, creating and founding spirits always appear and chant the same text with the same rhythm. Kulalao shamans

and villagers can keep on requesting *ruqem* and *sepi* through rituals, but whether or not they actually obtain spiritual power is completely up to the founding spirits, especially the creator Naqemati. Paiwan Kulalao shamans have no control over the creating and founding spirits.

In addition, the Siberian shaman makes exchanges with animal spirits of his/her surroundings for the purpose of obtaining as much (good fortune) as quickly as possible, while allowing as little (human vitality) to be returned as possible. The portion that is returned is to be returned as slowly as possible (Hamayon 1994: 81). The Paiwan shaman, on the other hand, makes ordinary offerings while reciting text, or she makes expensive offerings while chanting on behalf of villagers in exchange for hoped-for but not guaranteed spiritual power and good fortune from the ancestral spirits. The mentality and attitude of the Paiwan shaman while making exchanges with the ancestral spirits are different from those of the Siberian shaman. The Paiwan shaman is quite humble and uncertain whether the offering will result in a good return. If the villagers have encountered serious problems, the Paiwan shaman will suggest that they prepare the expensive pig offering and then perform the chanting rituals with the expectation that the ancestral spirits can be moved to provide more good fortune and spiritual power in return. In other words, in chanting rituals, offering a large pig to the creating and founding spirits is an exchange that carries with it expectations but no guarantees. It is believed that an expensive offering and a direct encounter with spirits through chanting can get a better return. There are hierarchical relations between ancestral spirits and the living (shamans and the villagers). In fact, similar hierarchical relations exist between the Paiwan chief and the commoners. The creating and founding spirits are expected to be helpful and sympathetic in much the same way that a commoner expects this kind of attitude from a Paiwan chief.

The Paiwan chiefs' power and authority lie mainly in their ability to realize the commoners' expectations of them and to carry out rituals to obtain and secure *ruqem* and *sepi* bestowed on the entire village by ancestral spirits through shamans as mediums. Each chief has a head shaman (*kataringan*) who is designated to carry out rituals for his family and the village.

In villages where Christianity has not taken root, Paiwan chiefs have been concerned with the problems of shamanic succession and the power of chants, and are often willing to invest a great deal in

the initiation of their designated shamans. Shamans are respected and important figures who help to maintain the essence of hierarchical Paiwan society.

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The Korean Shamanistic Ritual and Psychoanalysis

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It is interesting to note that uneducated Korean shamans (mudang) were applying the same principle as Freudian psychoanalysis long before its advent. This paper discusses similarities and differences between the techniques used by Freudian psychoanalysts and mudang, through comparing case studies of Freud's female patient and a mudang's female client. Mudangs' techniques differ from those of psychoanalysts who cure through one-to-one talking sessions in that their healing is carried out through impromptu public drama skilfully instigated by them, in which the repressed feelings are revealed and clarified. Being spontaneous and highly entertaining, their method can produce a dramatic success.

Introduction

This paper discusses similarities and differences between the principles and techniques used by modern psychoanalysts and Korean shamans (*mudang*) to cure patients, through examining two case histories, one Korean and the other one of Freud's patients. The Korean case is of a woman in her thirties, who started getting ill immediately after her cantankerous mother-in-law's death following a long sickness, and Freud's patient was suffering from delusions of jealousy about her faithful husband's imagined affair with a young woman. Interesting parallels can be drawn between them.

First, there is a need for a brief discussion of what psychoanalysis involves and what happens in the Korean shamanistic ritual, called *kut*. There are mainly two different types of psychoanalysis currently in use, namely psychoanalysis which takes long and frequent sessions of treatment, and psychoanalytic or psychodynamic therapy, which is

a shorter version aimed at a specific purpose, involving less time and expense. The healing method used in the Korean shamanistic ritual (*kut*) resembles the second category, i.e. psychoanalytic therapy. It is interesting to note how uneducated Korean shamans were applying the same principles ages before the advent of the Freudian theories.

Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis, founded by Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) in Vienna in the 1890s, and further developed by Carl Jung (1875–1961), Melanie Klein (1882–1960), Anna Freud (1895–1982), Donald Winnicott (1896–1971), Jacques Lacan (1901–1981), Hyman Spotnitz (1908–2008), et al. has firmly established itself in mainstream medicine despite various critiques of its theories and efficacy over the years.

It is based on the premise that people repress feelings too painful or socially inappropriate in the unconscious mind, which can cause neurotic disorders and symptoms, such as panic, phobias, convulsions, obsessions, compulsions and depression, sexual dysfunction, various relationship problems, a wide variety of personality disorders such as painful shyness, meanness, obnoxiousness, workaholism, hyperemotionality, hyperfastidiousness, hypersedutiveness, etc. Freud (1900/1997, 1973) posited that most of such thoughts and feelings were sexually orientated, which was subsequently refuted by some of his followers, including Carl Jung (1949; Jung and Kerényi 1959), his initial ally, disciple and friend.

Many sophisticated theories have evolved from the early days of Freud, who himself developed his original theory further into the topographic theory which divides the mental apparatus into the systems of conscious, pre-conscious and unconscious, and then replacing it with the structural theory, according to which the human mind consists of “id,” “ego” and “superego.” Other theories, some of which were first suggested by Freud and refined and developed further by various others, include Ego Psychology (Kernberg 1975), Conflict Theory (Brenner 1982, 2006; Blackman 2003), Object Relations Theory (Spitz 1965; Mahler et al. 1975; Klein 1998; Sayers 2000), Self Psychology (Kohut 1979, 1982), Lacanian Psychoanalysis, Interpersonal Psychoanalysis (Sullivan 1953; Fromm-Reichmann 1960), Relational Psychoanalysis (Mitchell 1983), Intersubjective Psychoanalysis (Atwood and Stolorow 1984) and modern psychology which includes group therapy, developed by Hyman Spotnitz

(1961, 1969) and his colleagues. Detailed critical analyses of those theories are beyond the scope of this paper, but what is relevant is that the basic principle of the existence of the “unconscious” and the important role it plays on people’s mental lives has remained the same. The psychoanalyst identifies “the beast in man” hidden deep in his unconscious which causes mental health problems, using such methods as “free association”, the interpretation of dreams and “parapraxes,” etc, and through abreaction, attempts to solve the analysand’s problem.

According to Freud (1963/1973: 289–290), an important difference between psychiatry and psychoanalysis is that while the former diagnoses and prognoses neurosis by investigating the patient’s family history and his/her predisposition to it by hereditary transmission, the latter analyzes his/her unconscious and identifies the hidden repressed feelings and wishes, even unknown to the patient, which lie at the root of the problem. However, these days a distinction between the two seems to be somewhat blurred, the two terms being used to mean the same thing (Torrey 1986), or psychoanalytic methods being used in psychiatry. Because the patient often shows a strong resistance to exposing his or her repressed feelings, as we shall see later in the case of one of Freud’s many short-term patients, the treatment requires a long period of regular sessions, demanding great financial and physical commitment of the analysand. Classical analysis usually requires three to five sessions of 50 minutes per week and on average may last 5.7 years (according to Wikipedia). For treatments for a specific purpose, such as Brief Psychodynamic Therapy (BPT), Brief Relational Therapy (BRT) and Time-Limited Dynamic Therapy (TLDT), 20–30 sessions or less are required. In most states of the USA, unlike Ontario and in Germany, classical psychoanalysis is not covered by health insurance, so costs involved could be negotiated. In the UK, psychodynamic therapy, not to mention lengthy psychoanalysis, is rarely on the NHS (National Health Service), patients being usually treated by clinical psychologists.

An important feature of classical psychoanalysis is that it is conducted on an individual basis, usually in private, the analyst sitting nearby but hidden from the view of the analysand who lies relaxed on a couch, so that the latter can freely talk to the former with minimal self-consciousness or embarrassment. Thus it is often described as a “talking cure.” Although single-patient sessions remain the norm, recently the group therapy, developed by Spotnitz, and the play therapy for children are also used. Also studies have been done on cultural variations which come into play in therapy techniques (e.g. Thompson and Mullahy 1951).

Korean Shamanism and the Cure through *Kut*

Evidence, such as petroglyphs and cave paintings, shows that shamanism has been in existence since at least the Palaeolithic Age, although the phenomenon that gave it its name was first introduced to the West in the seventeenth century by Russian travellers to Siberia. Various evidence, such as tomb murals and other archaeological finds (Hogarth 1999), suggests that shamanism has been an integral part of Korean culture from the ancient times.

There exists a poem (Yi Kyubo [1241–1242/1982]), describing Korean shamanistic practices, in more or less the present form, which dates back to the thirteenth century, which clearly shows that even that early in Korean history shamanistic practices were already condemned by the government authorities who were mostly literati. The author of the poem, a top government minister, celebrates the expulsion of his neighbour, a *mudang*, out of the capital. In that poem, he criticizes and laughs at the absurdity and irrationality of the shamanistic practices and the benighted multitude who were the clients of the *mudang*. However, historical records suggest that despite the strong official persecution, the government occasionally made use of *mudang*'s services. For example, there is occasional mention of *mudang* being recruited to pray for rain during long spells of drought and the healing and divination by them in Koryŏsa (The History of the Koryŏ Kingdom),¹ and during the Chosŏn dynasty, while it was officially persecuted, the government set up a health department called Sŏngsuchŏng and a charity hospital called Hwarinwŏn which employed *mudang* for curing illnesses (Yi Nŭnghwa 1927/1991; Yu 1975; Hogarth 1999: 315–317).

In pre-modern Korea, before the advent of modern medicine and technology, the most important function of the *kut* was curing illnesses which were believed to be caused by malignant spirits (Yi Nŭnghwa 1927/1991; Akamatsu and Akiba 1938/1991; Akiba 1950/1987; Kim T'aegon 1981; Hogarth 1998, 1999). The *kut* is essentially based on the principle of reciprocity (Hogarth 1998), in which various gods and spirits, both benevolent and malignant, are treated to good food, drink, entertainment and more recently gifts of money, so that they would bestow the same on its sponsors. The illness-causing malignant spirits are placated and treated

¹ For details see: Hogarth 1999: 297–300.

to good things in life, binding them to Maussian (1950/1990) obligation to receive and reciprocate. If any of the gods and spirits bear grief and grievances themselves, they are dispelled by abreaction, i.e. bringing them out in the open and experiencing catharsis through tears. That is why interestingly the Korean shamanistic pantheon includes some historical characters and culture heroes who lived turbulent lives and met tragic ends (Hogarth 1998). Therefore, an indispensable feature of the *kut* is the copious tears shed by all those present, human or spiritual (Yi Nūnghwa 1927/1991; Akamatsu and Akiba 1938/1991; Akiba 1950/1987; Kim T'aegon 1981; Hogarth 1998, 1999). Tears are misinterpreted by some (e.g. Kim Yōlgyu 1977) who claim that the *kut* is basically a sad mournful event, but they overlook the fact that tears are cathartic and help dissipate grief (Hogarth 1998: 84).

One of the lengthiest and the most important part of a *kut* is that dedicated to the sponsor's ancestors, in which the spirits of her/his agnatic kin make appearances through possessed *mudang*. Just before the beginning of a *kut*, *mudang* has a short consultation session with the sponsor, and through various questions sort out the ancestors that played a significant part in his/her life before their death. Clothes for each ancestral spirit, usually in the form of a gift of a new set of clothes in his or her favourite colour and style, are provided by the sponsor, which are worn by *mudang* for each relevant part. When the ancestral spirits appear, they have a heart-to-heart talk directly with the sponsor, which can reveal hidden feelings of resentment, grievances, accusations, dissatisfaction, unfulfilled desires and wishes, etc, which were left unsaid before their death for various reasons such as social unacceptability or inappropriateness. This part dedicated to ancestral spirits, called *chosang p'uri*, mostly resembles the method used by psychoanalysis. It is a group therapy session when all the participants, living or dead, vent their repressed feelings, and experience catharsis through copious tears. Any discord, disagreement, or animosity is dissolved and the all the discordant parties are reconciled. Therefore reconciliation (*hwahae*) is a word that often crops up in *kut*.

Nowadays, however, *kut* are rarely performed for purely curing purposes, *mudang* advising their clients to go to hospital for somatic diseases, while undertaking healing *kut* to cure inexplicable illnesses, which are beyond modern medicine. From my observation it would seem that what they cure effectively are psycho-somatic illnesses, as we shall see in a Korean case history later.

A *kut* is a party, in which all the participants, i.e. gods, spirits which include sponsors' ancestral spirits and wandering malignant ghosts, officiating *mudang* and spectators, have a good time. Even a most private *kut* involves a fair number of people, hence a community spirit is very much in evidence. The atmosphere of *kut* is like that of any party, colourful, exuberant, intoxicatingly enjoyable to all those present: bright primary colours and loud music predominate, inhibitions being largely discarded. People talk, laugh, cry freely and through abreaction experience catharsis. Performance is an inherent part of a *kut*, the sponsor(s) taking part in the psycho-drama, as well as the gods and spirits in the form of officiating *mudang* through possession. Schechner (1977; 1988; Schechner and Appel 1990) distinguishes ritual and performance, but *kut* does not easily fit in with his theory, being both ritual and performance. The enjoyment of dramatic performances produces endorphin in the brain, and has the same effect as taking an anti-depressant.

As in psychoanalysis, in shamanism theoreticians and practitioners are the same people, hence there are almost as many theories as there are practitioners. In Korea, there are currently more than 135,000 practising *mudang* in South Korea (Hogarth 1998: 97), and therefore there are variations in *kut*, depending on the region and the group they belong to. Also they tend to go along with the times, and introduce various new gods and spirits, so small variations are endless. However, the basic principles of *kut* remain the same.

Psychoanalysis and *Kut*

The principle underpinning these two seemingly vastly different methods of curing is surprisingly similar, although there are significant differences between them. We shall discuss similarities and differences by closely examining two cases, one a Korean case, and the other one of Freud's patient.

A KOREAN CASE

A *kut* was sponsored by a 35-year-old woman, with the financial help of her mother, to send off her recently deceased mother-in-law's spirit to the other world. She had looked after the cantankerous old woman who had been an extremely difficult patient during her protracted terminal

sickness. When she finally died, the daughter-in-law strangely started feeling very ill, having severe headaches and being unable to eat or sleep well, despite her newly gained freedom from the gruelling daily routine of caring for a terminal patient on top of her already heavy workload as a wife and mother. As the doctors at the hospital could not find anything wrong with her, she was convinced that the spirit of her recently dead mother-in-law was causing her illness which would eventually kill her. So as a final resort, her mother took her to a *mudang*, who told them that her mother-in-law's newly departed restless spirit was indeed the cause of her illness, and that she would be cured if they held a *kut* to placate it.

A PATIENT OF FREUD

A well-preserved lady of 53 was brought to Freud for treatment by her son-in-law, a dashing officer who was on leave, because of her irrational behaviour, accusing her husband, the prosperous owner of a factory, of having an affair with a young female employee. Theirs having been a love match 30 years before, her husband had always been faithful to her, but it would seem that the imagined infidelity was more or less instigated by herself. About a year before, she confided to her maid that what would cause her the biggest pain would be for her husband to have an affair with a younger woman. The maid happened to harbour secret envy and antagonism towards one of her school friends who had done so much better in life than she had, having gained a responsible position in the lady's husband's factory through commercial training and vacancies that occurred because of men being called to the military service. The next day the maid wrote her employer an anonymous letter in disguised handwriting informing her of her husband's affair with the girl in the factory, which never took place in reality. It triggered off her irrational neurotic behaviour, although both she and her husband knew what had happened and sacked the maid and kept the falsely accused girl. But whenever she saw or heard about the girl, she made herself so miserable that the happiness of the family was disturbed.

Prima facie, the above two cases have nothing in common, but the methodology of their curing processes is intriguingly similar. The Korean case was effectively cured by a *kut*, and the Freudian case was dealt with through two psychoanalytic sessions. Let us briefly examine what happened during their respective curing processes.

THE KOREAN CASE

The *kut* lasted about 12 hours with a short lunch break in the middle of it. The usual array of important shamanistic gods appeared through the possessed *mudang*, and promised the patient that they would help her. There followed the spirits of her agnatic kin, the last of which was the climax of the *kut*, the confrontation between the patient and the spirit of her mother-in-law via the possessed *mudang*.

When “the mother-in-law” appeared, the mother of the patient leapt at the *mudang* who was possessed by the dead woman’s spirit accusing her of unimaginable cruelty towards her daughter before dying. This kind of direct confrontation rarely occurs in reality, since in-laws are usually very civil to one another in Korean society, keeping a respectable distance between them. “The mother-in-law” apologized to the old woman profusely, and turning to “her daughter-in-law” and tenderly holding her hand said, “I was in so much pain I had to take it out on somebody, and unfortunately you had to bear the brunt, as you were always there for me. I realize now how much you must have suffered. Although I bullied you beyond endurance, I loved and cherished you more than anyone, apart from my own son. Please forgive me, and I promise I’ll give you good fortune and happiness.”

At this the younger woman started crying and said, “Oh, mother, I don’t deserve your kind words. I am the one who caused your death, by wishing every day you’d die and relieve me of my suffering. How could I have such wicked thoughts? I’m indeed the most unfilial wretch that ever lived.”

“The mother-in-law” said, “I do understand how you, such a gentle dutiful woman, must have felt to have such extreme thoughts. No, no, you are not to blame; it was my fault for having made your life a living hell.” The younger woman threw herself in the mother-in-law/possessed *mudang*’s arms and the two of them cried their eyes out. The mother of the patient joined in, and all three wept until their eyes became all red and swollen. Then it was time for “the mother-in-law” to depart the scene.

It would appear then that the young woman was projecting her “guilty” wish for her mother-in-law’s death on the older woman’s spirit, i.e. the latter wanted to kill her through spite. As a woman who had been brought up with the conception that filial piety is the supreme human virtue (Yi Nūnghwa 1926/1990: 484; Lee 1975; Ch’oe 1981), this idea must have been most abhorrent, so she must have repressed it and hidden it in her unconscious mind, which was causing the inexplicable illness in her. After being

reassured by the person causing her guilty complex that it was an understandable feeling under the circumstances, her gratitude and relief released her from the burden of guilt and eventually cured her illness.

After the *kut*, both the young woman and her mother told me (the author of this paper) that they felt as though a great weight had been lifted from their hearts (*kasüm-i shiwõnhada*), and a few days later the *mudang* in charge told me the woman was completely cured.

Freud's Psychoanalytic Session

The patient lay on the now famous couch looking at the ceiling, with Freud sitting next to her, out of her view and listening. She at first told him the background story, and whatever was in her mind. Gradually Freud would delve into her unconscious mind, digging out the repressed feelings, through such methods as free association, interpretation of dreams, etc. What Freud found, despite the patient's initial resistance was that the woman harboured a strong love of a sexual nature for her handsome son-in-law, the very man who brought her to Freud, and was in effect projecting her guilty feelings on her innocent husband. Her repression of her socially unacceptable love for her dashing son-in-law was such that she wanted to discontinue her treatment by Freud only after a couple of sessions, claiming she was already feeling better. According to Freud's analysis, at the basis of the projection of her "inappropriate" love for her son-in-law on her husband lay the possibility that her affectionate faithful husband failed to give her full sexual gratification. Freud admits he could not get to the bottom of this problem, as the lady was quite adamant that she felt much better and was sure that her absurd delusions of jealousy would never return. It is possible that her realization after a couple of sessions that her delusions were in fact a projection of her "guilt" on her faithful husband, effectively made her realize the absurdity of her delusions. Freud interprets her refusal to carry on with any further sessions as her resistance to exposing her repressed "guilty feelings."

The above two cases have commonalities in that the healers identify the cause of their physical and neurotic symptoms, and through abreaction, attempt to cure the patient. In both cases, the healers merely provide the patient with an opportunity to discover their repressed feelings, buried deep in their unconscious minds, and the latter through abreaction is made to feel better.

Conclusion

E. Fuller Torrey (1986: 210) claims that psychotherapists (including psychoanalysts), and “witchdoctors” (broadly referring to indigenous healers including shamans) are “cultural variations of the same people.” So psychotherapists in the States are “simply the indigenous therapists of the dominant American culture” (ibid.: 232). By that remark, he does not condemn them both as having “no scientific basis,” as the article by an unidentified writer in Wikipedia [W] states (Under Psychoanalysis, subheading Scientific Criticism, third paragraph). On the contrary, he emphasizes that “Recognition of this fact should not downgrade psychiatrists; rather it should upgrade witchdoctors.”² (ibid.: 232) He is right in that what the psychoanalyst calls “the beast within man” is analogous to what the *mudang* calls “the malignant spirit.” Torrey’s view is also shared by some Korean psychiatrists, most notably Dr. Rhi Bou-yong (Yi Puyŏng), MD (1970; 1977; 1978; 1983: 413–414).

However, the *mudang*’s techniques differ from those of the psychoanalyst in that the healing is carried out through impromptu drama skilfully instigated by them, in which the repressed feelings of guilt, pain, wishes, etc. are identified and revealed, and antagonistic parties involved are reconciled. In Schechner’s terms (1977; 1988), *kut* is both ritual and performance, and in *kut*, this dramatic performance is enhanced by the addition of what people enjoy in life, such as good food, drink, music, and colourful costumes and decors, which produces endorphin in the brains of the participants and acts as anti-depressant. Being spontaneous, highly entertaining and enjoyable as well as achieving abreaction and catharsis through tears, their method can produce a dramatic success. But it must be emphasized that most modern Korean *mudang* are enlightened and well informed though popular media such as TV, and can quite often differentiate somatic diseases from psychosomatic ones, although occasional failures have been reported.

² Here is a good example of why the information contained in Wikipedia should not be directly cited, but approached with care.

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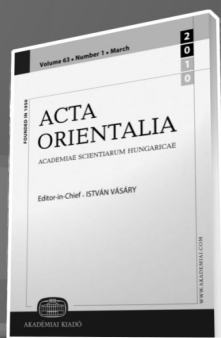
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Yi Shamanic Rites of Personal, Familial, and Social Healing

DANIEL A. KISTER

BEIJING

Chinese Yi families celebrate seasonal sacrificial healing rites which both engage the spirits and stimulate cathartic human activity through poetic chants and simple symbolic gestures. The family joins the officiant as the healing agents. Personal healing procedures reflect an awareness of empirical, psychological, social, and spiritual forces at work in the patient's condition and cure. They bolster self-assurance within one's family, spiritual culture, and natural surroundings. They take place within rites to purge the family of threats from other family's curses, imagined as an infectious threat and a quasi-material force to be fought. In line with Rene Girard's theory of sacrifice, the rites also purge society itself by deflecting violent tendencies onto scapegoat animals and an imagined spirit battle. Gods represented by "spirit branches" lead the battle. The rite may end by symbolically inviting family members to cleanse themselves of their own misunderstandings.

One of China's fifty-five "minority" nationalities is the Yi People, with a population of about 7,000,000. The Yi living in the Liangshan Mountains of Sichuan have tended to maintain their traditional language and culture, and the main person responsible for preserving their culture this is a male shamanic figure called *bimo* in Chinese (*pi-mox* in the Yi language). The *bimo* knows the written language and legendary myths, and he deals with the spirit world in rites for family well-being. He draws upon his scripture book and the aid of spirit helpers and is said sometimes to employ feats of wonder, but in the rites described here he never seems in deep trance. A secondary cultural figure, the *sun*i (*su-nyit*) may be male or female and is more clearly shamanistic (Bamo 2004: 5–7).

He or she deals with the spirit world with the aid of a drum in a trance state.

The Yi live in a world subject to spiritual forces. As one *bimo* has said, there are such forces in the surrounding forests, represented ritually in symbolic “spirit branches.” There are also animal gods, such as the Eagle and Tiger; household spirits, such as Gods of Farming and family ancestral spirits; and threatening spirit forces associated with disease or curses from antagonistic families. Seasonal rites for family health and well-being seek purification from such forces and the down-to-earth human threats that they are associated with. Referring to Liangshan Yi rites I have attended from 2002 to 2007, I shall describe various forms that purificatory healing can take—personal, familial, and social. At the same time, I shall call attention to aspects of the Yi world view brought to light in the healing process.

Individual Healing

A rite for family well-being may include individual healing procedures for a family member suffering from physical disease or from a psychic malady diagnosed as “soul loss.” A simple, two-hour, contemplative ritual to heal a mother’s rheumatism ended a rite held in early 2002. The healing took place at a spring near the home, with father and daughter in attendance. The *bimo* performs simple symbolic actions while chanting the mythical origin of trees, water, grass, stones, and *Fengshi*, a spirit believed to contribute to a rheumatic condition. As the mother squats contemplatively near the spring, the *bimo* squats behind her and brushes a straw sheaf on her sides. He fashions a straw figure of *Fengshi* and sticks a small straw and stick configuration in the ground before her, along with smoking grass and a live chick. The father passes a steaming stone around her in a common Yi gesture of purification, and the *bimo* spurts water toward her. While he chants and the father and daughter call out, the mother uses a straw to blow bubbles in a bowl of water (fig. 1). She then rubs buckwheat grains on her body and puts them in a hole dug by the father where the grass was. The father pours water on hot stones set among the sticks, and the mother walks through the steam, followed by the father and *bimo*. The rite ends as the father uses earth to cover the figure of *Fengshi*, which is now in the hole.



Fig. 1. The mother blows bubbles in a bowl of water. Photo: Daniel A. Kister, 2002.

In the Yi world view, the empirical, spiritual, psychological, and social forces thought to be at work in the mother's illness and cure constitute a multi-dimensional ecological system. The fact that the ritual is held at a water source suggests an empirical realization that moisture can influence a rheumatic condition. The fact that it evokes the mythical presence of *Fengshi* points to an understanding, however, that empirical forces do not necessarily explain why an attack of illness affects one person and not another. The activity of spirit forces are thought to provide an explanation. As can be the case with shamanic rites in other cultures, the ritual employs simple symbolic activity and group support to effect a cure on two levels. On the explicitly stated level of believed activity in the mythic spirit world, it aims ritualistically to thwart the influence of *Fengshi*. At the same time, on what seems an implicitly recognized level of experiential activity in the world of the human psyche, it has a curative potential to calm the mother's mind by helping her see her life-situation with reassured self-confidence. As has been said of shamanic healing in general, the ritual on this level "provides healing by meeting fundamental human needs for belonging, comfort and bonding with others" (Winkelman 2006: 95).

On this experiential psycho-somatic level, the evocation of the mythic Yi spirit world as focused on *Fengshi* has the potential to bolster

the mother's inner self-confidence by inviting her to see her illness, not as an arbitrary freak of nature, but as the result of the intervention of quasi-personal forces in a meaningful mythic world to which she belongs. As has been said of a woman undergoing healing in another shamanic culture, the mother "believes in the myth and belongs to a society which believes in it. . . . What she does not accept are the incoherent and arbitrary pains, which are an alien element in her system but which the shaman, calling upon the myth, will re-integrate within a whole where everything is meaningful" (Levi-Strauss 1963: 197).

The supportive presence of the loving family can add to the rite's psycho-somatic effect. If the activity consisted merely of magical ritualistic procedures, the family's presence would not be needed. On the socio-psychological level, however, its caring presence is important to bolster a sense of belonging and bonding. On this level, as in any shamanist rite, the healing agent is not just the *bimo*. It is the participating group. It is the family, with their belief in the Yi worldview and their loving care. It is first and foremost, moreover, the mother herself. On the experiential psycho-somatic level, a change must take place in her perception of herself for the cure to take effect.

Earlier as a part of the same family rite, a simple symbolic ritual was performed for the daughter, a university student who suffered from chronic anxiety diagnosed as soul loss. As a metaphor for a psychological problem, the term "soul loss" is as apt an expression as the English, "He's lost his mind." Among the Yi, however, as in some other shamanist cultures, it has a more realistic, quasi-physical sense. The Yi believe that when family members leave home to herd the flocks, plant crops, hunt, or send off souls of the dead during the course of the year, their own souls may end up wandering among the mountains. With the new year coming on, they must be called back. If a person can lose one's soul away from home in the nearby mountains, it is understandable that the daughter can suffer soul loss far from home at the university and needs reintegration into the family and its spiritual life.

The family rite as a whole first sought to purify the family of various evil forces (Kister 2006: 49–52). It took place inside, near the hearth, with the daughter absent because she was of a marriageable age and so considered ritually no longer part of the family. The *bimo* chants, summons family ancestors, fashions small straw figures, and on one of these ties green grass used for calling and sending away souls or spirits. According to myth, an Yi ancestor once fell in a river, but grabbed

hold of some straw and was saved. So it is used to call back spirits. Still focusing on the family as a whole, the *bimo* sticks rows of wood sticks in a shallow basket as “spirit branches.” He puts on his broad-brimmed *bimo*’s hat to give power to deal with the spirit world, and he uses a small spirit branch to sprinkle with water a goat to be sacrificed. As family members huddle together, assistants pass around them spirit branches and the live goat, clockwise and counterclockwise. While the *bimo* chants, the goat’s throat is slit and its blood gathered in a pan. Its head is pointed toward the door and hind parts toward the hearth as a kind of sacrificial scapegoat pointing whatever evil threatens the family outside and away from the household.

When the purificatory action then shifts from the family as a whole to the daughter, she is present. The *bimo* rings his bell and sways to and fro, perhaps in mild trance. The father brings out a bowl used only to retrieve lost souls, containing rice, salt, and a pen of the daughter. He sets it on a cloak on the floor between the hearth and the goat’s carcass and leads a string from the bowl to the goat as a symbolic avenue for the soul’s return. He beats a buckwheat cake and raises it toward the goat and then takes the string off the goat and turns the animal to face the bowl. He waves the cloak and bowl over a smoking fire outside and lays the end of the string from the bowl on the goat’s hind parts. The *bimo* then puts on his cloak, chants as he rings his bell and holds one of the small straw sheaves. He moves toward the door, opens it, and stands in the doorway. As his body sways and shakes, he calls out and lightly stamps his feet. The father gradually draws the string from the goat into the bowl, covers the bowl with a straw cover, and puts it behind the hearth fire. The *bimo* closes the door, takes off his hat, and the retrieval procedures are over.

In Korea, where a psychological shock can give rise to soul loss, recovery may focus on the patient’s person itself, on the person’s body. As the patient sits in quiet thought, surrounded by loving family, the shaman uses water for cleansing and a knife to probe the seventh vertebra, where the soul is thought to return. Among the Yi, where separation from the home can cause soul loss, it is natural that the recovery process focuses on a symbolic pathway toward the hearth, with its memories of family togetherness. The inclusion of the sacrificial goat in the symbolic pathway, however, seems enigmatic and contrived. As a sacrificial scapegoat, it is readily understandable that it serve as a medium to drive evil away from the house. It is less easily understand-

able that it be included in the symbolic pathway for the soul's return. Victor Turner has characterized the sacrificial rites of another culture as "a many faceted process of symbolic action, expressed in the medium of multivocal symbols" (Turner 1977: 200). Like other symbols in an Yi rite, the goat is such a symbol. It was said on another occasion to provide energy for gods assisting in the healing process or serve as a concrete embodiment of their presence. Now that it has been offered to the gods, it may be thought to have a share in divine power. As a domestic animal sharing in Yi family life, it may be thought on a more down-to-earth level to symbolize their life together; or, like the spirit branches, it may stand for the larger world of nature in which family life shares. In none of these multi-faceted possibilities, however, does the goat have the natural symbolic power of the hearth to ease the daughter's anxiety by drawing into a renewed sense of family belonging that she can experience in her mind, heart, or memory.

As the overall rite for family well-being continues, the grass used to retrieve the soul is separated from sticks and straw and placed inside the house. As a natural symbol of renewed bonding and well-being, all then share in a meal of goat soup; and family members have strings cut off their necks that were tied early in the rite and that on another occasion were said to stand for mutual misunderstandings. The *bimo* wraps the strings around a stick figure and makes a bundle of sticks and straw that an assistant passes around the huddled family, clockwise, then counterclockwise. The bundle, wood chips, and a steaming stone are tossed outside, and the rite is over.

Group Healing

As we have seen, the seasonal family rite in which individual healing commonly takes place is itself prophylactic in that it aims to renew family harmony and well-being. At the 2007 ISSR Conference, I discussed from another point of view a seasonal family rite that seemed not to fulfill this aim. The rite was held at the mother's request in the fall of 2005 to celebrate family togetherness at harvest time and to cleanse the family of the effects of evil words and deeds committed during the past year by family members themselves or families antagonistic to them. It was held before a pan fire in the school where the father taught, as a

substitute for the family hearth. Willows were used as spirit branches and a cock as the sacrificial animal.

The *bimo*, the paternal grandfather, forms a configuration of willow sprigs to serve, he says, as a pathway or seats for the gods. On other occasions, persons have seen it as a barrier to ward off evil or a battle formation of gods fighting external forces of evil. The *bimo* first summons ancestral gods as assisting spirits. In a gesture believed to have purgative effect in the spirit world, he periodically touches spirit branches to the cock and tosses them to the door. All call out to frighten away evil spirits and dispel the contagious effects of debilitating words or deeds. In an action that has the potential to strengthen family bonding, willow branches and the cock are waved around the huddled family clockwise to rid them of evil, and then counterclockwise to insure, it is said, that good fortune stays with them. The cock is then held outside to dispel evil and summon happiness.

In different shamanic cultures, healing focuses on different aspects of the evil currents that can threaten human well-being; and rites employ different modes of activity to achieve purgation (Kister 2008: 55–88). The evil to be dispelled in a Korean family commonly consists of bitter, vengeful feelings that can result from disruptive activity within a family; and the purgation of such feelings takes the form of dramatic encounters among family members, living and dead, through the shaman's mediumship. The evil to be dispelled in an Yi family rite is multi-faceted; but in the present rite and the rite to be examined next, it is not so much the result of a disruptive situation, but the cause. It is the threat of violence that Yi families apparently feel to their well-being from malicious words in the form of curses and backbiting from hostile families; and purgation takes the form of projecting potential feelings of retaliation outside the family onto a sacrificial scapegoat and/or an imagined battle in spirit space with mystic forces that spring from others' malicious words. The threat from such words is perceived not as a moral abstraction, but as a quasi-physical force in cyber spirit space. As Rene Girard has said of the evil to be dispelled by traditional sacrificial rites, it is a threat of "violence seen as something exterior to man and henceforth as a part of all the other outside forces that threaten mankind" (Girard 1977: 31).

Before killing the cock, the *bimo* cuts its mouth and lets blood flow over spirit branches, the animal thus clearly appearing as a scapegoat for evil originating in sinful words. The *bimo* intones a chant telling

how malicious words pass from one person to another, and the mother says they are like an infectious disease. She recognizes that, as Girard says of sacrificial rituals, the “impurity and contagion” to be cleansed “are firmly rooted in reality” (Girard 1977: 28); “a sort of *infection* is in fact being checked” (Girard 1977: 30). The *bimo* kills the cock without shedding blood, pressing against its body. Perhaps he uses this bloodless manner to kill the animal out of fear that an attempt to cleanse the family by shedding blood may contaminate it further. He then makes the dead cock crow by blowing on a bamboo tube stuck into its windpipe, perhaps, as the son says, to frighten away evil spirits. He twirls spirit branches over the cock and tosses the animal toward the door as all laugh and shout. The father takes the cock and branches outside and closes the door. The animal is cooked, each person present must take a bite of roasted innards, and all share a meal of chicken soup.

As with the previous rite, the ritual agent is not just the *bimo*; it is the participating community, the family. As has been said of a Siberian rite, “those who are present are not mere objective spectators but rather faithful believers, and their belief enables the shaman to achieve results” (Diószegi 1974: 7). In the present instance, however, only the mother and grandfather *bimo* believe in the rite. Only in their minds does it have the potential to achieve purgation on the spirit level. Only in the mind of the mother, moreover, does it fulfill its potential to achieve family togetherness on an experiential level. Others in the family have no real interest in the proceedings. They attend just to please the mother. The rite thus highlights more a spiritual gap in the family than family togetherness.

In its multi-faceted symbolic and imaginative process, a rite held by another Liangshan Yi family in the summer of 2007 was particularly rich in potential for meaning and group healing. The *bimo* first takes his seat just outside the house door and makes an elaborate spirit-branch configuration out of several dozen pointed poplar sticks with the bark attached, a dozen or so shorter, thinner sticks with the bark removed, and some short branches with foliage. Sticking the sticks in the earth in the courtyard just front of him, he sets a row of ten barked sticks. He then plants several rows of sticks and stick groupings jutting out from his right and left. In the middle, he sticks a few groups of shorter, bare sticks and at least one group enclosing a leafed poplar branch. The elaborate configuration constitutes the visual focus of the rite and the main focus of its purgative thrust in the spirit world.

The *bimo* claims that he doesn't know the configuration's significance; but the son of the family, a university student, says it signifies the marshalling of gods and spirits invited from the four corners of the world into battle formation to fight forces of evil. In the previous rite, the mother saw curses and other malicious words as a contagion to be stemmed. The son here sees them as a force to be fought, and throughout much of the rite the purgative movement gets expressed in battle imagery. Spirit battles have apparently been common among the Lapps (Tolley 1994: 149–150), and they can also be found in shaman rites along the lower Amur River.¹ They appear as well in Christian mythology in the fight between reprobate angels and the godhead in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. As it is waged in this Yi rite, the son doesn't believe in the battle's religious thrust. With his father deceased, however, he takes an active role in the proceedings and manifests an avid interest in the rite as a family cultural tradition.

In front of the configuration of spirit branches representing gods invited from afar are other plants, including a small grass figure and a clump of reed-like grass in which the son ties knots to symbolize misunderstandings within the family and curses or evil from without. The *bimo* sticks still other spirit branches on a basket at his right to represent gods and spirits within the household, those of the *bimo* and the sponsoring family. Before him is a shallow basket containing an egg and painted yellow ox horn.

The rite begins with a series of chants based on Yi scriptures. They are intoned by the *bimo* as he sits behind the spirit-branch formation, and they are punctuated by periodic shouts of "Pao-u" (no lexical meaning) by all present. In this instance, the shouting is said not to chase away evil spirits, but to cheer on the gods to fight them. Holding a black cock, the *bimo* chants to summon gods and spirits and purify the area and participants. The son fashions a tall human-like figure from artemisia and sets it before the spirit branches so as to face the *bimo*. The chant states that this figure stands for an evil spirit that can cause illness, accidents, or death. In an action that focuses the evil to be purified on potentially debilitating tendencies within the sponsoring family itself, the son hangs on the figure two long threads given him by his mother, blue representing family females and red for males and

¹ Tatiana Bulgakova private conversation.

both standing for family misunderstandings. The mother gives each a shorter thread to tie on the wrist as a sign of family belonging. The *bimo* puts on his sacred hat of power and chants briefly to invite his personal spirit(s) (pl. 3 *a*). An assistant brings a steaming stone from the hearth and tosses it outside the gate to purify the house, participants, and the *bimo* so that helping spirits can enter. All shout “Pao-u.”

Still seated behind the configuration of spirit branches, the *bimo* next takes off his hat and chants a call to battle. He summons helping gods from outside: nearby Mountain Gods, the Tiger, Eagle, Bear, Wolf, and Pine Gods. He summons household gods from inside: Gods of Farming, Possessions, Eating, a god who wards off disease, ancestral spirits. Focusing the evil to be purified on potentially destructive tendencies in society at large, he calls upon armies of outside gods to ward off evil spirits sent by hostile families that have cursed the sponsoring family and that are imagined as hovering around in a kind of sacred cyber spirit space. The threat of violence that such evil spirits embody is perceived as Girard says one perceives it in traditional sacrificial societies: “an independent being,” whose “sacred presence invades his universe, mysteriously infects, without participating in it, and buffets him about rather in the manner of a plague or other natural disaster” (Girard 1977: 31). “Pao-u.” The *bimo*, summons more gods, tosses more sticks, and the son blows several times on the ox horn. “Pao-u.”

The *bimo* goes on to chant some basic socio-ethical norms: One should not tell lies, and one should help, not hurt others. “Pao-u.” He chants the names of well-known clans that may have cursed, cheated, or injured the family, along with the names of *bimo* who may have helped them and the ritual animals they may have used in cursing the family. He tells all evil spirits to be gone. Laughter and “Pao-u.”

The series of chants has lasted an hour and a half. As the ritual battle with forces of evil now comes to a climax, the chants give way to ritual actions; and the symbolic focus shifts from the spirit branches to the sacrificial cock and goat. The *bimo* recalls the background of the animals and invites the gods to accept them. Both the animals and the sponsoring family are good, he says; they never did anything bad. “Pao-u.” Family members huddle outside the house door; and assistants wave around them the live cock and goat to rid them of misfortune stemming from both others’ curses and natural causes (pl. 3 *b*). The *bimo* puts on his sacred hat. An assistant symbolically kills the goat, beating its back gently with three spirit-branch sticks and then actually

slaughtering it with a knife. In a Korean shaman rite, the ritual slaughter of a sacrificial animal can on occasion turn into a bloody frenzy. In the present Yi rite, it is performed casually, with no suggestion that it serves as a projection of violent or vengeful feelings. Nonetheless, it is intrinsically a violent act. Now and when the *bimo* subsequently kills the cock, he and later the mother state that they are not killing an animal; they are cursing enemies. When slaughtering an animal for a meal, Yi surely do not make such a protest. In the ritual, however, as in other sacrificial cultures, they seem to feel it is necessary to allow them



Fig. 2. The *bimo*, covered by his cape, chanting. Photo: Daniel A. Kister, 2007.

to do violence on the animal “without fear of reprisal” (Girard 1977:13). Thus the priest performing an ancient Babylonian sacrifice would state after killing a bull: “This deed was done by all the gods; I did not do it.” (Burkert 1983: 11) “Pao-u.”

The *bimo* next uses a stick to beat the cock to death and a knife to let blood flow from its mouth. With the sacrifice of the two animals, a turning point has apparently been reached in the battle with evil; and the artemisia figure that had been facing the *bimo* is turned in the opposite direction as a sign that bad has now been turned to good. Perhaps, as in other sacrificial cultures, now that the animals have been offered to the gods, they and the plant lose their association with evil

and acquire association with “higher powers” of good (Henninger 1987: 12.8000). The *bimo* holds the cock above the spirit branches representing his and the family’s gods at his right and sticks feathers on it. As all watch attentively, he then three times makes the dead cock crow, in this instance directly blowing into a hole cut in its wind pipe. Perhaps this is done, as was said for the rite described earlier, to announce the rite to the gods, with loud crowing signaling success. Finally, the *bimo* tosses the cock toward a corner of the courtyard. “Pao-u.”

After another half-hour of chants, the *bimo* bends over the spirit branches at his right. Covered by his cape, he rings his bell and intones a chant asking his personal god to separate the gods summoned from outside from the family gods in case they got mingled together during the ritual action (fig. 2). His hat then hanging on his back, he squats before the goat, which lies between the spirit-branch configuration and courtyard gate. In front of the goat lie the knife, the cock, and the stick used to kill the cock—all lined up in a naturally symbolic movement toward the gate as purgative scapegoats pointing evil outside and away, or, on a more contrived symbolic level, as embodiments of the gods in their fight with evil along with the battle formation of spirit branches. “Pao-u.” The *bimo* then rings his bell to summon all gods—his own, the family’s, and those from outside—for what appears to be the final offensive in the battle. He tosses the knife three times outside the gate to rout evil forces. If the blade falls facing outward, the rout is deemed a success. He then tosses out the cock. If it falls facing outward, that also signals success. Finally, he drags the goat to the gate, rings his bell, and chants. “Pao-u.”

On the consciously stated level, the action takes place in an imagined realm of spirit space and aims to purge the threat of violence from without. Would families persist in performing the rite, however, if it took place only on that mystic level, with no verifiable results, with no experiential sense of release from currents of verbal violence and no real sense of enhanced family well-being? Though not consciously noted by participants, the rite must have some experiential effect on the family. Girard maintains that a sacrificial act can purify a group by deflecting whatever violent urges it has on a surrogate victim, such as a scapegoat animal (Girard 1977: 4). As a social contagion, the violence latent in curses from hostile Yi families will take its natural course and infect the family with desires for vengeance if not dealt with ritually. In the imagery of the rite, as has been noted, curses and other malicious

words are both a contagion to be stemmed and a force to be fought. In line with Girard's theory of the psycho-socio dynamics of religious sacrifice, the Yi rite can purify the family experientially by giving them a venue to express vengeful feelings in ritual battle and thus purge themselves of their own tendencies to violence.

The purificatory battle of the Yi rite is not just as the act of a single family. The rite is performed annually by numerous families and provides an opportunity for Yi society as a whole to purge itself of tendencies to violence. In accord with Girard's ideas, it can be understood as "absorbing all the internal tensions, feuds, and rivalries pent up within the community" (Girard 1977: 7) and "securing the safety of the group by checking the impulse for revenge" (Girard 1997: 21). Seen in this vein, the animal victims serve as "a substitute for all the members of the community, offered up by the members themselves. The sacrifice serves to protect the entire community from *its own* violence." (Girard 1977: 8)

With the Yi, the violence remains on the verbal level—others' curses and the family's retaliatory shouts of "Pao-u." Though animal sacrifice constitutes the climax of the ritual battle, moreover, the surrogates employed to stem the violence are not so much the sacrificed animals as the battling gods ranged symbolically in the spirit-branch configuration. On the imagined level of the spirit-world, the spiritual forces embodied in the spirit branches are at least as important as the family animals in the purgative action; and on the experiential human level, the family's shouts as the cheer on the gods are more important in drawing the community into the action than the act of letting blood. Like sports fans venting potentially violent urges as they cheer on their team, the sometimes laughing family bolsters their high spirits and sense of family well being with shouts of "Pao-u." Even a participant like the son, who does not believe in the spirit battle, can experience the ritual battle's power as a cathartic purge of negative social feelings.

Religious rituals and sports meets are not the only means that society has to purge violent urges. Girard maintains that in modern societies the "judicial system . . . serves to deflect the menace of vengeance," limiting "it to a single act of reprisal, enacted by a sovereign authority." (Girard 1977: 15) He maintains that the modern judicial system is "the most efficient of all curative procedures." (Girard 1977: 21) It "treats the disease without fear of contagion." (Girard 1977: 22) In Liangshan Yi society, there apparently was a tendency toward inter-clan violence before Communist rule brought Chinese law to the area in mid-twenti-

eth century. Prior to that time, purgative rituals were perhaps necessary as a stabilizing social mechanism. The fact that they continue today suggests that they are still unconsciously experienced as an effective mechanism to heal social wounds. Indeed, they may have an advantage over modern judicial processes. They keep tendencies to violence in check before they erupt in crime, whereas judicial processes come into play only after physical violence has broken out.

Despite the general symbolic dominance of the spirit branches over the animals in the rite, once the battle with evil has been won, the focus remains on the animals. They provide meat for a ritual meal. The fact that all present must participate by taking a morsel of roasted goat innards, points to the meal's importance as a symbolic expression of the peace that has been won. With bad changed to good, the animals shed their association with evil as scapegoats; and for a devote believer like the mother, their meat may now seem blessed by association with the gods. Most, however, probably simply enjoy the meal with a sense of communal well-being like revelers after winning a football game.

After the meal, the spirit branches take center stage once more in a ten-minute healing ritual that takes place not in spirit space, but in the family's minds and hearts. The action grows naturally out of the shared family meal and activates symbols that were introduced early in the rite, but have so far lain dormant. Forming something of a deconstructive tension with the overall thrust of the rite toward purgation from threats from without, it invites the family to seek well-being by purging themselves of their own misunderstandings. Perhaps partly in line with ethical criteria stated in an early chant, it invites them to reflect on their own disruptive acts.

The *bimo* now moves to the front of the spirit-branch configuration. Before him is the shallow basket with an egg, spirit leaves, and cracked buckwheat. Between him and the artemisia figure of evil turned to good squats the mother. The *bimo* removes from the figure the blue and red threads symbolizing family misunderstandings and has family members hold them together. Using a sickle, he cuts the threads between each to signal, says the son, the end of family misunderstandings (pl. 4 *a*). The mother unties other threads on the wrists, those symbolizing family belonging, and gives them to the son, who puts all the threads on the artemisia figure (pl. 4 *b*). The *bimo* then rubs a small grass figure and the egg on the left shoulder and arm of each to signify the rubbing away of illness or anything bad. Each family member

blows on the egg to blow away evil in the form of their own disruptive tendencies. The *bimo* breaks the egg open with the sickle to rid them of such tendencies. He next holds before the son and mother the clump of reed-like grass with knots symbolizing misunderstandings within and evil from without. The family untie the knots. The *bimo* then washes their hands with clear water and their shoes with water mixed with ashes. As the son sees it, this signifies that they can make money and have more animals than other households. In its relation to the overall symbolic action, it seems rather to signify cleansing of wrongdoings perpetrated with the use of hands and feet. All these simple symbolic gestures may be believed to have some sort of effect in the spirit realm, but they clearly have an experiential aim of inviting members of the family to insure future family well-being by contemplating the realities of family life and their own past failings.

The Yi rite as a whole ends with a final cleansing action. The *bimo* gathers the spirit branches into two bundles, one representing gods from without, one representing his and the family's gods within. An assistant holds each bundle in the steam of a stone brought out from the hearth, and the family walk through the steam of another stone. They then sit together, and an assistant waves all the spirit branches counterclockwise around them three times and then over their heads nine times. He puts the branches representing the *bimo*'s and family's gods on the courtyard wall and throws those representing gods from without outside the gate. The *bimo* then divines the future for the household and for himself, good or bad, and leaves.

The present rite centers on the mother, the de facto head of the family since the father is deceased. In the other rites we have seen, the father plays a key role; and for much of the present day's rite, women generally remained inside the home, apart from the action. It has been said that the sacrificial rites of traditional societies are the work of male members of society, that they are performed by men as an artificial social mechanism to insure the continuity of a perpetual male life-line over against the natural maternal life-line of women. "Sacrificing produces and reproduces forms of intergenerational continuity generated by males, transmitted through males, and transcending continuity through women," on whose "reproductive powers" males are physically dependent (Jay 1992: 32). If this is the case among the Yi, it may explain why the son, though he does not believe in the rite as a religious activity, takes such a strong interest in it. He perhaps senses that partici-

pation in the action, sacrificial and otherwise, gives him stature within the family's patrilineal life.

Like shamanist rites elsewhere, the symbolic and imaginative action of this Yi rite is multi-faceted; and its potential for meaning and healing is virtual. On the experiential level, that potential gets realized differently as each participant responds internally in line with his or her own personal experience, expectations, and beliefs (Kister 2006: 41–60). According to the son, the mother responds to the confessional rite out of a need for inner cleansing. He himself finds meaning in the rite as a whole in its potential to reinforce cultural identity, family continuity, and perhaps his own sense of personal identity. Probably no one in attendance consciously understands the action in terms of the social healing that Girard speaks of; and the officiating *bimo*, who does not always understand why he does what he does, may find very little real meaning in the action at all.

Purely Ritualistic Healing

We have seen that Yi healing takes place on two levels: on the explicitly stated level of believed activity in the spirit world and on an implicitly recognized level of experiential psycho-social activity in the world of the human psyche. We have focused on this second level as ritual procedures draw participants experientially into the healing action; but healing is believed to take place on the spirit level simply by the performance of certain ritualistic actions, regardless of what may take place in participants' minds and hearts. This is clear in rites for children. The *bimo* rite just described was followed immediately by a rite performed by a male *sun*i that included ritualistic healing for a young grandson. He was thought to have suffered soul loss, but not by being away from home. As with Korean soul loss, he was surmised to have experienced some sort of shock. Perhaps something frightened him, or a playmate playfully cursed him. Though he was present with the family by the hearth, the retrieval procedures did not seem to engage him in the healing process. The ritual activity itself was apparently thought sufficient to effect a cure. The *sun*i goes from the hearth to the house door; and the grandmother brings a basket with a bowl containing rice, an egg, and salt. The *sun*i squats inside by the door and drums with a fast beat. He and the grandmother then stand with their backs toward the

door. He dances to the hearth, bends down, stands while drumming, returns to the doorway, and states that the boy's soul has returned. The grandmother holds basket and bowl outside and moves them nine times counterclockwise in the air to insure that his soul has indeed returned and will not leave him again.

In the case of a sick infant, ritualistic procedures may give the parents peace of mind; but they can have no effect whatsoever on the young infant's mind. The healing action is believed simply to take place in the spirit world. A ritual which I know only second hand was performed in 2001 in the home by a female *sunì* for a feverish baby. Holding a live cock, she calls on family ancestral spirits to chase away the evil spirits causing the fever and curses those spirits. An assistant rubs the cock over the father, mother, baby and another offspring. The *sunì* then uses a knife to cut the cock's mouth, tells its history, kills it, and smears its blood and feathers on the wall. She then tosses the cock, knife, some salt and flour toward the door. If the cock's head points toward the door, that is a good sign. She drums and chants with a gradually more excited rhythm. She calls her spirits and those of the family to chase away or confine the evil spirits. Perhaps with knowledge gained from her helping spirits, she says that the threatening spirits came along with meat that the family got somewhere. She tells the parents to take good care of their children and wonders why people take medicine, since it is evil spirits that cause disease.

As I have tried to demonstrate, Yi healing entails a great deal of activity that can be understood in socio-psycho-somatic terms. Nonetheless, examples of purely ritualistic healing serve as a caution against interpreting Yi healing rites solely in such experiential terms. Though *bimo* must surely be at least subconsciously aware of the experiential effect of some of their procedures, they, like the *sunì* just mentioned probably see the root cause of the evil they deal with as lying in the spirit world.

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Initiation Rituals of Shamans and Folk Healers in Hulunbeir, Inner Mongolia: Similarities and Dissimilarities

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After the Cultural Revolution new shamans have appeared every year. In their activities they become possessed by their ancestral spirits, the ongon, which were formally induced into them at their initiation ritual. Folk healers, too, claim that they can work successfully because they are assisted by an ongon, in this case the spirit of a former healer in their family. Contemporary shamans perform initiation rituals for healers similar to those they perform for shamans. Healers, however, do not seem to need such an initiation. This article discusses similarities and dissimilarities between the two kinds of rituals in the light of a shaman's or healer's relation to the ongon.

My experiences with shamans in China began with an extended introductory trip in 2000 to parts of Manchuria and the northeastern part of Inner Mongolia. On this first trip I was able to acquire a general impression of shamans and their activities in the area, which helped me to select Inner Mongolia as the field for later, almost yearly, return trips for short but better focused research. The material for this essay was gathered during these trips, which brought me into contact with people of different ethnic backgrounds, such as Mongols, Evenki, and Daur. These short trips of about two weeks on the average severely limited the time I could spend with the people with whom I worked, a handicap further aggravated by the long distances I had to travel in order to meet them. Another limitation of at least equal importance was that I was not able to speak their languages. The latter limitation was, however, to some degree overcome by the help of an able translator who also

showed great interest in the topic of my research.¹ His dedicated assistance gives me some confidence to address the topic proposed here.

Limits of space do not allow me to present a full discussion of the initiation rituals for shamans and folk healers in Hulunbeir, the geographic area of my research. They are much too complex to be properly presented in a short essay. I will therefore limit myself to showing some of the decisive features of these rituals in order to provide a basic idea of where they are similar and where they differ from one another. At the end I will mention some of the problems related to the nature of my research and data, but I wish to point out right here that my data do not allow (and are not intended to be) a general discussion of the rituals I am about to introduce as if they were representative either for shamans or for folk healers.

As a preliminary remark it might be useful to briefly characterize the two kinds of personalities who are the focus of this paper: the shaman and the folk healer. For the purpose of this essay it is sufficient to take a shaman as a person who is called by a spirit, an *ongon*, and works with the help and under the influence of this spirit, often by being possessed (or entered) by it. The folk healer, who locally is often called *bariyači*, also works with the help of an *ongon*, yet he/she is not possessed by the *ongon*. Both shamans and *bariyači* acknowledge a family relationship to the *ongon*, whom they recognize as a distant ancestor. It goes without saying that these characterizations are far too simplistic, but it may already have been noticed that for both shaman and *bariyači* a relationship with an *ongon* is vital—although the exact nature of that relationship is, as I hope to show, characteristically divergent.

As an example of a shaman's initiation ritual I use the ritual of a Buriat Mongol man, yet I will restrict the description to the ritual's most salient points.² First, the ritual requires extensive preparations. In

¹ I wish to take this opportunity to thank Professor Erdemtu of the Central University of Nationalities, Beijing, for his unfailing dedication and his friendship for so many years.

² This ritual took place in June 2002. Since then I have had the chance to witness several more of the same kind. The repeated experience made me aware that such a ritual is not so much performed according to an established schema as that its actual form depends on such factors as the candidate's ethnic/cultural background and the performing shaman's discretion. It should further be mentioned that the ritual described establishes the candidate as a shaman. It is the first in a series of further rituals performed as the shaman advances in his/her career.

the case described they involved two kinds of space. In the candidate's house several altars for the *ongon* were prepared with the necessary food offerings and paper flags. Outside of the house, but close to it, a new *ger*, a Mongol tent, was put up. At its center a birch tree was erected in such a way that its leafy top protruded through the ring which forms the center of the *ger*'s roof (pl. 5). To the trunk of this tree, at about the height of a person's shoulders, was affixed a nest containing several eggs made of flour dough mixed with sheep's hair (fig. 1). Outside of the *ger*, two more birch trees were erected on its western side. One, the



Fig. 1. On the right the center tree with the attached nest is visible.

On the left is the officiating shaman beating her drum.

The man in a white hat is the candidate shaman. Photo: Peter Knecht, 2002.

father's tree, stood close by the tent; the other, the mother's tree, was placed at a distance of somewhat more than twenty meters. These two trees were linked with a strong rope made of raw cowhide over which was swung a movable fitting similar to the stirrups of a horse saddle. At the foot of the western tree a table was installed to serve as an altar, but without any image of an *ongon*. In the opposite direction, that of the rising sun, nine bundles of willow were implanted at regular intervals, beginning from the entrance of the *ger*.

The first part of the ritual was held in the candidate's house.³ The main shaman who was to perform the ceremony started drumming and singing almost casually once the preparations had been completed. She was soon joined by several assistant shamans and disciples. Then sheep, one for each altar, were brought into the room and led before the images of the *ongon*. The main shaman anointed them by pouring, successively, milk, tea, and liquor over their bodies and, finally, by throwing a handful of polished rice over each one. Then they were led outside, where they were ceremoniously slaughtered. A piece about ten centimeters long of their aorta, which was ripped out to kill them, became the first offering to the *ongon*. A long pause followed during which the sheep were cut up and their meat cooked. During this time the participants were busy preparing the meat, engaging themselves in conversation, having some snacks, or trying to get some sleep. After a while, a strip of fur from the sheep's belly and the inside of its legs with the four hoofs left attached to it was laid out on the ground in front of the *ongon* altars. Once the meat was cooked, all the pieces of each sheep—legs, breastbone, tail, intestines, etc.—were laid out on top of the piece of belly fur in such an order that eventually the sheep's body was completely reconstructed. The final piece to be put on top of all was the head, whose wool had all been carefully burnt off. Now things were ready for the main ritual to begin.

The shaman learns the time when to begin the ritual from the helping *ongon*. In this case the appropriate time was shortly after three o'clock in the morning, when a thin line of light had just appeared on the eastern horizon. The officiating shaman, while quietly singing and dancing, was dressed in a fine but ordinary coat and cap. After the candidate, kneeling before her for a while, had performed his formal greeting, everybody, accompanied by the shamans' constant drumming, moved out of the house and into the outside *ger*. There, the shaman candidate first moved quietly clockwise around the central birch tree before he suddenly burst out into the open space in front of the *ger*. The officiating shaman, together with her assistants, supported him with their drumming. From this moment tension

³ The candidate's family lived in a village of brick houses, but for the purpose of the ritual they had built a new *ger* close to their house.

among the bystanders built up fast and reached its climax, when the candidate, assisted by the bystanders, jumped into the stirrups on the rope strung between the two outside trees and moved on the rope as if he were riding a horse, first to the western tree and then back to the eastern one. That he was able to perform this feat was taken as a sign that his *ongon* had entered him. Once back on solid ground, he was made to sit on a chair and was handed his drum. After drumming for a while he fell to the ground. His helper took away the drum, put him back on the chair, and handed him two staffs whose tops were carved in the form of horse heads. Clutching a staff with each hand, he began rhythmically to hit the ground with them, while his *ongon* began to speak through him. The *ongon* addressed one after another of those of the new shaman's relatives who had previously asked for a pronouncement. One after the other, as they were called by the zodiac animal of the year they were born in, they came forward to kneel before the new shaman. In this position they listened intently to the *ongon's* words and, at given moments, extended either a cigarette or a cup of drink to him. The new shaman clenched the cup between his teeth before he suddenly tossed it away and the listener hurried to catch it in the flap of his/her Mongol dress. At the end of this session the new shaman threw away the two horse-head staffs and fell from his seat. At that moment his assistant caught him and helped him to regain his seat. By that time he had returned to his normal state of mind but was visibly exhausted. Shortly after he had rested for a while, the shaman and all the participants moved back into the house where a festive common meal marked the conclusion of the celebration.

I believe the following steps to be essential in this ritual: first, the preparations before the altars of the candidate shaman's *ongon*; second, the sacrifice of sheep and their offering to the *ongon*; third, the candidate's circling of the central tree (*turu*) with the nest in the *ger* used for the initiation; and fourth, as the ritual's climax, the candidate climbing the rope, the arrival of his *ongon*, and the *ongon* addressing the members of the newly installed shaman's family.

Now I turn to describing the main steps in the initiation ritual for a healer, a *bariyači*. It was the first such ritual I had a chance to attend

and was held in August 2005 for a Buriat woman.⁴ She had arrived with her husband and family at the spot, the top of a small sunny hill in the grassland, the day before and they had pitched their *gers* there. When we arrived with the shaman's party, preparations for the ritual were still at an early stage. In the *ger* to be used for the ritual, the altar for the family's *ongon* was already set up, but outside people were still busy decorating and putting up nine birch trees in a straight line extending in a more or less southwesterly direction from the entrance of the *ger*. The candidate and other participants, members of the family and their guests, were handed colorful ribbons to be fastened to the leafy branches left at the top of these trees. Colored threads touched all of these trees and linked them finally with the tree in the center of the *ger*. The shaman explained that these threads represented the road the *ongon* would arrive on.

In front of the *ger* some of the men installed a device for the distillation of milk, mixed with alcohol, into a special ceremonial alcoholic drink. Inside, at the center of the *ger*, a birch tree had been installed with its top protruding through the roof. On the trunk, at about shoulder height, a small platform was attached to hold a small cup made of kneaded dough into which a small burning candle was put (pl. 6).

When the preparations were coming close to completion, the shaman took up her drum and began singing quietly and dancing slowly until the sheep to be sacrificed was brought into the *ger* and placed between altar and tree. After the shaman had anointed it, it was taken outside and slaughtered. The time for the preparation of the meat, its cooking and arranging at the foot of the altar took meant a period of rest for the shaman and her assistants, while members of the family were still occupied with final preparations. Once the sheep's meat was laid out at the foot of the altar, the shaman was dressed in her formal ritual costume and then took up drumming. This initial part of the ritual was much the same as the one described above for a shaman's initiation, but it involved the sacrifice of only one sheep.

It did not take long before the shaman was seized by her *ongon* and suddenly fell to the ground. She was picked up by her assistant and seated on a chair. In this position she was given her two horse-

⁴ It just happened that the candidate for this ritual too was a Buriat. This does not mean that the shaman performing these rituals would do it only for Buriat, nor does it mean that only Buriat Mongols could become *baryyači*.

head staffs and the *ongon* began to address first the woman who was to become a *bariyači*. While she was being addressed at length, the woman knelt before the shaman (pl. 7), listening intently and at times offering a cup of milk or alcohol, which the shaman grasped with her teeth and then tossed into the woman's lap. The *ongon* spoke for a long while to the woman alone, but then also her husband was called forward and they were addressed together; then some of the family members present were addressed, too. After a final address to the woman alone, the *ongon* left the shaman, who now had a short rest before she was again handed her drum.

At the foot of the central tree a sheet had been spread out on which the *bariyači* candidate was made to sit with her back toward the *ongon's* altar and facing the door of the *ger*. She then had her shoulders covered with a large piece of white cloth (pl. 8 a). The shaman standing on the *bariyači's* right side resumed drumming and suddenly the new *bariyači* jumped up, rushed out through the door and began running toward the line of trees planted outside. Always running, she wove in and out between the trees, circled the last and most distant one, and then came running back toward the *ger*, weaving between the trees in the same way but now in the opposite direction. The shaman and her assistants had come outside, too, to assist her with their drumming and singing. When after several runs the woman had completed her course she stepped aside to have a rest. This signaled the end of the ritual.

For a while people remained outside engaged in conversation. The shaman had her formal costume taken off and took some rest. In the meantime, tables and chairs were arranged in the *ger*. Soon the tables were covered with food, the main fare being the meat of the sheep that had been offered to the *ongon*. Everybody present was offered a seat, but the main one, next to a tray with the best meat, was offered to the shaman who had performed the ceremony. She first cut small pieces from the fatty tail and the breastbone meat and put them on a small plate, which her assistant then took out of the *ger*. Outside, he threw the meat to the four directions as an offering to the *ongon* and deities. After that small ceremony all the guests began eating. The owner of the *ger* and the husband of the new *bariyači* came around with the alcohol that had been freshly distilled for the occasion, offering each guest a cup of

it, beginning with the shaman and her assistant.⁵ This formal meal at the end of the ceremony was much the same as that offered at the close of the shaman's initiation ritual, although there the number of guests to be served was considerably larger.

In summing up the ritual's main steps, it may be noticed that the main steps of a *bariyači* initiation ritual are very similar, if not in part almost identical, to those of a shaman's initiation ritual. At the initiation of a *bariyači*, too, they are, first, the sacrifice of a sheep; second, the officiating shaman's calling of the *ongon*; and third, the *ongon*'s arrival. For both rituals birch trees are important, especially the one tree in the center of the *ger*. Furthermore, in both rituals this central tree is linked with colored threads with the trees outside. The trees and the colored threads that connect them with the central tree and with one another share the same function: they are said to be the route for the *ongon* to travel.

However, there are some aspects by which the *bariyači* initiation differs significantly from that of the shaman. First, the candidate *bariyači* does not circle the center tree in the *ger* before alighting into the open, but only sits quietly at its base. Second, the *bariyači* is not entered or possessed by the *ongon*. The shaman only invokes the *ongon* who will function as the guarantor and protector of the *bariyači*. As a visible token of this protection, the *bariyači* is covered with a white cloth and then has to run meandering through the spaces between the nine trees outside of the *ger*. In this way the new *bariyači* passes again and again under the route of the *ongon*. At the ritual described here, the woman had to run several courses, although I did not note how often she had to do it. In a different case, at the ritual for a man, the new *bariyači* was instructed to run around the trees the same number of times as the number of his years. He

⁵ According to Schenk, her teacher, the Buriat shaman Zeren, says that this kind of alcohol is reserved for a *bariyači*. He also says that in the process of distilling it it is revealed where, i.e., in what family, the new *bariyači* will be found (Schenk 2000: 230). However, in the case I have witnessed, the distillation apparently meant nothing more than the production of an alcoholic drink that was judged to be necessary for the ritual, the question of who would be the *bariyači* having been settled beforehand. This situation may be due to a lack of memory about how such a ritual had once been performed, i.e., in the time preceding the Cultural Revolution. The radical suppression imposed during the Cultural Revolution has cut links with many traditions, those of shamans included, which people now try to reconnect often without the benefit of knowledgeable elder practitioners.

tried, but his age made him become quite exhausted before he could run the full course. At the place described the woman apparently did not have to run so many courses, yet here too she was visibly tired at the end of her feat.

Considering the fact that for both, shaman as well as the *bariyači*, the ultimate reason for their being able to function properly according to their respective roles is an *ongon*, the two seem to be like two streams drawing from the same source but flowing in different directions. I believe, therefore, that the question of what distinguishes a shaman from a *bariyači* hinges on what kind of meaning is given to the *ongon*. The question is a tricky one because the term *ongon* can have a number of meanings. Here, however, it may suffice to say that an *ongon* is often conceived of as an ancestral spirit. For a shaman it is the spirit of a once powerful but now dead shaman, while for the *bariyači* it is the spirit of an ancestor known for some special healing skill and outstanding achievements.⁶ In this concept of an ancestral spirit we may, from one point of view, touch on the basic point of convergence between shaman and *bariyači*, because both claim that next to other features characteristic of each one of them one cannot become either a shaman or a *bariyači* without counting such an ancestor among one's forebears. The very ability to become either a shaman or a *bariyači* rests ultimately with an ancestor, a member of one's family line, and is inherited within that line.⁷ However, from another point of view the two are clearly different from one another. A shaman becomes possessed by the *ongon* and functions in this state under the direct influence and guidance of the *ongon* to such an extent that it is the *ongon* that is believed to be acting. In the case of a *bariyači*, the *ongon* is understood to guarantee a *bariyači*'s success but does not appear to become directly involved in a healing process in such a way that its presence can be felt. In other words, the *bariyači* is not possessed by the *ongon* during an act of healing. Certainly, for the *bariyači* too the *ongon* is the ultimate guarantor for the success of a healing rite, but it remains aloof from the *bariyači*. However, it may be said to offer pertinent and practical guidance to the *bariyači* in dreams or provide direct insights into what the *bariyači* has to do,

⁶ Cf. Manžigeev 2002: 81.

⁷ Cf. Schwenk (2000: 193) and the glossary *bariatsch* (271).

but it does not act for the *bariyači*. For example, a *bariyači* with a career spanning about fifty years whom I know well (pl. 8 b) has not only his *ongon*, an ancestor of his family, but also venerates a deity as the guardian deity of *bariyači*. Inspired by pictures of *ongon* as they are used by shamans, he had similar pictures made of the guardian deity, but he has never undergone an initiation ritual of the kind I have described. He says that his power just rests with his family line and that one day he discovered quite naturally that he was capable of healing other people.

Another *bariyači*, a woman widely famous for her healing activity, emphatically denied having ever undergone an initiation ritual by a shaman or anybody else when I asked her about the source of her ability. For her this source was a powerful *bariyači* of an earlier generation in her family. How this ancestor is linked to her activities is not exactly clear to me, but she said that due to her inherited capability she was able to feel the patient's pains in her own body when faced with a particular case.⁸ She also told me that there were several active *bariyači* in her family line, but none of them had undergone an initiation ritual. One of them I happen to know myself. This *bariyači* is a woman and a devout Buddhist, in fact her guide and teacher is a lama. She claims that the Buddha shows her in a dream the night before a patient comes for consultation what the problem is and how she should deal with it. Yet she distances herself strongly from any connection with a shaman.

None of the three *bariyači* I have just mentioned underwent a ritual initiation into their profession. Yet their skill is widely accepted in the local population, to such a degree that medical doctors turn some cases they feel unable to deal with over to these *bariyači*. All three, in explaining to me the reason for their success, strongly emphasized that, next to the connection with their *bariyači* ancestor, their personal experience, gathered in the daily exercise of their charisma, is basic. For those *bariyači* whose initiation ritual I was able to witness I have unfortunately no data which would show whether they are successful or not. To date I have had no chance to meet them again.

Instead of a conclusion I wish to mention one more problem. If to become a *bariyači* does not necessarily require an initiation by a shaman, the question remains why a shaman should perform a *bari-*

⁸ See Shimamura (2000: 101) for a similar statement.

yači's initiation ritual if not in all, then at least in some cases. A hint toward a partial answer to this question might come from the problem of the so-called "white shaman" known, for example, among the Aga Buriat of Mongolia. There, "white shaman" seems to be another term for a *bariyači*, who is described as a masseur who applies magical power but also prays to the Buddha for help. This person may use the costume and other paraphernalia of a shaman, but is only rarely, if ever, able to become possessed by its *ongon*. Yet the formal installation as a "white shaman" has to be performed by a "black shaman," i.e., a shaman who becomes possessed by his/her *ongon* (Shimamura 2005: 196–198).⁹ It may, therefore, be conceivable that shamans in Inner Mongolia took over the idea of performing an initiation ritual for *bariyači* from a tradition such as that of the Aga Buriat "white shaman." In this context it is interesting to notice that the persons mentioned as having undergone a *bariyači* initiation were Buriat. However, I am not aware of having ever heard the term "white shaman" applied either to them or to anybody else of the persons I happen to know in Inner Mongolia.

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⁹ In Schenk's (2000: 101) account Zeren says that for the Darhat a "white shaman" seems to be the same as what in his area is called a *bariatsch*.

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Ghosts and Paracetamol: Batek and Jahai Shamanism in a Changing World (Peninsular Malaysia)

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Shamanism and traditional beliefs of the Batek and Jahai (who belong to the Semang-Negrito groups of Peninsular Malaysia), although currently probably in decline in sedentary populations that have converted to Islam, are still extremely important for these cultures. This paper will attempt to examine the dichotomies and tensions between traditional beliefs and the Batek and Jahai healing system on the one hand, and the surrounding Muslim world, ever pressing for rapid modernization and assimilation of other cultures, on the other. These tensions and the dichotomy between “health and illness” appear to be expressed—in the different perceptions of the dominant culture and that of the indigenous groups—in terms of the opposition between “rainforest and city,” “pure and impure,” “identity and assimilation” and “nature and culture.”

The aim of this article is to present the data collected over the past four years during my research on traditional beliefs and medicine among the Semang-Negrito of Peninsular Malaysia, with particular reference to the Batek and Jahai ethnic groups. Over the last decades considerable pressure has been put on traditional beliefs and the Batek and Jahai healing system by the rapid modernization of the surrounding world and the assimilation of the aboriginal Orang Asli into the dominant culture.

For hundreds of years Malaysia has been a multiethnic country with a population which consists mainly of Malay Muslims (around 60%), who command political power, Chinese (around 30%), mainly Buddhist, who wield economic power, Indian Hindus originally from Tamil Nadu (around 8%), and the Orang Asli or “original people,” the

aboriginal population of the country, which is subdivided into around twenty different ethnic groups that in turn fall into three large categories: the Semang-Negrito, the Proto-Malay, and the Senoi. The Orang Asli represent about 0.6% of the population, or around 107,000 people, about 2,200 of whom are Semang-Negrito (Nicholas 2000: 3; Dentan et al. 1997: 176).

Currently, there are six groups of Semang-Negrito in Peninsular Malaysia considered to be the early inhabitants of this geographic area: the Kensiu, Kintak, Lanoh, Mendriq, Jahai, and the Batek.

Although most of the Jahai and Batek have now been sedentarized for around 30–40 years and have converted to Islam while maintaining strong links with their traditional culture, several Batek bands are still living a nomadic or seminomadic life in the rainforest of Taman Negara, now a national park. These nomadic bands have not converted to the official religion of the country and their economy is based principally on hunting and gathering and on the income they receive from participation—as guides or simply as ethno-tourist attractions—in different touristic activities managed mostly by the Taman Negara park headquarters.

My research has centered on the Batek bands living in Taman Negara and the sedentarized Jahai in the Kelantan region close to the Thai border. For both groups the rainforest represents a sort of maternal womb. The jungle is seen as a perfect and balanced realm which offers all its creatures protection, shelter, food, water, and medicinal plants. Shamanism and traditional Batek and Jahai beliefs, though currently probably in decline in sedentary populations that have converted to Islam, are still extremely important for these cultures.

In contrast with the dominant perception of other neighboring non-Orang Asli groups, which consider the forest to be a dark and dangerous place inhabited by malevolent spirits and connected with black magic, the Batek and the Jahai have deep respect for it and believe the jungle to be the only “perfect” place on earth, with no evil spirits living in it. In the rainforest the flora, the fauna, and the human beings live in perfect harmony, so much so that the divisions between the three spheres are unclear. The most powerful shamans—*halak* in Batek and *jampi* in Jahai—were believed to be able to change their form into animals and plants, but this power is not restricted only to human beings. Many Jahai and Batek stories tell of the existence of certain tigers that can change their form and become humans at will. However, these

particular felines are considered to be good and friendly, fulfilling the role of protectors rather than aggressors.

The Batek and Jahai cultures are entirely based and focused on the world of the rainforest. Both ethnic groups believe in only one god—Gobar for the Batek and Karei for the Jahai—the irascible god of thunder, who sends terrible thunderstorms to the earth mostly in order to punish the violation of taboos.

Traditionally the Batek and the Jahai have no official leader and all members of society are considered to be equal. Their social life is basically regulated by a long series of taboos, most of which are connected to the animal world and concerned with noise, smell, the preparation of food, menstrual blood, and the blood shed during childbirth.

It would take too long to examine these prohibitions in detail, but it must be noted that, according to my research, an interesting transformation appears to be taking place regarding the taboos connected with the search for and cooking of food. One of the strongest taboos was, and in part still is, the absolute prohibition against cooking meats from two different animals, including fish, on the same fire. This is because the god of thunder is particularly sensitive to all kinds of smells and hates the mixing of different odors.

Nowadays, and as a consequence of the tension between modernization and tradition expressed respectively by the world outside the rainforest and the world of the jungle, the taboo mentioned above is transforming into an opposition between food from the “modern” world and “wild” food from the rainforest. Only the latter is considered to be pure, clean, and healthy, while the first is impure, dirty, and dangerous for human health. At no time may alimentary products from the jungle be mixed with cultivated or processed products, the only exception being rice, which is for some reason considered to be neutral.

Food from the world outside the rainforest has a strong and particularly unpleasant smell for the god of thunder, and is the cause of many sicknesses and diseases. Shamans in particular should strictly avoid it.

The tensions and the dichotomy between “health and illness” appear to be expressed—in the different perceptions of the dominant culture and that of the indigenous groups—in terms of the opposition between the “rainforest and the world outside of it,” the “pure and the impure,” “identity and assimilation,” and “nature and culture.”

Until a few years ago the welfare of the Batek and Jahai was a matter mostly for shamans, the *bidan* and the *bhomo*. These were, respectively,

obstetricians and herbalists, who—though less powerful than the *halak* and the *jampi*—similarly received therapeutic songs during dreams.

At present the villages are visited once per month by a doctor, and the nomadic Batek are instructed by the authorities to visit the clinic in Kuala Tahan, a small village which is the gateway to the Taman Negara national park. In both cases the doctors and nurses are not Orang Asli, and sometimes Batek and Jahai patients feel uncomfortable receiving treatment from or being visited by them.

Despite the fact that medical assistance and medicines are provided free of charge by the government to all Orang Asli when they fall ill, most of the indigenous people only seek such help when it is too late. Nevertheless, despite their distrust of medical staff, the Jahai and the Batek often ask foreigners they encounter for Western medicines, paracetamol in particular, which is believed to be good for all kinds of conditions from problems connected to pregnancy to tuberculosis, which is one of the most widespread illnesses. However, painkillers and medicines in general are considered to be good only for the treatment of the symptoms and not for treatment of the real underlying causes, as in the case of so-called ghost sicknesses.

Nowadays the number of shamans seems to be in decline, though *bidan* are still assisting and treating pregnant women and children and the *bhomo* still treat minor diseases with medicinal plants—which are now very difficult to find, mainly due to deforestation. The difficulties linked to the lack of powerful shamans and the destruction of the natural environment have induced great anxiety among the Batek and the Jahai populations. As many of my informants told me, they feel that most of the sicknesses they suffer from remain potentially harmful and easily spread throughout the social group, as pills are only effective in the treatment of symptoms and real treatment requires the action of a therapist able to deal with the supernatural world.

The last *halak* (shaman) among the Batek bands of Taman Negara who I had the honor to meet and work with (fig. 1), died about three years ago. This man, whose name was Macang, had received many therapeutic songs in dreams, but when I met him he was already very old and probably affected by tuberculosis.

The call to the profession and all the training of the young shamans among the Batek as well as among the Jahai take place in dreams with apparently no human intervention.



Fig. 1. *Halak* (shaman) Macang collecting medicinal plants in the jungle. Photo: Diana Riboli, 2005.

Semang-Negrito shamanism probably represents one of the oldest shamanic complexes in the world. The shamanic realm is the jungle itself, and the *halak*'s and *jampi*'s journey *in spiritu* takes place mostly in the rainforest. In a flight that takes place in a trance state often associated with a dream, shamans reach the most secret and marvelous places in the jungle in their search for medicinal plants and the help of the benevolent

spirits, who some Batek and Jahai groups call *cenoi*, beautiful beings in the form of tiny men and women who live in flowers.

In the Jahai and Batek shamanic complex the lack of any particular costume and ritual objects and the rareness of ceremonies is evident, with the jungle itself along with its flora and fauna held to be sacred. However, during the *sewang*, the only ceremony with a therapeutic purpose in which the entire group takes part and which must be celebrated only in the jungle, all participants adorn themselves with rainforest elements, their bandoliers, headgear, and ornaments made out of fresh leaves and flowers. During the *sewang*, it is absolutely forbidden to use objects or to consume food from the world outside the jungle.

To express the shamanic journey and the altered states of consciousness associated with it, Batek and Jahai shamans, when talking in Bahasa Malayu, use the expression “*berjalan dalam mimpi*” (“*cip jinglo tewin*” in Batek) or “walking in dreams.” During these states, as noted earlier, the most powerful shamans can assume the shape of various animals and even of plants.

Flora and fauna are two of the main pillars of the Jahai and Batek cultures. In the course of shamanic dreams the *halak* and the *jampi* mostly encounter supernatural beings in the form of animals and plants who give them therapeutic songs and advice to help them in their profession.

Halak Macang was able to transform himself into a tiger, though toward the end of his life he preferred to become a flower or a tree, as he felt he no longer had the strength to assume the form of a feline.

Despite the many difficulties and the decline of shamanic practices noted in the initial stages of my fieldwork, in the course of the last two years a revival of traditional beliefs has become evident in Batek bands and even amongst the sedentarized Jahai in Kelantan.

A few months after Macang’s funeral, many Batek camps were visited in the night by a big, friendly male tiger, a clear sign that the soul of the *halak* had entered the body of the feline so that he could continue to protect his companions. At the same time many young men started to receive a call to the shamanic profession. During their initiatory dreams, most of them meet and are instructed by animal spirits—and by Macang himself, who gives them a few therapeutic songs, especially to one young *halak* who seems to be very promising and who we will refer to as “A.”

A, who receives dreams almost every night, is already able to treat many diseases and to transform himself into a large scorpion. In this

form he goes to the river to catch crabs and then allows himself to be transported by the water of the river into the soil and from there to the roots of trees, bushes, and flowers, eventually reaching the inside of the trunks in order to examine the plants' therapeutic properties.

Other young Batek *halak* are able to metamorphose into butterflies, which is considered to be the easiest transformation and a sort of training that will enable them, one day, to assume other forms and especially the form of the tiger. When the shamans assume an animal form they are able to understand and communicate in the language of the animal chosen, whereas in the course of dreams animal spirits mainly communicate with them in Batek.

In any case, transformation into plant or animal forms and altered states of consciousness in general, which often can happen even to people who are not really undergoing shamanic training, are always said to be extremely pleasant and fulfilling. Shamans never feel in danger during these states, which represent a reconciliation with a primordial and perfect world, a world without suffering or sickness in which all beings live in perfect harmony and can communicate and even interchange forms.

For many years now—probably around ten—*sewang* ceremonies have not been held by the Batek of Taman Negara as Macang was too old and not physically strong enough to sustain their celebration. Everyone in the community remembers the last *sewang* with great nostalgia and complains that now he is gone their problems and sicknesses are on the increase. This is because the ceremonies empowered the Batek to absorb the “strength” of the jungle, believed to be able to counter any external pressures and attacks mounted on the ethnic group as a whole.

Among the sedentary Jahai, most of whom have converted to Islam, the situation initially appears to be more complicated because of the sometimes difficult encounter between traditional practices and beliefs and the official religion of the country.

In the villages I visited the psycho-physical condition of the inhabitants appears to be threatened by multiple factors. First of all by the change in diet, once rich in proteins and currently based mostly on carbohydrates and canned food and very deficient in vitamins and proteins due to the Muslim taboo related to the consumption of the wild products of the jungle. Second, it must be noted that few houses have a running water supply, which means that most of the population use water from the

dirty and polluted river running through the plantations and villages for all their requirements. As a consequence, over the last few years gastrointestinal conditions which are often lethal have increased, particularly amongst the children, who play and bathe daily in the river.

Many other sicknesses are present, such as dengue fever, dermatological diseases, malaria, and a high incidence of tuberculosis. According to the Jahai, once they were able to treat almost all conditions apart from tuberculosis with the medicinal plants of the jungle—which now are very difficult to find—and with the assistance of the *jampi*, the last of whom died about 10 years ago. However, many people in the villages, and especially the women, are still able to apply traditional therapies for minor diseases.

Most of the adults “walk in dreams,” even if their shamanic training is not complete. No one can transform into animal or plant form any more, but a few individuals are still able to call and communicate with animal spirits—and in any case the perception, feelings, and respect regarding the rainforest remain the same, as well as the distrust of the world “outside” the jungle.

Regarding the psychological impact of the situation on the Jahai, most of my informants report the fact that they experience a certain anxiety as they are afraid of losing their culture and becoming assimilated into a “modern” world which they feel is distant and which they do not really understand. The anxiety also derives from the fact that they believe that many pathological conditions are in reality ghost sicknesses which require the intervention of a skilled and powerful shaman. At present, most diseases and even death are attributed both to the “poisoned” food from the world outside the rainforest and to the polluted water as well as to the lack of “fully qualified” shamans.

It must be noted that the Jahai do not seem for now to find comfort in the Islamic religion. In the villages only very few people go regularly to the mosque, first of all because the Jahai do not understand the meaning of prayer—a practice totally absent from their traditional culture—and second because many believe that in the night ghosts roam around the mosque.

In this area my fieldwork was mainly concentrated on women, who are also the most exposed to pressures and anxiety because of their gender, the high child mortality rate, and the fact that it is mainly they who are in charge of the education and care of the next generation. The women and the *bidan* in particular are still able to hold small ceremo-

nies, which take place mostly in the jungle, and a few of them receive therapeutic songs in their dreams.

During my most recent fieldwork I discovered that women are also able to enter into states of trance while singing and rhythmically moving a leafy branch taken from the jungle in the same way that the Batek *halak* do. While in these states, women do not feel possessed by any supernatural spirit but just “invaded” by a “special strength.”

While in these states, some women are also able to communicate with the spirits of the deceased and in particular with the spirits of their deceased children, who advise and comfort them.

It should be noted that the word *jampi* in the Jahai language has two meanings: the first is ‘shaman,’ and the second is ‘magical spell/spells.’ Most of the women and many men in the villages can do *jampi*, or use magical spells which are sometimes spoken to a liquid or even whispered to the paracetamol pills which must be swallowed by the sick person.

Sedentary Jahai feel somehow free and stronger only when they leave the villages to enter the jungle. Unfortunately, in the Kelantan region rampant deforestation is destroying more and more of the natural environment every year. Because of this, the Jahai think that nature and mother rainforest are very angry and that all the benevolent spirits living in flowers which help shamans and people in distress have abandoned the area. This they have done together with those tigers with the ability to transform themselves into human beings that protected the communities from the attacks of normal tigers and other dangerous animals, which are becoming very aggressive in the region.

Both Batek and Jahai hope to be able to organize a big *sewang* in the jungle in the near future. Despite their distance from Taman Negara, the Jahai knew of Macang and are now hoping that during the *sewang* a new, powerful *halak* will soon be able to give them back the strength and the power of the jungle in order—in the words of one of my informants—for them “no longer to be afraid, for there to be no more sickness.”

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Integrating Contemporary and Traditional Healing Practices in Belize

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Belize, a “Caribbean nation in Central America,” became independent in 1981, though the Maya presence dates back thousands of years. This article examines the integration of traditional and contemporary healing practices in the Belize of modernity by focusing upon several illustrative examples from the Maya and from the Garifuna, an afro-indigenous group in Belize. A focus on allopathic approaches to psychological disorders in Belize further highlights issues regarding traditional and contemporary healing modalities. While often the traditional and modern systems work in isolation from each other, in parallel, thoughtful integration of healing modalities and mutual respect among practitioners offers substantial benefits.

Background

While it was first home to the ancient Maya several thousand years ago, Belize officially became a British colony in the 19th century after centuries of settlement by British loggers and colonization attempts by the Spanish. Located in Central America, Belize faces the Caribbean Sea to the east, Mexico to the north, and Guatemala to the west and south. Belize became an independent nation in 1981. Over the past twenty-five years or so, Belize has been a pillar of political stability in a region filled with civil war and economic fluctuations. It is the only nation in Central America with English as its official language, and its history and location, and especially its diverse population, makes this “Caribbean nation in Central America” unique.

Population estimates from 2009 indicate that the population of Belize is only 307,899, making Belize the least densely populated in Central

America. For comparison, though it is larger in area than Jamaica, a nation of approximately three million, Belize's population is about one tenth the size of that island nation. The largest city in Belize is its former capital, Belize City (formerly known as Belize Town), which has a population of about 70,000. Other communities are considerably smaller. For instance, the next seven largest towns range in size from Punta Gorda in the south (about 5,000) to the national capitol Belmopan (17,570). The "urban" population of Belize comprises about one half of the population. These towns aside, the remainder of Belize is largely comprised of rural communities.

Belize is a diverse nation. About 50% of the population identifies as Mestizo, 25% as Creole, 13% as Maya, 6% as Garifuna, and 3% as Mennonite (which in Belize can indicate both a religion and being a Caucasian of Mennonite heritage), with other groups, including East Indian, Lebanese, and Chinese/Taiwanese also represented. Creoles are the descendents of white British colonists and African slaves. As slavery was coming to an end, a 1835 census of what was then known as the Bay Settlement indicated 1,184 slaves, which represented 47% of the population. It is possible that this census and others like it did not adequately enumerate any Maya population that may have been living outside the major colonial settlements such as what is now Belize City. Estimates of the ancient Maya population during pre-Columbian times range from 50,000 to 500,000 or even one million. Today, according to the 2000 census, three Maya groups are included. Ketchi represent about 5.3% of the nation's population, Mopan 3.9%, and Yucatec, who are much more numerous on the Yucatán peninsula in Mexico, about 1.4%. The Garifuna, an Afro-Indigenous people created from the mixture of Africans and Caribs on St. Vincent, appeared in Belize in the nineteenth century, with the first probably arriving in 1802, and others several decades later, following exile to Central America.

The current demographics represent a substantial change from the first half of the twentieth century. For example, 1946 statistics show the Creole population as 38% of the population, Mestizos as 31% of the population, and Maya as 16.9% of the population. Such figures have important implications for language, education, social policy, health care, and identity. For instance, while the official language of Belize is English, and the lingua franca is commonly recognized as Creole, the 2000 census reported that 46% of the population spoke Spanish primarily, 32.9% spoke Creole primarily, 8.9% spoke a Maya language

primarily, 3.9% spoke English primarily, 3.4% spoke Garifuna (a language which is a combination of Arawak and African languages), 3.3% spoke German primarily (mostly Mennonites), and the remaining 1–2% spoke another language. More than twenty-five percent of the population reported that they were not fluent in English and an additional twenty percent indicated that they spoke no English.

Racial and ethnic groups have historically tended to be located in varying geographic regions of Belize, leading to many sociopolitical challenges that have impacted government policy, including health. This was especially true in the colonial era, prior to the construction of modern roads and airports (Grant 1976). The center of Afro-Creole culture historically has been Belize City, with many Mestizos living in the north and west, including Corozal and San Ignacio. Many Maya, especially Ketchi and Mopan, concentrated in the southern, mostly rural Toledo District, with some Yucatec Maya historically located in the north. The Garifuna have traditionally dwelled in coastal communities, including Dangriga, Hopkins, and Seine Bight, but significant numbers live throughout present day Belize, including Belize City.

Belize's religions are diverse. English colonialism left a Protestant legacy, and many Belizeans identify as Anglicans and Methodists. More recently missionary work has led to increasing Pentecostal and Adventist converts. In the nineteenth century, the decades-long Caste War of the Yucatán brought a return of the Roman Catholic Church by refugees from the north of Belize. Many Mestizos and Garifuna, as well as Maya are today members of this faith. Traditional spiritual beliefs are also practiced, often in a syncretic fashion with more organized faith traditions. Some Creoles (and others) maintain beliefs in obeah, and some Maya maintain traditional ways. Traditional Garifuna spiritual practice, with its focus on honoring the ancestors, is well represented, typically in syncretic fashion with Catholicism. In 1958, at the invitation of Belize, the Mennonites arrived via Mexico, Canada, and elsewhere. Today both traditional (such as those who choose not to utilize steel reinforced wagon wheels) and more modern communities (such as those who embrace instrumental music and even the Internet) exist. Other religions in Belize include Baha'i, Hinduism, Islam, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, and a brand of Rastafarianism (Rich In press).

General Social Conditions in Belize

According to the 2006 Human Development Index of the United Nations, which measures life expectancy, education, and income, Belize ranked 88th out of 179 ranked nations in the world. In comparison with other nearby Central American nations, such as Guatemala (ranked 131st overall) and Honduras (ranked 117th overall), Belize is favorably ranked and it directly follows 87th ranked Jamaica overall. Belize lags somewhat behind Mexico, its much larger neighbor to the north, which was ranked 51st overall, and the United States, ranked 15th overall. Due to difficult economic conditions, emigration of trained, educated personnel has been an issue. For instance, in 1992 the Ministry of Health employed 365 nurses (about 15 per 10,000 in the population then), including 39 rural health nurses, 13 public health nurses, 12 psychiatric nurse practitioners, and five family nurse practitioners. Between 1989 and 1991, it was estimated that 8 percent of the total nurses (about 30 nurses) emigrated (National Committee for Families and Children 1995: 29).

At birth, a Belizean girl has a life expectancy of 70 years, while for boys life expectancy is about 66 years. The 2006 Human Development Index ranks Belize 41st for life expectancy, ahead of Guatemala (102nd), Honduras (105th), and Mexico (42nd). The infant mortality rate indicates 23 deaths out of every 1,000 live births (26 per 1,000 for boys and 20 per 1,000 girls). The infant mortality rate in the poorer southern districts (Stann Creek = 42/1,000; Toledo = 51/1,000) is about double the rate in Belize District (23/1,000), which has the best medical care in the nation (NCFC 1995: 31). The total fertility rate indicates 3.36 children born per woman. Despite migration, Belize's population has doubled since its 1981 independence and continues to increase. 37% of the population is age fourteen or younger, 58.6% are between ages 15 and 64, and only about 3% are over age 65. The median age is 20.4 years. While this age profile is quite similar to those of Guatemala and Honduras, the profile for the United States is quite different: 20% aged fourteen and under, 67% aged between 15 and 64, and 12.8% over age 65, with a median age of 38 (Rich In press).

Health issues are a major concern for Belizeans. The adult prevalence of HIV/AIDS is about 2%, and about 3,600 Belizeans are living with HIV/AIDS. It is the fourth leading cause of death in Belize, and it has been estimated that there is 30% under-reporting. Major infectious

diseases include bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever. The nation monitors for dengue fever and malaria and publicizes these and other health dangers. Chronic illnesses, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes now tend to be greater threats to more Belizeans than acute infectious illnesses. The main causes of infant deaths in recent years have included respiratory disease, asphyxia, congenital malformation, sepsis, and other causes, including cerebral infection, cardiac failure, meningitis, and acute diarrhea. The main causes of child deaths in recent years have been respiratory disease, dehydration, cerebral infection/irritation, sepsis, drowning, cardiac failure, as well as other causes such as pulmonary tuberculosis and broncopneumonia (NCFC 1995: 32). The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Natural Resources share responsibility for environmental health education. The Ministry of Health runs health education programs through the Health Education and Community Partnership Bureau and the Primary Health Care Office. Over the past decade or so, programs have included one to combat cholera by teaching improved hygiene and sanitation (NCFC 1995: 56). Television news segments have also aimed to educate the public concerning health issues. Sample recent efforts have focused upon HIV/AIDS, diabetes education, and coping with grief and loss and other psychological issues. Eleanor Bennett, coordinator of mental health services (Channel 7 News 12/15/09), Jennifer Lovell, president of the Mental Health Association (Channel 5 News 6/4/09) and Belizean psychiatrist Claudia Cayetano (Channel 5 News 11/12/09) have been instrumental in such efforts.

A perennial problem has been funding and staffing for hospitals and medical care. In 1992, Belize had about 110 trained physicians, of which only five were pediatricians. About 2/3 of the physicians were in government employment, though many of these physicians also had part-time private practices as a means of supplementing income (NCFC 1995: 28). To fill vacancies left by those medical professionals who emigrate, medical staff from other nations, such as Cuban physicians, has supplemented the Belize workforce.

Belize has seven government hospitals, with at least one in each of the six districts. Belize City and San Ignacio each also have a private hospital. There are about thirty-five functioning health centers and seventeen rural health outposts across the nation (NCFC 1995: 27). While Belize City is well served by its hospital, community health centers in other towns are rudimentary, and many small villages are not served

at all by such centers or outposts. Issues regarding the finances and management of the healthcare system in Belize, including its hospital in Belize City, have been at the forefront of the news for several years. If they are able to afford it, many Belizeans may prefer to seek health care in Mexico or the United States. However, most Belizeans cannot afford such care. In her 1973 examination of psychiatric care in Belize, Bullard was able to write that “there are no instances of persons taking their spouses or relatives outside of British Honduras to see psychiatrists and neurologists or sending people to special clinics for the mentally ill in the United States or Mexico, although they do send persons abroad for problems caused by physical illness” (1973: 72). However, she was able to note that for mental illness that was suspected to be caused by “black magic” “for more difficult cases, the patient may be taken to a well known obeah specialist, often as far away as Mérida” (1973: 72) in Mexico. Notably, the expense of such trips was typically considerably much less than a trip to a modern allopathic physician in a hospital in Belize, and the treatment was often viewed more favorably.

Given Belize’s unique history, it is not surprising that a variety of healing modalities have developed over time. Maya traditions coexist with Garifuna ones, and both exist alongside the conventional modern allopathic medicine originally associated with the colonial powers from England. In addition, other religious, racial and ethnic groups, including the Creoles, Mestizos, Mennonites, and East Indians, have brought their healing traditions to Belize. From time to time traditions borrow from each other in interesting ways, as a healing modality or herbal remedy originally associated with one group begins to become utilized by another group. In the multicultural brew of Belize, opportunities for cross-fertilization of techniques are ample, and one may easily find individual cases of persons from one group who occasionally or routinely utilize techniques most closely associated with another group. Whether these various healing modalities work together in an integrated fashion, especially with respect to modern allopathic medicine as conventionally practiced by trained physicians, or whether they simply exist in parallel, working as more or less independent healing systems, is a matter of considerable debate. This article examines two groups of modern Belize, the Maya, who are indigenous to the land, and the afro-indigenous Garifuna, as case studies of how contemporary and traditional healing practices may or may not integrate.

The Maya

The first inhabitants of Belize were the ancient Maya (or their precursors, sometimes referred to as the Paleo-Indians) who lived a nomadic way of life, leaving evidence of occupation dating back from approximately 15,000 to 7,000 B.C. Ancient Maya history is typically dated in four eras, the preclassic, classic, terminal classic, and postclassic, dating from about 2,500 B.C. to about 1,500 A.D. The monumental architecture, carved stelae, ceramics, codices and other evidence left many clues as to the nature of society. Remarkably, many elements of the ancient religion and cosmology described by archaeologists and the ancient Maya themselves (e.g. McKillop 2004) persist in the practices and beliefs of the Belizean Maya today. Furthermore, anthropologists' accounts from the early and mid-twentieth century reveal great consistency in the healing and spiritual traditions practiced by the Maya of today.

For instance, Rosita Arvigo and Michael Balick describe one hundred healing herbs of Belize in their 1998 book *Rainforest Remedies*. Thomas Gann, in his 1918 book *The Maya Indians of Southern Yucatán and Northern British Honduras*, describes about a dozen plants utilized medicinally, most of which are also described eighty years later by Arvigo and Balick. For instance, Gann describes the use of ruda for children suffering from convulsions (1918: 39), Bullard (1973: 75) notes its use for the evil eye and that it is “grown in most yards,” and Arvigo and Balick note that it is utilized in the present day for muscle spasms, stomach cramps, epilepsy, the evil eye, and fainting spells. The authors note that it is also an abortifacient that may be fatal to the mother (1998: 179). As another example, Gann describes pichi (made from guava) as being used for ulcers and sores (1918: 38) while Arvigo and Balick note that it may be used for mouth sores and bleeding gums, skin sores and ulcers, and upset stomach (1998: 117). As a third example, Gann notes that chalche is used for neuralgic pains and rheumatism (1918: 39) and Arvigo and Balick note that it may be utilized for painful joints and aches (1998: 181). Of course, one could go back further in time to the infamous account by Friar Diego de Landa (1566: 108) which, despite the author's obvious bias against the Maya (it was he who destroyed thousands of Maya writings in the 1562 auto-da-fé at Mani), provides interesting documentation concerning such issues as Maya cosmological, numerical, and calendar beliefs, in addition to descriptions of heal-

ing plants and their uses. Clear continuity in a number of elements from then to the present day Maya are easily apparent.

Arvigo and Balick have developed a classification system for traditional Maya healers in Belize. The authors notes that these categories “have developed over the centuries” (1998: 5). While the categories have some overlap, there are different emphases for each healer type. For instance, the doctor/shaman/h'men category is viewed as being at the top of a hierarchy in terms of power and connection to the divine. The “village healer” by contrast is viewed as a man or woman who has cared for many family members and may be the primary healthcare provider in a village. A “grannie healer” typically only cared for family members and will provide home remedies for common ailments such as diarrhea. The midwife is the traditional birth attendant and is usually a female (or male among the Ketchi in Southern Belize) and may provide herbal remedies, including baths and teas. The “massage therapist/*sobadera*” may be a man or woman and their healing powers are often considered a divine gift that may be passed on across generations. The “bone setter/folk chiropractor” focuses on sprains and broken bones and may utilize a form of traditional Mayan acupuncture, including the use of stingray spines. In his early twentieth century observations, Gann also describes the bone-setting techniques that are well known to present day in Belize. Furthermore, he writes that “massage is practiced chiefly for uterine and ovarian pains by the older women, who also act as midwives. Specifically he describes massage of the uterus (1918: 38), a technique used by Maya healers in the late twentieth century (Arvigo 1994). Several decades after Gann, Villa Rojas also noted the techniques of the bone-setter (1945: 137) as well as the utilization of massage. Villa Rojas found no “professional bonesetters” and noted the work could be performed by a h'men or anyone with the needed skills (1945: 138). Finally, returning to the classification system for healers, Arvigo and Balick describe the “snake doctor” type of healer who focuses on bites from snakes, scorpions, bats, rats, dogs, etc. Often the healer may possess a secret formula, considered especially important given the reality that often the local clinic will not carry anti-venom for all animals, such as the potentially lethal bite of the tommy goff snake.

Arvigo and Balick also write about concepts underlying the traditional treatment of disease in Belize (1998: 8), such as local concepts of etiology. The authors discuss important distinctions between what are viewed as spiritual and what are viewed as physical diseases, and

also note the importance of prayer, thermal equilibrium, the movement of sap in plants, numbers such as the number nine. Furthermore, they write about local concepts such as the evil eye and the impact of bad winds. Once again, continuity can be easily documented for many of these concepts through ethnographic accounts of the early and middle twentieth century. For instance, in his work among the Maya, Villa Rojas describes many beliefs about the causes of disease, especially the impact of bad or evil winds (1945: 134) and the evil eye (1945: 135).

In her widely popular book *Sastun* (1994), Arvigo describes her apprenticeship with Don Elijio, a famous Maya shaman living in western Belize. Arvigo, who was born in the 1940s in Chicago in the United States, received her D.N. degree from the Chicago College of Naprapathy in 1981 and then relocated to Belize, where she knew there would be greater freedom to practice her healing modalities. In her work with Don Elijio, who lived beyond age one hundred before passing away in 1996, Arvigo describes many instances when traditional and modern healing systems were in conflict. For instance, Don Elijio, despite his reputation, had much difficulty in locating an apprentice who would agree to the rigorous training. Don Elijio feared that his knowledge would die with him, since he felt that young Belizeans were not interested in the traditional Maya healing. He also expressed initial concern that Arvigo would return to the United States after her training, leaving the Belizean Maya unserved. In another instance, Arvigo described how Protestant missionaries would periodically visit villages near where Don Elijio worked, conveying the message that the Maya healing system was based on sacrilegious superstitions and that true believers should be Christians who did not utilize Maya faith healing. Arvigo reports that after such missions, visits by patients to Don Elijio would taper off temporarily for a while. While Don Elijio was skeptical of modern allopathic medicine, he was not completely hostile to it, and would send patients and relatives to the Belize City hospital when he felt it was warranted. Conversely, some patients and authorities expressed skepticism about Don Elijio's brand of healing, one that did not come with formal training and paper credentials. Only late in life, after recognition of his work by scholars such as ethnobotanist Michael Balick, Ph.D., was Don Elijio recognized formally in his own nation with awards such as the Distinguished Citizen Award from University College Belize.

Over the last fifteen years or so, Arvigo has developed a thriving practice, including training programs and product sales of books, vid-

eos, incense, bumper stickers (“Save the Uterus” proclaims one sticker), and herbal remedies. She currently offers about a half dozen courses at various levels, ranging from three days to about a week. The courses are offered both in the United States and in Belize, and she has trained some of her own students, who now serve as approved, certified teachers as well. Her basic self-care training can cost about \$400 U.S. dollars, while her professional care training runs about \$1,650 to \$2,200 U.S. dollars and her certification training costs about \$1,500 U.S. The trainings are often available as continuing education units for practitioners in the United States in fields such as massage therapy, midwifery, and acupuncture. She maintains an up-to-date website listing the times, places, and costs of her trainings and order forms for her many products. For instance, for about \$7 U.S. one may purchase one ounce of products such as aloe vera and beeswax in attractively labeled bottles, bearing Maya-inspired artwork. Other of her remedies have been given fanciful names such as “belly be good” and “traveler’s tonic” and are advertised for maladies including insect bites, diarrhea, virility, fibromyalgia, and back pain. Many of these herbal products are available in Belize in tourist areas, such as airport stores and hotels, or shops on the heavily touristed cayes. Her trainings for “Maya Abdominal Massage,” which she describes as a “non-invasive external massage technique that guides internal abdominal organs into their proper position for optimum health and well being,” have become especially popular.

Arvigo’s success has led to considerable controversy in Belize. Alex Greene’s fieldwork in the late 1990s, when he was an anthropology graduate student in western Belize, found that the “potential riches awaiting those who contribute plants to medical science are common knowledge, while the relative infrequency of such jackpots is rarely understood” (1997: 42). The Belize Association of Traditional Healers (BATH) was formed in 1992, with about nine healers of various ethnicities, and was in large part organized by Dr. Rosita Arvigo. It attracted the interest of the New York Botanical Garden—and this association with a “rich” organization from the United States led to envy and greed on the part of some—the BATH was not universally admired or “at least not universally trusted,” according to Greene (1998: 43). Greene writes that after a shift in the political party at the national level, Arvigo was accused by a new member of BATH of embezzlement and denounced despite no evidence (she was not the group’s treasurer, for instance). As Greene rightly notes, “as an American with a successful cottage industry of herbal tinc-

tures and rain forest tours, and with connections to the NYBG, she was a natural suspect” (1997: 44). Arvigo received three death threats and resigned, followed by the other BATH healers.

The dichotomy between traditional healers and modern allopathic ones remains intense. During the controversy in the 1990s, one faculty member of the University College of Belize said that “the issues of bio-prospecting are too important to be left to the healers themselves,” and some wanted Arvigo out of the picture and viewed the healers as naïve and/or illiterate, noting that the healers were not familiar with writing grant proposals, or the formal academic research process (Greene 1997: 44). In the present day, many urban Belizeans, particularly those educated in the elite preparatory academies, are apt to view Arvigo’s work as a sham and her products as overpriced mementos for foreign tourists. It is important to note, however, that many of the same herbs sold by Arvigo are available free of charge to Belizeans knowledgeable about herbal remedies who take the time to collect and prepare their own herbs. Furthermore, outside of the tourist areas, one frequently sees the same herbal remedies sold on the street for dramatically reduced “local” prices. Often it appears the only difference between these products sold for local consumption and Arvigo’s products is that the local products come without the fancy bottles and labels. Indeed, in one view, what Arvigo has done is to import Maya techniques and herbs learned from the Maya of Belize to the United States and then back to Belize at prices few Belizeans can afford. A more charitable view is that she has documented potentially dying traditional practices and herbs, and as a result, has found considerable financial and personal success in addition to her important work aimed at preserving the rainforests, the plants needed for the herbal remedies, and the knowledge of traditional healing.

Arvigo remains a controversial figure in Belize, one whose work is both well-publicized and yet frequently greeted with suspicion. While Greene correctly notes that Arvigo originally came to Belize to “escape American medical hegemony” (1997: 45), as her work was seen as quite alternative to mainstream medicine in the USA, she had become part of the “establishment” in Belize in a number of ways, through her power, economic success, and international connections. Though some Belizeans may indeed view the “herbal healer as cultural hero,” as symbolic of an emerging national identity, and as practitioners who “may help democratize health care,” Greene’s view that healers’

voices may be silenced by the “very symbolic systems that valorize them” (1997: 45) remains as true today as ten years ago when Greene wrote his important article.

In sum, what is clear, is that however one views the use of these herbal remedies from a political or social justice standpoint, the fact remains that they currently exist outside the system of allopathic medicine. For instance, one does not expect one’s physician to present one with herbs when one goes to the hospital in Belize City. Allopathic medicine and Maya medicine appear to be systems that work side by side with little integration, with rare exceptions such as the involvement of ethnobotanist Michael Balick with Don Elijio. Balick’s research aimed in part to locate the underlying biological mechanisms (in “Western” scientific terms) by which the h’men’s plants heal. Don Elijio’s interest in helping Balick (by sharing his knowledge of plants with the ethnobotanist) would be one example of a Maya healer working towards integration from the indigenous point of view.

Mutual respect and dialogue across healing systems is important for a number of reasons, not the least of which is safe and effective healing. To cite just one example of cultural miscommunication, Bullard (1973: 73) cites cases of evil eye treatments by ‘bush doctors,’ ‘local curers,’ and ‘obeah men’ that led to the deaths of a number of children. Since it is believed that the evil eye often brings “gastrointestinal upsets, fevers, and extreme dehydration,” parents are often justifiably concerned of the grave consequences of non-treatment. According to the “Western” biomedical model, the children die since the dehydration, fever, and consequent convulsions are not kept in check by intravenous fluids, anti-pyretics, etc. What Bullard insightfully realized is that “ironically it is precisely because mothers realize that *mal de ojo* is fatal that they do not entrust their children to a government doctor or a physician in private practice. They reason that the child’s best chance is with a local practitioner who at least understands the nature of disease” (1973: 73). It is worth noting that dehydration due to diarrheal disease is not a problem that disappeared with colonialism. Indeed, it was the second leading cause of death in Belizean children in 1991 and a survey found that almost eleven percent of children under five had a case of diarrhea in the two weeks before the survey (NCFC 1995: 33). One tends to think that if allopathic physicians and practitioners would learn about local belief systems and remedies, and be receptive to facilitating faith healing (such as inviting a traditional healer into the hospital room)

when patients request it, fewer such unfortunate incidents would occur. Rather than remaining ignorant of the beliefs of health care consumers from different faith groups, or presenting a superior attitude towards such belief systems, understanding and respect seem more sensible. In health matters, failure to communicate can be lethal, and with cases such as the one just discussed, it is clear that there should be little room for professional jealousies or rivalries between practitioners from different healing systems.

The Garifuna

Like the Maya of Belize, traditional healing among the Garifuna has a long history. While the Garifuna have a very different history and culture than the Maya, it is worth discussing both groups in the context of an examination of how traditional and contemporary healing may integrate in the setting of the recently formed nation-state of Belize.

Perhaps the most succinct description of the Garifuna was written by Sarah England (2006). It is worth citing: “The Garifuna are an Afro-Indigenous people born out of the mixture of Africans and Caribs on the island of St. Vincent, exiled to Central America, and turned transnational migrants to the United States since the 1940s. They are thus members of three diasporas—the African diaspora, the Garifuna diaspora, and the Central American diaspora. They are simultaneously black, indigenous, and Latino: Honduran, Belizean, Guatemalan, Nicaraguan, and North American; part of Central America and part of the Caribbean. As an ethnic group they share a common language, history and culture that unites them across national borders” (England 2006: xiii). The status of the Garifuna as afro-indigenous has important implications in Belize, especially given the current legal situation regarding land rights for indigenous peoples such as the Ketchi and Mopan Maya in Southern Belize (Wainwright 2008). The Garifuna cite 1802 as the date of their arrival to Belize (Cayetano and Cayetano circa 2009).

The Belizean Garifuna are at a crossroads in many ways, as young people decide whether to remain in Central America or emigrate to the United States, whether to speak the Garifuna language and practice traditional beliefs or to assimilate into an exclusively English-Creole speaking Christian way of living.

Anthropologists have long been interested in the Garifuna religion and spiritual healing practices. For instance, Douglas Taylor (1951), Nancie Gonzalez (1969), and Virginia Kerns (1997) have all published influential books on the Garifuna and recently Garifuna anthropologists, such as Joseph Palacio (2005), have written seminal publications on Garifuna culture. Such publications detail a number of the important healing practices among the Garifuna, such as the *amuyadahani* (the bathing of the spirit of the dead), the *chugú* (the feeding of the dead), and the most sacred rite, the *düügü*, or feasting of the dead. A *düügü* is held following a request made by a deceased ancestor, typically during a ceremony held by the *buyei* healer. Often a *düügü* is held when a family has gone through a series of troubles or misfortunes such as illness or death. While the *düügü* is enormously complex, in brief it involves considerable planning and expense as invitations to friends and relatives abroad must be made and advance notice given, and much food and drink acquired. The main purpose of the *düügü* is the placating of the ancestors on whose behalf the *düügü* is held. Benefits of the *düügü* include “psychological release,” according to Palacio (Cayetano and Cayetano circa 2009: 8) and “general improvement in people’s condition, including curing of disease.” It is noted that the stipend charged by the *buyei* is “far less than that of a medical doctor’s fee” and that the “greatest benefits to be derived from ancestral rites is that they are a means of re-asserting group solidarity among friends, relatives, and within the community at large” (circa 2009: 8).

Paul Johnson presents an excellent case study of how traditional Garifuna practices meet modernity in his book *Diaspora Conversions* (2007), which was based on seven years of fieldwork in Honduras and in the Bronx, in New York City. He argues that pressures “toward assimilation or Protestant conversion” on the one hand and a pull towards “African tradition” on the other hand, are “not socially bifurcated but rather work in tandem” (2007: 22). He rightly notes that as emigrants to New York the Garifuna are exposed to “the religions of their neighbors, including Cuban Santería, Haitian Vodou, Trinidadian Orisha, and Puerto Rican Santerismo” and “they have begun to view their religion in relation to these others and to perceive themselves as members of the religious African Diaspora” (2007: 22). In Belize, similar dynamics are at play, as the Garifuna draw parallels to their African Creole countrymen and note similarities and differences in traditions, and to the Belizean Maya as well, as the Garifuna are an

afro-indigenous people. What Johnson notes of his observations in New York and Honduras could be said by many of Belize: the Garifuna religion has “proudly and overtly syncretized African, European and Amerindian influences” (2007: 17). As one example from Belize, Bishop O. P. Martin, the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese, is a Garifuna, and one proudly listed alongside a dozen other Garifuna “contributors and heroes” in a recently published information booklet to a Garifuna Museum in Belize (Cayetano and Cayetano circa 2009). In fact, many Catholic services will include drums and Garifuna songs, particularly with respect to the importance of honoring ancestors, a central aspect of Garifuna religion and also part of the Christian tradition. In fact Johnson writes (perhaps too strongly) that “Catholicism also played a role in the formative stages of Garifuna religion, Today all traditional Garifuna religious actors consider themselves to be Catholic and Catholicism provides the overall mythic structure within which the ancestor religion is maintained” (2007: 73). While a century ago, a British colonial referred to Garifuna rituals such as the *dügü* as the “Devil’s Feast,” (2007: 84) today Catholic saints “are prominent on Garifuna altars and specific saints like Esquipula and San Antonio are called on as ever-present sources of assistance” (2007: 73).

The ethnogenesis of the Garifuna reflects diverse traditions, including both African and indigenous influences, and these are reflected in the healing modalities practiced by the group along with other influences such as Roman Catholicism. Modernity has led to a number of challenges (including possible language loss, emigration, and economic hardship) with regard to the cultural survival of this group, that instead of leading to the loss of the faith traditions have strengthened them (Johnson 2007). While many Garifuna continue to believe at least elements of the traditional belief system, and to utilize at least some of the healing techniques, whether herbal remedies or prayer, there appears to be little integration of allopathic medicine with traditional healing. Instead, a person may more typically make a decision concerning whether a problem is a spiritual or Garifuna issue on the one hand, or a physical problem not caused by spiritual matters (such as neglecting an ancestor) on the other, and then consult a modern allopathic practitioner or a traditional *buyei* accordingly. While there are certainly cases of Garifuna working in allopathic medicine, most notably the Garifuna psychiatrist Claudia Cayetano, who is highly visible as a spokesperson

for the profession, there is little indication of deliberate, overt attempts made at integrating the two systems.

While the examples of the Maya and Arvigo and the Garifuna and Roman Catholicism are different in many, many ways, both illustrate the important fact that traditions do not exist in isolation and that socio-historical conditions are never non-changing and static. In both cases, there is little formal integration with the allopathic healing system, though individual patients from both Maya and Garifuna cultures may sometimes utilize traditional cultural healing and other times utilize allopathic healing, often after making a decision as to whether the perceived problem is related to a cultural issue (such as religion) or to a purely physical issue not caused by spiritual factors.

Mental Health

One forum in which traditional healing systems and modern allopathic healing systems may especially come into conflict is the realm of what are termed psychiatric or psychological disorders by modern “Western” allopathic medicine. In the United States, disorders such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder are likely to be treated by a combination of psychotropic medication prescribed by a psychiatrist and talk therapy with a trained psychologist or other psychotherapist. Recently however, rigorous, carefully controlled research on integrative, complementary, and alternative medicine in the United States has demonstrated considerable efficacy for such illnesses when treating such disorders with massage therapy, chiropractic adjustments, music, movement, and dance therapies, and certain herbal remedies such as kava kava and St. John’s Wort, etc. (Field 2008; Taylor 1999). Interestingly, a number of these techniques bear striking similarities to some of the techniques traditionally used in Belize by the Maya (such as the massage, the work of the bone-setter, and the use of herbs) and Garifuna (such as the use of herbs, and the use of music, movement, and dance therapies). However, there is currently little integration of traditional Maya and Garifuna techniques and modern allopathic techniques when it comes to mental health treatment in Belize. Instead, the two healing systems again seem to work apart from each other.

In Belize, psychiatric disorders are especially unlikely to be treated by allopathic practitioners. Research (on allopathic approaches) based

on prevalence rates in Puerto Rico, judged to be a more apt comparison than to the United States, estimated that 97% of all such disorders were untreated in Belize, including 63% of schizophrenia cases, 89% of affective disorders (such as depression), and 99% of anxiety disorders (such as post traumatic stress disorder) (Bonander et al. 2000).

There is recognition that those with mental health issues are underserved. For instance, in part due to the perception of “crazy people locked off from society first at Sea View and more recently at Rockview,” (2/27/03 Channel 5 News), in 2003 ground was broken for a new acute psychiatric wing at the Karl Heusner Memorial Hospital in Belize City and plans were announced for the construction of a modern mental health facility in the nation’s capitol to replace Rockview. In 2005, media attention noted the problem of Belize’s “street people” in Belize City, noting that many had become homeless in part due to psychiatric conditions (3/31/05). Plans for a resource center were announced which would offer out-patient group therapy, hot meals, and occupational therapy and which would make available trained medical professionals to serve up to one hundred transient clients. However, as of 2006, the plans had not fully materialized. The mental health facility at Belmopan hospital could only serve four clients and Rockview’s capacity was fifty-two patients. At this time Rockview charged patients an optional one dollar a day and could not force patients to remain there (5/24/06 Channel 7 News). Finally, in 2007 ground was broken in the nation’s capitol city for a half-way house for those with psychiatric disorders (3/20/07 Channel 7 News Belize). It is important to recall however, that most Belizeans live at great distances from both Belize City and Belmopan and are unlikely to have access to these institutions.

According to Bullard (1973: 42), there was no psychiatrist in Belize (then British Honduras) until 1964 when a Chief Medical Officer who was also a psychiatrist arrived. Thirty years later, the 70-bed Rockview psychiatric hospital had a medical staff of 28, including two psychiatrists, six psychiatric nurses, and 20 trained medical attendants (NCFC 1995: 28). To serve the rest of the nation, each of Belize’s six districts has, in theory, two psychiatric nurse practitioners. The system is clearly overtaxed and underserved. Indeed, at times over the last decade or so there has not been a single psychiatrist in the nation, with treatment often provided by nurses or generalists. With the aim of improving care, in 1991, the Ministry of Health trained eighteen psychiatric nurses in a three year program with the assistance of a university in Newfoundland,

Canada (5/23/2000 Channel 5 News). However, resources remain scarce. The 1995 telephone directory yellow pages listed no psychologists, no social workers, no therapists, ten social service agencies, and two pages of physicians (but no psychiatrists). The 2008 telephone directory yellow pages show that little has changed in terms of advertised services. The more recent directory lists no psychologists, therapists, or social workers, several pages of physicians (but no psychiatrists), though twelve social service agencies are listed, and some of these agencies, such as the Salvation Army and Dorothy Menzies Home, offer some relevant services. The non-medication or under-medication of psychiatric patients has led to several unfortunate confrontations between such individuals and police, as well as increased homelessness. However, there have been attempts to provide free medication to psychiatric patients with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and depression in the past, which as of 2005, made Belize and Panama the only two nations in the Caribbean and Central America to do so, according to Vildo Marin, the Minister of Health (5/9/2005 Channel 7). According to available news reports, 2,000 Belizeans received psychotropic medications at public health facilities at this time (5/9/2005 Channel 7). Belizean psychiatrist Claudia Cayetano, has often served as a one person advocate for those with severe and persistent mental illness, educating the public, organizing educational opportunities, and providing services.

The Channel 7 news from December 15, 2009 reported that a revised mental health policy is being drafted and in the consultation phase, led by the Pan American Health Organization and the Mental Health Association. The previous mental health policy was drafted in the 1960's, and according to Eleanor Bennett, the coordinator of mental health services, included very outdated language, including words such as "imbecile" and "idiot." Bennett also noted the move in Belize from a reliance upon institutions to greater use of community based organizations. In her television interview she noted that individuals representing a variety of professions, and government departments such as Health, Social Services, Education, Police, and the Judiciary were involved, but there is no mention about traditional healers at all. It is worthy of note that while it is admirable that colonial era documents are being updated to avoid offensive language, traditional healers have never been known to refer to their clients with such disparaging labels. In fact, the proposed modern system, with its focus on re-integrating the troubled person back into family and community (as opposed to the earlier institution approach),

sounds in a number of ways, more similar to traditional healing than to colonial era psychiatry. In her 1973 work in Belize, Bullard, whose work is heavily influenced by the social construction approach to mental illness which was becoming popular in the 1970s, realized that often the family, village, and ethnic community of the sick individual was better able to make a correct diagnosis of health than was the psychiatric establishment, whose gatekeepers had often only had just met the potential patient. As anthropologist Bullard, notes (1973: 48), “the person who will know the least about the prospective patient is the examining psychiatrist and his opinion is the least crucial.”

Nevertheless, despite the fact that at least one anthropologist some years ago recognized what traditional healers had long known, the traditional healers are no where present in the current dialogue with the allopathic healers concerning the mental health policy revision. As a further irony, while Belizean Garifuna psychiatrist Claudia Cayetano is to be commended for her efforts on behalf of persons with severe and persistent mental illness from an allopathic approach, at least in her public statements she has made no mention of the value or role of traditional healers, whether Maya or afro-indigenous or other. Nevertheless, she is justifiably listed, with a dozen or so others, as a “Garifuna contributor and hero” along with Joseph Chatoyer, T.V. Ramos, and Alejo Beni in *Luba Garifuna*, the informational booklet from the Garifuna Cultural Museum (Cayetano and Cayetano circa 2009). Once again, traditional healing and contemporary allopathic healing typically work as separate systems. Given the paucity of available allopathic care for psychological disorders, and given the recent empirical research indicating at least some efficacy for complementary and integrative healing modalities, it seems like a wise course of action would be to encourage dialogue among practitioners from both systems and from the various religious, racial, and ethnic groups in Belize.

Conclusion: The Possibility of the Integration of Traditional and Contemporary Healing Systems in Belize

Integration of traditional and contemporary healing in Belize is often non-existent. That is to say, often the two systems work in parallel. Sometimes those in rural areas have no other options other than a

local healer, typically one from one's own ethnic group. Often in case of snake bites, insect bites, accidents, and disease, Belize City is simply too far a journey or too expensive a gamble. Likewise, a number of Belizeans, particularly those from Belize City and those who have considerable contact with the sizable tourist market (such as on the cayes), may express strong preferences for modern 'Western' allopathic medicine whenever possible, such as is offered in the hospital in Belize City. Such individuals often remark that if possible, such as if funding permitted, they would even prefer seeking treatment in hospitals in nearby Mexico, such as in Cozumel or Mérida, or in the United States (such as in Florida). The stated reasons often suggest that these individuals view the highly (formally) trained practitioners and more modern facilities as superior to those offered in Belize. This preference seemed especially true if the medical condition was perceived to be rare, hard to treat, serious, or purely physical (as opposed to spiritual) in nature. In fact, a number of the city and town dwellers who expressed a preference for 'Western' medicine often disparaged traditional healing systems. For instance, a number of such individuals viewed Arvigo's products with disdain and suspicion, noting that they were over-priced products marketed for tourists or that they were shams. Of course, Arvigo reports that Don Elijio and his patients often spoke with disdain about modern hospitals, which often were viewed as places where one goes to die rather than to heal. While some individuals did indeed remark that they utilized by traditional healing methods and contemporary ones, often the way the systems were combined was less of an integration and more of a case of first utilizing one method and then trying the other method if the first method did not work. For instance, if a traditional lotion or herb or healer did not resolve an issue, such an individual would then attempt treatment from the other healing system, such as seeking out treatment by a physician in a hospital.

Thus while there are indeed individuals who avoid traditional healing or who avoid contemporary healing, there are some who have experience with both. If such a state of affairs seems unusual, it is helpful to recall that a similar situation exists in the United States. Recent polls indicate more than one in three people in the USA utilizes some form of alternative health, such as massage therapy and herbal remedies (Eisenberg et al. 1993). Yet allopathic physicians often remark that their clients fail to disclose these treatments, often due to embarrassment or fear of ridicule by the physician. For safety reasons, such as tolerance

and interaction effects, it is essential that clients fully disclose their treatments to their providers.

In sum, given historical and economic realities in Belize, it is unlikely that traditional methods of healing will disappear any time soon. Disparaging traditional methods, especially when allopathic alternatives are not available to many (for financial or practical or other reasons, such as spiritual preferences), is clearly not a prudent or effective course of action. Rather it seems mutual respect among practitioners and ongoing conversations aimed at sharing knowledge would be a helpful, reasonable, and attainable goal.

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Ket Shamanism

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This article surveys what is known about traditional shamanism among the Ket people living in the Yenisei River area of central Siberia. It provides an overview of practices, beliefs, paraphernalia, and linguistic aspects of Ket shamanism. The article also outlines how Ket shamanism came to the attention of the outside world. It also describes the current state of shamanism among the Ket living in Turukhansk District, citing information gathered on the author's expedition to the Yenisei and Yelogui rivers in August–September 2008.

Introduction

The Ket family groups who nomadized across broad areas near the Yenisei River and its tributaries in Russia's Turukhansk District were the last hunter-gatherers of Inner Eurasia.

Traditional ethnographic accounts categorize them as "Paleosiberians" or "Paleoasiatics," together with North Pacific Rim sea-mammal hunters and fishers such as the Yukagir, Yupik, Itelmen, Nivkh, and Ainu, as (Shrenk 1883: 256–257), although Ket origins and language appear to be completely distinct from these peoples. The usefulness of the terms "Paleosiberians" or "Paleoasiatics" as a generic economic descriptor for all North Asian non-pastoral hunting groups is diminished by the inclusion of the reindeer-breeding Chukchi and Korak in this designation. Unlike the reindeer-herders who surround them on all sides, the Ket traditionally had only one domesticate, the dog, an animal used in hunting and for pulling small loads. A few southern Ket groups briefly acquired reindeer from their Selkup neighbors during the 20th century. Only during the Soviet collectivization campaign of the 1930s were the Ket first settled in Russian-style villages, after which many

families still continued to spend much of the year as before, moving between winter and summer hunting grounds rather than living in one place. Evidence from river names suggests the Ket and their now-extinct southern relatives (the Yugh, Kott, Arin, Assan and Pumpokol) lived in the forests between the Upper Yenisei and the southern tip of Lake Baikal before being pushed gradually northward by the intrusion of pastoral peoples (Vajda 2001, in press). Though distinct from the reindeer-breeding tribes of western and southern Siberia both linguistically and anthropologically, the Ket maintained centuries of contact with neighboring Samoyedic and Turkic tribes, often intermarrying with them. Consequently, all central Siberian peoples, including the Ket, share many parallels in their spiritual culture and traditional healing practices. Though Ket shamanism reveals a number of unique aspects, the features held in common with other West Siberian forest peoples such as the Selkup, Khanty, and South Siberian Turks (Khakas, Altai, Shor), places it squarely within the cultural heritage of spiritual traditions from aboriginal central Siberia.

How Ket Shamanism Came To Be Known to the Outside World

The Ket today live in one of the most isolated parts of modern Siberia. Because the Turukhansk District has seen no extensive development based on the exploitation of underground reserves of oil, natural gas or minerals, there are no sizeable urban areas or even roads or railroad links in this area, which is larger than the territory of California. The 1200 or so people recorded in the 1989 census as belonging to the Ket ethnicity live mainly in small villages near the Yenisei or its tributaries and remain largely invisible to the world outside of the Russian Federation (for up-to-date demographic information see Krivonogov 1998; 2003). The mobile Ket hunting bands were even less accessible to outsiders before being forced to settle in multi-ethnic riverside villages during the 1930s. Originally referred to as the Yenisei Ostyak, they were studied first-hand ethnographically only in 1906–1908, when the Imperial Academy of Sciences sent V. I. Anuchin to record detailed information about their material and spiritual culture (fig. 1). The objects gathered by Anuchin form the basis of the Peter the Great



Fig. 1. Photo of Ket people. Anuchin Expedition, 1906.

Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography's collection of Ket artifacts. In terms of published scholarship, the expedition's result was a monograph on Ket shamanism (Anuchin 1914) that offers a wealth of data, much of it not recorded again by subsequent fieldworkers. The Finnish linguist Kai Donner visited the Ket in 1912 during his three-year sojourn (1911–1913) in central Siberia. Donner (1933) contains material of interest for the study of shamanism, some of it collected from Ilia F. Dibikov, a young Ket man who visited the author in Finland for three months in 1926. Earlier writings on the Ket penned by explorers from the 18th and 19th centuries deal primarily with linguistic facts, though some include brief anthropological observations.¹

The next researcher of Ket ethnography came from Germany. After the establishment of the USSR, the new Soviet government invited Berlin Museum worker Hans Findeisen to spend 13 months in 1927–1928 among the Ket in the area of the Mountain Tunguska River. Findeisen's primary interest was shamanism, and he collected a vast amount of primary material, including songs, photographs (figs. 3 and 4), artifacts, and folkloric texts. Much of Findeisen's material remains unpublished and some of it perished in Allied bombing raids during

¹ Cf. the general discussion in Vajda 2001: 1–17, 92–94.

the Second World War.² Findeisen's pioneering and invaluable work on Ket shamanism is unfortunately still largely unknown, aside from what he included in his general monograph on shamanism (Findeisen 1953).

During the inter-war years, two talented Soviet scholars of the Ket met with a tragic end, and most of their material never gained wide attention (Vajda 2001: 6, 154–155, 162). Niko K. Karger, inventor of the first Ket alphabet, performed ethnographic and linguistic fieldwork among the Ket during an expedition to the Yenisei in 1928, bringing back valuable artifacts to enhance the Ket collections of the Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography established by Anuchin. Unfortunately, Karger fell victim to the political purges of the 1930s. His alphabet was discarded and only a few of his writings ever saw the light of day; none of those that were published deals specifically with shamanism. The ethnographer Grigoriĭ M. Korsakov, also working during the 1930s, perished in the early 1940s during the Leningrad Blockade and his archive has never been recovered.

The next major advance in the study of Ket shamanism came in the 1960s, as Evgeniia A. Alekseenko began what was to become three decades of dedicated fieldwork among the Ket on behalf of the same Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography that houses the earlier collections by Anuchin and Karger. Some of her most important findings derived from fieldwork conducted during expeditions in the summers of 1970–1972, undertaken primarily to collect new data on Ket shamanism. The essential readings on Ket shamanism are Alekseenko (1967; 1978; 1979; 1981a; 1981b; 1984a; 1984b; 1992; 1997), though this list far from exhausts that author's published works. Vajda (2001: 20–41) includes an annotated bibliography of all of Alekseenko's numerous publications on Ket ethnography between 1959 and 1998.

Invaluable information on the five traditional categories of Ket shamans appears in English in Alekseenko (1978). Each category was distinguished by differences in their dress and paraphernalia, as well as by distinctive spirit helpers and differing abilities to travel to the sky or to other realms during shamanic trances (see below). It is important to note that because shamanism throughout the North was actively suppressed by the Soviet authorities beginning in early 1930s, only Anuchin, Donner and Findeisen were able to observe traditional

² Janina Findeisen, personal communication.

Ket spiritual life in open practice, and even this picture was probably nothing more than a remnant of the culture as it had existed before the social dislocations brought on by the importation of European diseases and the imposition of *yasak* (fur tax) beginning in the 17th century. Nevertheless, the salvage ethnographic studies conducted by Alekseenko beginning in the late 1950s illuminated many previously unknown facets of Ket shamanism.

Other studies conducted during the second half of the 20th century also include mention of previously undocumented elements pertaining to Ket shamanism, notably Kreinovich's (1969) description of the traditional economic life-cycle of the Ket nomadizing in the vicinity of the Mountain Tunguska River. Nikolaev (1985: 90–109) traces the ethnic origins of different aspects of Ket culture, some apparently connected with the forest, others with steppe pastoral peoples farther to the south. Ivanov and Toporov (1969) compare Ket mythological elements with other Native Siberian traditions. Werner (2006: 51–63) analyzes shamanism along with other aspects of traditional Ket culture using comparisons of Ket vocabulary with that recorded from the extinct southern Yeniseian languages. Werner's work is invaluable for its compilation of shamanic lexicon—special words used by shamans during their songs and séances. The annotated bibliography in Vajda (2001) provides descriptive commentary on all publications dealing with Ket shamanism through 1998.³

Beliefs Regarding the Soul and Human Health

Anuchin (1914: 11) reported that the Ket possessed “amazingly few healing resources” as well as an unexpectedly sparse knowledge of plant lore, given the fact that they were forest hunter-gatherers. Plant lore is also weakly represented in the Ket language, and even the best speakers of Ket today have but a limited repertoire of names for individual herbaceous plants. Because healing practices among the Ket were documented only in the 20th century, however, it is possible that some earlier traditions simply disappeared without being recorded. One reason for the lack of medical practice is that the Ket attributed all illnesses not to physical

³ Cf. in particular the indexed listing (Vajda 2001: 384–385).

problems with the human body itself but rather to the condition of its *ulvei* (or *ulbei*, depending on dialectal pronunciation)—the immortal life essence thought to be associated with every human. The Ket believed every person possessed an *ulvei*, a word that literally means ‘water-wind’ and often translated as ‘soul’ (Russian *dusha*) in descriptions of Ket spiritual culture. According to Ket traditional belief, every person was animated by seven spirits, the number seven figuring prominently throughout Ket folklore and belief. Among these seven, the *ulvei* was absolutely essential to the person’s well being. The rest were acquired from eating various plants and animals and little is known about their individual characteristics. Unlike the other spirits, which could inhabit plants and animals as well as humans, the *ulvei* could only animate a human being or a bear, the latter being regarded as a lost human relative. According to Pavel Sutlin,⁴ the *ulvei* possessed the form of a small person. A similarly anthropomorphic image of the *ulvei* appears in Anuchin (1914: 10), who relates how the evil witch Hosedam imprisoned the *ulvei* of the great shaman Doh by nailing its hands and feet to a tree, after which Doh lost his shadow and was unable to remain on the earth, thereafter dwelling instead in the second layer of the sky. Illness typically occurred when an *ulvei* wandered too far from its owner. Chills were perceived as a sign that the *ulvei* had become lost in a cold place, while fever resulted if the *ulvei* became overheated. Serious illness such as paralysis or coma indicated that the *ulvei* had lost its way completely or had been captured by Hosedam, the evil witch of the north who devoured lost human souls. Long-term absence of the *ulvei* eventually caused the death of its human host.

When a person died, his *ulvei* could pass into the sky or descend to the underworld, later returning to inhabit another individual. One of the shaman’s duties at funerals was to divine whether the *ulvei* had gone to the sky or to the underworld. An *ulvei* outside a human body experienced neither torment nor ecstasy, but simply waited in a sort of limbo for the next incarnation, which occurs when it entered the body of an unborn baby near the time of birth by passing through the sex organs (Anuchin 1914: 10). The shaman was able to locate a missing *ulvei* and return it to its owner, thus curing severe illness. This quest was one of the main purposes of the shaman’s singing and dancing. The shaman was also able to discover why

⁴ Personal communication.

an *ulvei* was ill or out of sorts, in which case the person it inhabited would show the same symptoms. Hosedam, evil goddess of the north, hunted and devoured *ulvei* that wandered too far, causing the illness and death of their owners. It was the primary task of the shaman to retrieve stolen souls and lead them back, thus curing the patient. Hosedam and her legion of servants were the shaman's principle adversaries.

Two categories of people in Ket society were traditionally involved in healing the sick. These were the shaman (known as *sening*) and the sorcerer (*bangos*, or *bangoket*, a term meaning 'earth person'). The *sening* operated exclusively through magical intervention involving contact with the spirit world and did not resort to the use of natural medicines, while the *bangos* treated the sick with the help of talismans containing various plants and minerals. Certain categories of shamans were connected with the upper, heavenly world and were helped by the myriad spirits (*esdeng*) who dwelled in the seven layers of the sky. The *bangos* by contrast, was confined to the earthly realm and also had knowledge of the underworld. Such people were said to be able to see no higher than the flight of a bat, but could peer far down into the earth (Anuchin 1914: 19). The bat, mole, and snake were animals associated with *bangos* activity. The *sening* was able to ascend up to the sky or fly far across the earth in order to commune with the spirit world, and each *sening* had his unique path, which was kept secret from that of other shamans. According to Anuchin (1914: 25), there were no "black" or evil shamans among the Ket, whereas a *bangos* could cast both good and bad spells on people. The *bangos* was thought to be able either to cure or induce rheumatism in people, for example. Both *sening* and *bangos* claimed to be able to foretell the future and predicts good fortune for hunters. This suggests that *sening* and *bangos* were social roles, rather than invariably distinct personages or entirely unrelated spiritual traditions. Anuchin (1914: 32) reports that of 14 shamans operating among the Ket during his 1906–1908 expedition, a number of them functioned as *bangos*, as well. The latter role was most effective on moonless nights, whereas *sening* began their séances in the evening, preferably when both sun and moon were simultaneously visible in the sky. In general, the *sening* and *bangos* magic was kept in separate spheres, and even *bangos* talismans were disallowed during shamanic séances (Anuchin 1914: 19). Unfortunately, no detailed study of the *bangos* was ever conducted and it is possible that this social role represents the survival of a more ancient healing tradition.

To recapture lost or stolen *ulvei* and return them to their owners, the shaman resorted to a trance-like state that assisted his flight into other realms. During my stay on the Yelogui River in August, 2008, one elderly woman told me that shamans used to eat the fly agaric mushroom, *Amanita muscaria*, which is called *hango* in Ket, in order to achieve the proper state. It was the shaman's task, assisted by his spirit helpers, to fight Hosedam or any other malevolent beings that stood in the way of accomplishing this feat. According to Ket lore, the great shamans of the past were able to induce Hosedam to regurgitate the souls she had swallowed, after which they could be reunited with their owner. If the owner had already died, the *ulvei* would become free to be born into a new human baby. The great Ket culture hero Alba, a figure with folkloric parallels among the South Siberian Turks (Ivanov and Toporov 1969; Nikolaev 1985), was said to have freed many souls by inducing vomiting and diarrhea in Hosedam. But generally only shamans had the capacity to traverse the dangerous northwest trail into the realm of the northern witch to battle her for control of the *ulvei*. The shaman's ability to undergo the shamanic trance and travel to the spirit world was thus considered crucial to the health of the group.

Chronic maladies were thought to be caused by a rock getting into the sick person. The shaman was able to remove the rock with the help of the spirit of the gray crane (*tau*), which could extract the object with its long beak. The loon (*bit*) was also regarded as a shamanic bird due to its ability to dive from the air into the water to get food. Shamans employed their loon spirits to find and regain wayward *ulvei* from the underworld realm.

On Becoming a Shaman in Traditional Ket Society

Among the Ket, both men and women could become shamans. Anuchin (1914: 23) claims that the shamanic gift was passed on to a member of the opposite sex in the next generation so that it alternated between males and females in the same family line. Alekseenko, however, noted that while the shaman's gift was inherited within the confines of a single family group, the preponderance of shamans were men, as were all great shamans, so that a strict gender-based intergenerational skewing does not appear to have been a universal norm, at least not in the 20th century.

Women shamans were unable to travel to the sky and were limited to the earthly realm in their shamanic quests (Alekseenko 1978; 1981b).

Shamans were distinguished from ordinary people through family inheritance of the shaman's gift, or *qut*. The *qut* is conceptualized as an anthropomorphic spirit passed down from one generation to the next. The *qut* also brought special "sky people" (*esdeng*), shamanic helper spirits whose power likewise passed from one shaman to a relative in the next generation (Alekseenko 1981b: 99). The *qut* was immortal, with each bearer merely representing a single link in the chain of its earthly manifestation. It could not be shared by two shamans in the same family simultaneously, but passed on only after the death of the older shaman. The shaman's song is also known as *qut*, and the same root appears in verb forms expressing shamanic dancing and singing: *duqut* "he shamanizes," *dilqut* "he shamanized." Finally, this root also forms the basis of the word *quttyn* (or *qutn*), used as a synonym for *sening* 'shaman'. The latter word appears to be a more ancient in that it is found in some of the extinct southern Yeniseian languages as well as in Ket.

The shaman's gift was sometimes manifested at a young age, when a child proved to be high-strung and unsociable. More often the gift appeared in young adulthood, when the individual would fall into a sort of mental illness called *dariy*. This word is translated as 'shaman's illness' but it is also used generically in Modern Ket to refer to any sort of mental imbalance. According to Anuchin (1914: 24), the *qut* might appear to a twenty-year old and summon him to begin shamanizing. Other spirits would follow, causing the inchoate shaman to become unsociable, to laugh or cry without obvious cause, and to feel the urge to sing or dance. According to Anuchin's informants, a person beset with *dariy* who resisted the shamanic call might become permanently insane or even die, but one who heeded it spent the next few months or years learning to master the spirits that visited him. It was considered that every shaman had a choice of seven spiritual trails, one of which, however, was fatal to him. Finding one's proper trail, the secret path to be taken during shamanic trances, was essential for the beginning shaman, as was composing the proper song (*qut*). Generally, a person called by the spirits to become a shaman would succeed in finding his proper trail and in composing his unique song. He would master the spirits that had induced *dariy* and would regain his mental health. As a sign to the community that this had occurred, the beginning shaman would request that a beater stick (*hatbul*) be fashioned for him. A man or woman who received this first *hatbul*, which was typi-

cally made out of semi-rotten wood to symbolize its temporary character, was called a “minor shaman” (*hena sening*). There was no other custom of shamanic initiation among the Ket, no public ceremony. Minor shamans had no drum and merely sat by the fire singing their spirit song while keeping tempo by hitting the beater stick against the left shin to summon the spirits (Anuchin 1914: 26).

According to Anuchin (1914: 24–25), the shaman grew increasingly powerful with practice. Shamans destined to possess the greatest power would go through seven stages of three-year cycles to finally become a “great shaman” (*qa sening*), capable of traveling to the upper levels of the sky. With each successive stage, the shaman acquired more spirit helpers. Great shamans were uncommon, and always were old men (Anuchin 1914: 25). Such a powerful spirit gift was greatly prized by the families that possessed it. Alekseenko (1981b) explains how the majority of shamans did not follow this complex path of maturation but remained what she called “family shamans,” that is, minor shamans (*hena sening*) who shamanized only occasionally and, as a rule, only within their own family group. A minor shaman who later refused to acquire a drum progressed no further in the development of his shamanic powers. Such shamans appear much closer in function to the *bangos*, since they likewise healed minor ailments and foretold the future or divined answers to questions by tossing a bear paw up into the air, the palm landing skyward denoting an affirmative answer to whatever yes-or-no question had been posed to the spirits. Minor shamans often lacked both drum and special clothing. Great shamans equipped with the full accoutrement of shamanic regalia were much less common. When a shaman died, his basic regalia were placed by his grave to decay—a sign that the spirits were ready to pass to the shaman’s descendant. But a great shaman’s iron pendants and perhaps his crown and the top of his staff were handed down within the family group rather than exposed to the elements. As important family heirlooms they were kept in a special box called a *qossul*. The contents and form of one *qossul*, translated as ‘shaman’s sled’, is described in detail in Alekseenko (1981a), an article containing illustrations of the various iron spirit images that once belonged to a great shaman.

Anuchin (1914: 33) described the clothing and paraphernalia associated with the stages of becoming a full-fledged “big” shaman. The individual elements were received in a specific order, as the shaman became increasingly more powerful through the acquisition of more

and more spirit helpers. The first item was the temporary beater stick (*hatbul*), followed by a headband (*tuneng*). This was followed by the acquisition of a breast pendant (*qutn*), then boots and gloves (*senda tesing* and *senda boon*). A crucial stage in becoming a stronger shaman was receiving a drum (*has*) and a new beater stick (*hatbul*). This was followed by a shaman's staff (*tagoks*), then by a coat and crown (*senda qat* and *senda dy'*), the latter two received simultaneously. As shamans acquired more spirit helpers they also received an increasing number of iron pendants symbolizing these spirits. Pendants were placed on the shaman's coat during shamanic séances. Shamans destined to become great shamans would eventually receive a second drum. The round drum shape is shared between the Ket and most other peoples of south-central Siberia, notably the Altai Turks and the Samoyedic Selkup. According to Findeisen,⁵ the drum of the Ket shaman is larger than that of other Siberian tribes (fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Shaman drum (Hans Findeisen, 1927–1928).
Photo courtesy of Janina Findeisen.

⁵ Janina Findeisen, personal communication.

The fieldwork performed by Alekseenko in the early 1970s added an important new dimension to our understanding of the Ket shaman by elucidating the presence of five distinct categories of shamans, distinguished by different primary animal helpers and consequently by different types of clothing and other regalia (Alekseenko 1978). The shaman costume described so elaborately in Anuchin (1914) is, in fact, typical for only one of these five categories. This happened to be the most widespread type of shaman, called the *qaduks* shaman, whose main spirit helper is a flying female reindeer, known as *qaduks*, a word not found outside of shamanic parlance. This category of shaman traveled to the sky world by using the drum as a female reindeer to ascend into the sky. The membrane of the drum, consequently, was made of reindeer skin. A *qaduks* great shaman typically had reindeer horns made of iron as part of his headgear (see figs. 3 and 4).



Fig. 3. Reindeer shaman's iron crown, Kellog Village 1976.
Photo courtesy of Heinrich Werner.



Fig. 4. Reindeer shaman's crown and clothing, Kellog Village 1976.
Photo courtesy of Heinrich Werner.

In contrast to the *qaduks* shaman, the bear shaman generally did not ascend into the sky but rather took paths across the earth, especially leading to the forbidding northwest, where Hosedam was thought to imprison the souls she had stolen from unfortunate people. The bear shaman had no drum and used a bear paw instead of a drumstick. While shamanizing he sometimes fastened the dried nose and mouth portions of a bear over his face, using a rawhide strap. His clothing was made of bearskin and contained iron images of the bones of bears. There was also a category of shaman whose patron spirit was an anthropomorphic figure called *kandelok*, which sported bear paws instead of hands. The *kandelok* shaman also had an iron headdress described by Alekseenko (1978: 261) as resembling a sort of helmet. Bear shamans and *kandelok* shamans possessed not only bear spirit helpers, but also were assisted by the *allel* family guardian spirits and by the *dangols*, or spirits of dead ancestors.

Another category of shaman was associated with a mythical giant eagle known as *dagh*, said to be large enough to cover the sun. Iron images of eagle claws often adorned his coat. This type of shaman especially prized eagle feathers. Like the *qaduks* shaman, the eagle shaman could ascend to the sky and receive assistance from spirits there. Interestingly, the eagle was said to have first taught humans how to shamanize. In one version, the first shaman had originally been an eagle; in another version a two-headed eagle taught humans to shamanize and was punished by losing one of his heads, in a sort of Siberian analog to the Prometheus myth. Two-headed eagles images are often found among the shaman's iron pendants. The first great shaman Doh seems to have been an eagle shaman, given the fact that an eagle often perched on his shoulder. Among the Ket it was taboo to kill eagles, and eagle feathers found by chance on the ground were displayed in special places of honor in the tent.

The last category of shaman was the dragonfly (*dynd*) shaman, whose coat tapered to a point in the back, symbolizing the insect's shape. A photograph in Alekseenko (1967: 191) illustrates the dragonfly shaman's headdress, which sported iron plates formed in the shape of thunderclouds. This type of shaman was thought to be the most powerful, and could ascend to the highest levels of the sky accessible to humans. His patrons were the dragonfly and the swan, as well as Tomam, benevolent goddess of the south revered for sending the migrating birds northward every summer. The swan (*tigh*), a sacred

bird that could not be hunted, was a special spirit helper to the dragonfly shaman. Dragonfly shamans could only operate in warm months, however, when the dragonfly, swan, and other migratory birds sent by Tomam were present. Dragonfly shamans seem to have been the least common type of shaman, while minor shamans most often belonged to the *qaduks* category. These did not acquire a drum or headdress and practiced with a drumstick, but instead wore regular clothing and the special headband known as *tuneng* (Alekseenko 1981b: 104).

The seven trails accessible to shamans were apportioned differently according to the category to which the shaman belonged (Alekseenko 1978: 261). The *qaduks*, bear, eagle and *kandelok* shamans all were capable of traveling from southwest to northwest, into the frozen realm of Hosedam. The dragonfly shaman could travel only to the southwest, along two different trails. All shamans except the bear could travel eastward toward the sunrise. Bear shamans were confined to the earth, while the other categories could also fly up to the sky during their quests, though the *kandelok* shamans, like the bear shaman, usually operated in the earthly realm.

The Fate of Ket Shamanism

The Ket are broadly similar to other early hunter-gatherers across the globe, where certain members of the tribe are regarded as being endowed with special powers to heal the sick through spiritual intervention, normally accomplished through magical singing. The root of the word *sening* ‘shaman’, appears related to words meaning ‘sing shamanically’ in the languages of the North American Athabaskans, Eyak, and Tlingit (Vajda 2010). If correct, this linguistic comparison reveals the deep antiquity of shamanic practice in the Northern Hemisphere. At the same time, many features of Ket shamanism reveal close parallels with the peoples of the Altai-Sayan Mountains of south-central Siberia notably the Shor, Khakas and Altai Turks. The round shape of the Ket shaman’s drum is very similar to that of Altai–Sayan peoples, and the name of this instrument (*has*) is possibly shared with languages of steppe pastoralists. The Buriat Mongol word for ‘shaman’s drum’ (*xese*) and the Teleut and Tubalar Turkic word for ‘hoop’ (*kash*) may represent the same word as Ket *has* ‘shaman’s drum’. Alekseenko (1984b: 81) suggests these words originated from the expansion of

steppe nomads in the Hunnic Era, before the rise of the First Türk Kaghanate in 552 A.D. Alongside the word *sening*, the Ket shaman is also known as *quttyng*, a term apparently derived from *qut*, a loanword into Ket meaning 'shaman's gift' or 'shaman's song' that in Turkic seems to have originally meant 'spirit'. The whole complex of belief in the sacred sky world and the ascent of the shaman skyward to find spirit helpers there appears borrowed from interaction with Turkic steppe peoples. The word *qaduks* 'flying female reindeer', a figure associated most obviously to the ability of shamans to ascend to the sky, likewise appears to lack any Native Ket etymology. The vertical axis of sacred sky and profane underworld duplicates the probably more ancient Ket horizontal dichotomy whereby the upriver south appears as sacred in contrast to the downriver north, the location of Hosedam and the area where souls are lost or devoured (Vajda, in press). A later Turkic origin for more elaborate social forms of shamanism also coincides with the arrival of iron from the steppe peoples and its association with details of the shaman's costume. The original Ket shaman, the *sening*, was probably closer in function to the *bangos* sorcerer, with lore of the earth being central to the most ancient traditions of spiritual healing.

The mixed forest and steppe shamanic heritage of the Ket tribes encountered by the Russian state in the early 17th century was left mostly unchanged despite interference from the Russian Orthodox Church. Only in the 19th century did Christian proselytizers begin to make inroads into the traditional world of Ket spiritual belief (Aleksenko 1979). Even here, however, reported baptisms yielded at most a conversion in name only, as the Ket generally maintained their beliefs in shamanism and other pre-Russian traditions. Medical knowledge from the Russians was slow to penetrate the north, due to the extreme isolation of the forests through which most Ket nomadized, so that before the mid 20th century it did not significantly compete with shamanic, spiritual-based cures.

Only when Soviet power was established firmly in the north did this scenario begin rapidly to change. In the first decade of Bolshevik rule, it was mainly the Russian Orthodox Church that was suppressed, an event that actually granted the local shamans a respite from competition by a state sponsored ideology. This period proved brief, as shamanism too was came under savage attack during the 1930s, when the Ket were forcibly settled in Russian style villages. One of my oldest informants recalls seeing a pile of broken drums and other profaned shamanic attributes



Fig. 5. Kellog Village and Yelogui River.
Photo taken from helicopter: Edward J. Vajda, 2008.



Fig. 6. Hango (two Ket women picking mushrooms and stopping by two specimens of the poisonous shaman's mushroom, fly agaric, *Amanita muscaria*).
Photo: Edward J. Vajda, 2008.

left lying in the mud by the post office in Kellog village during the first wholesale anti-shaman campaign. Everyone saw this destruction as the loss of power by the shamans, since a broken drum symbolized death of the shaman who owned it. The establishment of modern medical personnel in the North likewise undermined reliance on shamanism, though the Ket continued regularly to make recourse to shamanic magic within the confines of their own family, especially when nomadizing away from the village during the fall and winter hunts. During most of the remainder of the 20th century, the small-scale family practice of shamanism went underground, if it survived at all. The age of “great shamans” known far and wide was over forever.

The last shaman in Kellog Village (figs. 5 and 6) died in the 1970s, and his costume, modeled by his son, appears in figs. 3 and 4 above. According to my informants, there are no longer any true shamans among the Ket. The survivals of active Ket shamanism into the last quarter of the 20th century reported by Alekseenko (1997) appear to have by now largely disappeared. One hunter told me there would be no more shamans, because “Es [the sky deity] will never again send shamans to the people after how they were treated.” Even basic knowledge of shamanic lore survives among no more than a select few of the older generation of Ket. This makes the ethnographic descriptions by Anuchin, Donner, Findeisen, and Alekseenko all the more invaluable as the sole surviving record of a tradition that is partly unique among shamanic practices and partly shared with other Siberian peoples in ways that provide a rare glimpse into the prehistory of the Ket (pl. 9 *a, b*).

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Tlingit and European Interactions along the Spiritual Front

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This paper traces out some of the dominant themes in traditional Tlingit spirituality, including both shamanism and its polar opposite witchcraft, as well as some of the spiritual practices of lay people, the cosmological principles underlying Tlingit spirituality (such as reincarnation), and the spiritual meanings of social life. Of particular interest is how these beliefs were altered in the course of Tlingit exposure to Euro-American spirituality in the form of Christianity. Hence, the paper also addresses some of the factors effecting how Christianity was introduced into Tlingit territory, and especially how those factors changed during the Russian and American periods.

Introduction

The longer I work on the introduction to this article, the more I realize why it is so hard for me to write it: when Tlingit elders I know want to tell me something, they do not “tell me what they are going to say, say it, then tell me what they said.” That just isn’t their framework; they leave it up to me to piece together what they are saying, and why they say it. Perhaps, unconsciously, this style has stayed with me, despite my years in academia. Nevertheless, in acknowledgement of the cultural norms of the editors of this publication, whose opinion I hold in great esteem, and likewise my readers, I will try to reformulate my thoughts in this tripartite introduction-body-conclusion format.

When the first Russian ship hovered off the shores of the Alexander Archipelago in 1741, sent ashore its longboats, and the first Europeans set foot in Tlingit territory, a chain of events was set in motion that still reverberates throughout my people’s world, as surely as if those footfalls were an earthquake whose aftershocks are still shaking our

culture to its very foundations. Interwoven throughout the interactions of the colonial period, like the warp and woof of a Chilkat blanket, are strands of spirituality, both Tlingit and European, that in their conflicts with each other create a pattern at the same time familiar, in terms of how colonial powers were exerted in other parts of the world, and specific to the region today known as Southeast Alaska. This paper will attempt to trace out some of those threads, and see how Tlingit and European spiritualities blended together to form a new syncretized belief system, a Creole culture that reflected changes not only in the Tlingits, but also, to a limited extent, in their European trade partners.

The first part of this paper, then, will comprise a recounting of traditional Tlingit spirituality, followed by an examination of how Christianity came to Tlingit shores, and finishing with a look at how the two systems interacted and combined to form a new face of Tlingit spirituality. Although I have attempted to provide the key points in all of these matters, I know that my work has lacuna, and many subsidiary points I would have liked to have included did not make the final cut. Any one of the subsections in this paper could have filled an entire book, and so it is hard to decide which elements to include, and which to leave out. For these gaps and for any other errors I may have incurred in writing this paper, I beg your indulgence, my reader.

Body

When Aleksandr Baranov set down in Southeast Alaska in 1799, he faced a people whose world was full of spirits both powerful and dangerous, and with which only a few dared interact. While the average person did have a degree of spiritual power, much of it was probably limited to “medicines,” comprising a mixture of pharmacological knowledge and magical amulets generally consisting of small bundles of special plants called generically “‘green leaves,’ ([in Tlingit] *kayaní*), even though the principle ingredient was the root” (de Laguna 1972: 654).

There seems to have been no clear line drawn between “true” medicines (in our sense) that were purely curative, and those which were magical “medicines,” or even amulets that could ward off misfortune or bring good luck.

Rather, these various properties were all manifestations of the great powers of the “medicines.” (de Laguna 1972: 654)

I take de Laguna to mean that the power of plants, even in our restricted sense of “medical” usefulness, to the traditional Tlingit, was a spiritual phenomenon. It is precisely because these plants have a spiritual power that they work in amulets and for other non-medical ends. As a rather extraordinary example of these non-medical ends, Olson (1967: 115) recorded that a “Gunaxadi” woman named Djun apparently became a shaman or *ixt'* after she found some lucky roots while in the forest. As a side note, the Tlingit term that most closely corresponds to “shaman” is *ixt'* (older Tlingit orthographies spell it *ikht*), which Tlingit elder “Walter Soboleff has translated . . . to mean ‘doctor,’ ‘prophet,’ or ‘advisor’” (Bettridge 1979: 57). De Laguna (1972: 670) summarized the powers of the *ixt'* aptly in the following passage:

The shaman (*ixt'*) is the intermediary between men and the forces of nature. He cures the sick, controls the weather, brings success in war and on the hunt, foretells the future, communicates with colleagues at a distance, receives news about those who are far away, finds and restores to their families those who are lost and captured by the Land Otter Men, reveals and overthrows the fiendish machinations of witches, and makes public demonstrations of his powers in many awe-inspiring ways.

Many of the items in definition will be elaborated on in the course of the paper.

One also sees *ixt'* sometimes referred to by the term “Indian doctor”;¹ de Laguna (1972) and her informants regularly use the term, as well as simply calling the *ixt'* “doctor,” as did Dr. Soboleff above. Hereafter, I will use the word *ixt'* in my text, but many of the quotations will use the term “shaman” and some “Indian doctor” or “doctor,” so the terms should be seen as interchangeable.

It is also worth noting that while there are several examples of female *ixt'*, such as Djun, the vast majority of *ixt'* are male, and hereafter, I will treat the generic *ixt'* as male. Additionally, although I will largely treat *ixt'* as singular, they rarely worked alone: “to practice his call-

¹ Cf. Davis and Leer 1996 [1976]: 95, etc.

ing, the shaman needs one or more assistants” (de Laguna 1972: 670). Hence, although there may well have been *íxt'* who worked alone, whenever I talk about *íxt'*, bear in mind there is a most likely a troupe of helpers in the background making sure things go smoothly.

Moving back to Djun, then, it is said that after she found those lucky roots, she “had become a shaman and got her spirit power. Yet she had never cut the tongue of a living creature.” This line is a reference to the tradition of the apprentice *íxt'* venturing out into the woods to find a spirit or *yéik*. Again, as with *íxt'*, the Tlingit term for what we in English would call the shaman’s “spirit” is *yéik*, and I will use *yéik* throughout the remainder of my article; however, many of my quotations will use the term “spirit,” so the two should be seen as interchangeable. De Laguna relates that “there are three classes of yeik, as described by [Russian Orthodox missionary Ivan] Veniaminov” (Emmons 1991: 369), who was one of the first Europeans to document Tlingit spirituality—namely, those of the land, the sea, and the air. According to Veniaminov (later made Bishop of Alaska and ultimately canonized as St. Innokenty, or St. Innocent in English), these spirits had their own particular forms:

The spirits of the above [or *Kiyeyiki*] . . . are the souls of valiant people killed in war . . . The *Kiyeyiki* . . . always appear to the shamans as warriors in full battle gear . . . The *Takiyeyiki*, or the land [earth—Translator] spirits, are always recruited from among the souls of those people who died the ordinary [natural—Translator] death, or those who were not killed in war . . . The *Takiyeyiki* . . . appear to the Shamans in the guise of land animals, while the *Tekiyeyiki* . . . or water spirits appear as sea mammals, for instance, whales, killer whales and so on. . . . But whence did come or how are recruited the *Tekiyeyiki* . . . ? . . . The *Koloshi* [an older Russian name for Tlingit] are not able to explain this satisfactorily, though some think that these are the souls of the animals themselves. (Emmons 1991: 369; cf. Veniaminov 1984: 397–398)

It is, however, uncertain if the Tlingit ever utilized this taxonomic device or if it is Veniaminov’s invention. Kan (1999: 110), for example, disagrees with this depiction of Tlingit spirituality: “Once again, his [Veniaminov’s] efforts to construct a ‘systematic demonology’ (Russian *dukhoslovie*) of this ‘shamanistic’ religion result in a rather rigid differentiation of *yéiks* into those of the air, the land, and the

water.” Hence, we cannot necessarily take Veniaminov at his word when he says that Tlingit religion is classifiable into discrete elements, but must also take into consideration the missionary’s own worldview and agenda.

On the quest to find their *yéik*, the *íxt’* would follow restrictions including fasting or eating only devil’s club and drinking salt water. Devil’s club, *Oplopanax horridis*, in Tlingit *s’áxt’*, related to American Ginseng, is an extremely toxic plant with strong spiritual overtones that is still widely used by Tlingit today as a powerful medicine (de Laguna 1972: 658–659). I keep some devil’s club in my cupboard to drink in a tea when I’m sick, which is how my family always prepared it when I was a child, while others make it into a muscle salve, soak their feet in a devil’s club brew for arthritis pain, eat the bark straight, or even stick powdered devil’s club under their lip as if it were chewing tobacco. If consumed in excess, devil’s club can be deadly (one of my relatives almost died by drinking a brew that had simmered on the back of the stove all day); consuming the wrong parts of the plant, or plants harvested at the wrong time of the year, for example, can prove fatal.² As a quick example of its contemporary non-medical uses, some people hang a branch of the plant over their doorway to keep out evil influences; my grandparents used to hang devil’s club boughs over their doors for this purpose. Due to its highly toxic nature, *s’áxt’* can cause hallucinations in large (and therefore dangerous) doses; as a youth, I heard of young kids in our village trying to consume devil’s club for kicks—no serious injuries were reported from these incidents, but I was given to understand that even were they successful in provoking hallucinations (and I’m fairly certain they weren’t), it would not necessarily have been a pleasant “trip.”

With regard to drinking salt water, I have heard of Tlingit men preparing themselves for the consumption of salt water by drinking it at first out of thimble-sized cups (many of them vomit the first time they try this), and slowly working their way up to larger full sized cups until they can drink several cups in a single day; they did this in order to help

² Some small businesses (including those run by Tlingit entrepreneurs) commercially harvest devil’s club and market its products, but at least some Tlingit elders reportedly frown on this practice on the grounds that selling it damages the plant’s spiritual properties, and perhaps, I might think, also because of the danger involved in using a plant harvested from an unknown source in uncontrolled conditions.

prepare themselves for drinking salt water when traveling far out to sea to ward off dying of thirst, on the practical side, but on another level, many spiritually charged purification rituals also involved drinking salt water. Presumably, it was for the purposes of spiritual purification that *íxt'* drank salt water during their initiation ceremony. Furthermore, it is entirely conceivable that due to the privations brought on by fasting and drinking salt water, in conjunction with consuming large quantities of *s'axt'*, that *íxt'* did experience hallucinations during their retreats and during other ritual activities, many of which also involved fasting, drinking salt water, and consuming *s'axt'* in large doses.

After waiting in the woods, sometimes for days, the animal embodiment of the *yéik* would appear to the *íxt'*. Although many animals could come to the novice *íxt'*, the most significant was the land otter, which in Tlingit is called *kóoshda*:

One informant specified that the land otter was always the first animal to appear to any novice, and we may infer that other creatures, as well as additional land otters, might be encountered on subsequent retreats. Land otter power was available to any shaman, no matter what his sib [clan] or lineage [house] . . . All doctors cut land otter tongues, and this gives them their strong power said CW. [This statement has to be at least partially qualified in light of Djun and other examples.] Certainly this animal was the one most frequently mentioned. (de Laguna 1972: 678)

To the average Tlingit, the *kóoshda* was one of the most fearsome creatures in the world, particularly because they could be a *kóoshda káa*, literally a Land Otter Man. The full gamut of meanings behind Land Otter Men is not easy to summarize; de Laguna (1972: 744–755), for example, dedicates two sections of *Under Mt. St. Elias* to Land Otter Men, as well as mentioning them elsewhere. Some of the main points about these creatures include the fact that they can change form, and they especially seem to take the form of a loved one or someone that has died from exposure or drowning; it is conceivable that one should think of the phrase “death by drowning or exposure” as effectively meaning “taken by the *kóoshda káa*.” They take human shapes in order to lure you back to their den, where they will transform you into a *kóoshda káa* yourself. A professor of mine once told us in class that we can think of the horror of the *kóoshda káa* at least partially in

terms of reincarnation: in order to be reincarnated, the Tlingit believe the body has to be burned and given a memorial feast or *koo.éex'* (often called “potlatch”), but those who drown or die of exposure become lost in the woods—taken by the *kóoshda káa*—and hence cannot have those ceremonies performed for them; they are effectively removed from the social order. That then drives a strong impetus to recover lost bodies: to lose a body forever is to condemn that person to a true death, with no possibility of reincarnation, and their spirit will wander forever alone. In a sense then, fear of the *kóoshda káa* is related to the fear of being forever alone. Hence, common people avoid *kóoshda* out of fear of becoming a *kóoshda káa*, but *íxt'* seek out *kóoshda* in order to turn their power to their own uses, to benefit their clan.

When they finally see the animal that will become their *yéik*, whatever it is, the *íxt'* would cause it to die, not by killing it with a weapon, but rather with four shouts of “O!”, and then cut out its tongue as the physical representation of this *yéik*.³ Either at the same time or later, as accounts differ (and probably, practice differed amongst individual *íxt'*, especially those from different clans or villages), the *íxt'* would generally collect the tongues of several more animals, each of which would represent, or perhaps more correctly be used to summon,⁴ a different *yéik*. Most sources indicate the maximum number of *yéik* an *íxt'* could control was eight, a significant number that appears throughout Tlingit culture, such as in the length of purification fasts and other spiritually significant events, which generally have a proscribed period of four or eight days.⁵ These tongues could then be later used in the shaman's

³ Cf. de Laguna 1972: 675, 678–80; Krause 1956 [1885]: 195; Kamenskii 1985 [1906]: 84, etc.

⁴ Cf. de Laguna 1972: 683, 688, 693, 701, 702, 703, 736; Worl 2000: 160.

⁵ De Laguna (1972: 681, 761) reports that the number eight is significant insofar as it correlates to the eight so-called “long bones” in the arms and legs of a human being; this formulation collapses the radius and ulna, and tibia and fibula, into single “bones,” so that the eight bones are the four pairs of humerus, radius/ulna, tibia/fibula, and femur on each half of the body. One informant, an anthropologist well versed in Tlingit culture, told me another way to look at this calculation is that the eight-count actually represents the number of joints, rather than “bones” as such, which I take to mean the shoulders, elbows, hips, and knees, although it's possible wrists and ankles should replace shoulders and hips in this count. Four, another significant number in Tlingit culture, may correspond to the cardinal directions (East, South, West, and North), according to some Tlingit elders I have spoken with. It is not uncommon to hear that

rituals, along with the songs and paraphernalia associated with the *yéik*, including masks, rattles, and drums.⁶

The most important part of the equipment of an *íxt'* was the bundle containing the tongue of the land otter or other creature that he had killed during his noviciate [sic]. This was wrapped up with spruce twigs and devilclub [sic] twigs . . . The whole bundle was tied about with spruce roots and was worn as a neck charm by the shaman when practicing on the sick, according to Emmons' catalog notes. At other times, it was of course kept hidden far away. (de Laguna 1972: 695)

The paraphernalia of an *íxt'* was kept hidden because if someone stumbled upon it unprepared, they could suffer spiritual injury, such as a "spirit intrusion": "It was very dangerous for a layman to approach a shaman's grave or to handle his things, especially any part of his paraphernalia that might be cached near his grave house. No one would dare to pick or eat berries growing in the vicinity, nor risk drinking water from a nearby stream. This was because such contact might result in a spirit intrusion ('Anefsín, 'something-inside-hiding'" (de Laguna 1972: 699), which might take the form of "gallstones and tumors" (de Laguna 1972: 674). Graves will be discussed more fully below.

In addition to what we saw above with Djun, cutting tongues is not the only way an *íxt'* can acquire a *yéik*, even when the *yéik* corresponds to an animal, as de Laguna (1972: 679) points out in referring to the fact that some *íxt'* derived their *yéik* from a "starfish, mosquito, killer whale, or chiton,"⁷ of which she correctly indicates it would be very hard to remove the tongue! However, de Laguna is not sure what these other methods of acquiring spirits might consist of. There is, however, an example from de Laguna herself of at least one other way this non-tongue cutting acquisition of *yéik* could come about, insofar as she relates several stories of *íxt'* who acquired "Disease Spirits" or at

íxt' who did not have the full complement of eight *yéik* controlled four instead.

⁶ "In many cases the masks, rattles, and other objects may not have been made by the Tlingit, but have been imported from the Tsimshian, and there is no guarantee therefore that the animal which appears on such an object is interpreted in the same way by the Tlingit shaman as by the Tsimshian carver" (de Laguna 1972: 679).

⁷ A chiton is a small mollusk commonly called "gum boots" (de Laguna 1972: 683) by modern Tlingits.

any rate *yéik* associated with a “Disease Boat.”⁸ One of these stories (de Laguna 1972: 713–714), involves a man, “QAxetł,” who “died” of smallpox “for 4 days” (it was common mortuary practice to keep the body in the house for four or eight days after death before cremating or interring it). After this respite, QAxetł revived and reported that he had seen “a big black boat with sails” that carried the victims of disease, but turned back to shore rather than follow the “four black men” that tried to take him onto it. This turning back saved his life, and when he woke up, and sang the songs he learned from the four sailors (who became his four *yéik*), he was able to stop the spread of the disease, making him one of the only *íxt’* on record who successfully combated smallpox. Curiously, the informant telling this story to de Laguna was able to share two of QAxetł’s four songs, and the words to both of them were in Tsimshian.

This cross-cultural spiritual pollination is by no means unprecedented for the Northwest Coast region. De Laguna speculates that a Yakutat *íxt’*, “Tek’ic,” of whom she collected a great number of stories, may have had some practices borrowed from either the neighboring Eyak or Chugach (Alutiiq or Pacific Eskimo) people to the north and west (de Laguna 1972: 698, 708), and the words for the song associated with his most powerful spirits, the Children of the Sun, had Tsimshian words (de Laguna 1972: 711). She also mentions other *íxt’* who explicitly or apparently acquired songs or other powers from the Tsimshian (de Laguna 1972: 695, 704, 711). In addition to footnote 6 above, de Laguna indicates *íxt’* paraphernalia may have been manufactured by the Tsimshian or Haida people to the south (de Laguna 1972: 698, 704). Witchcraft, which will be discussed more thoroughly below, was thought to have originated among the Tsimshian or Haida (de Laguna 1972: 733), and “practically all Tlingit . . . beliefs about witchcraft, are shared with the Eyak” (de Laguna 1972: 734). Finally, some of the magical “medicines” mentioned above were apparently learned “from Dekina [Haida], or different people” (de Laguna 1972: 660), including possibly the Chugach (de Laguna 1972: 665).

In terms of what relationship *yéik* have to clans, “at first, it would appear that the spirits are clan property but this view does not represent the true nature of the facts. It is true that many spirits are associated

⁸ Cf. de Laguna 1972: 682, 710, 712, 713–714, 769–770.

with certain clans and that they belong to certain regions but these spirits can be, and often are, used by shamans of other clans” (Oberg 1973: 17–18). When an *íxt*’ dies, their *yéik* is usually inherited by a nephew of the same clan,⁹ hence reinforcing the association of certain *yéik* with certain clans. However, if there is no nephew to inherit or if the nephew is not receptive to the *yéik*, the child of the *íxt*’ (who must be a different clan and moiety because the matrilineal Tlingit practice moiety exogamy) could inherit his *yéik*, although this is rare. This cross-clan inheritance could explain why some *íxt*’ have *yéik* that generally belong to the opposite moiety (de Laguna 1972: 679).

While the average citizen could use the “medicines” mentioned above to handle most cuts, scrapes and coughs, for truly virulent diseases the assistance of an *íxt*’ was called for. The traditional belief was that practically all sickness was caused by witches or *nakws’aatí* rather than natural causes (de Laguna 1972: 729), and only the intervention of an *íxt*’ could cure these diseases.¹⁰ As with *íxt*’ and *yéik*, I will use *nakws’aatí* instead of “witch” throughout the remainder of my paper. The most common translations for *nakws’aatí* are “master of sickness,” which is the translation offered by de Laguna (1972: 728) or “master of medicine,” which is offered by Kan (1999: 18). In Tlingit, the word for medicine is *nakw* (de Laguna 1972: 654), meaning the most literal translation of *nakws’aatí* is “master of medicine” (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1990: 124); it is the close association of *nakws’aatí* with sickness and death that gives the term the idiomatic meaning “master of sickness.” This link between witchcraft and the word for medicine is probably why many Tlingit don’t like to translate *íxt*’ as “medicine

⁹ In part due to the practice of moiety exogamy based on matrilineal descent, passing property down from uncle to nephew (sister’s son) is the general pattern of Tlingit inheritance.

¹⁰ Shortly after Veniaminov came to Sitka in 1834, a smallpox epidemic struck that the *íxt*’ were mostly powerless to resist. Because diseases were seen to have supernatural origins, it is not surprising that Veniaminov characterized all of Tlingit religious practices as shamanistic, as noted above, since during that time the *íxt*’ became such a prominent figure as they tried to halt the plague ravaging the countryside; this readjustment may explain why Veniaminov “exaggerated the role of shamans in Tlingit culture at the expense of the more private (magical), but nevertheless important, religious beliefs and observances” (Kan 1999: 108). However, Veniaminov may have also formulated Tlingit spirituality into a “primitive monotheism” (Kan 1999: 108–109) more like Russian Orthodoxy’s hierarchical priesthood than it really was.

man,” and it should be fairly obvious that the presence of witches (who are not found in all cultures that have shamanism) makes the phrase “witch doctor” unpopular except amongst those who demonize *íxt’*. One occasionally sees *nakws’aatí* rendered as “sorcerer” (de Laguna 1972: 729, 732, 737; Olson 1967: 115–117) or “wizard” (de Laguna 1972: 733, 738); sorcerer is particularly problematic, because some people, notably missionaries, use that term pejoratively for *íxt’* (de Laguna 1972: 177, 379, 534, 685, 722–723). Also, de Laguna (1972: 728) mentions that “in speaking English, many Tlingit use the term ‘witchcraft’ to designate the person, rather than his activities or practice.” *Nakws’aatí*, like *íxt’*, were generally male (cf. de Laguna 1972: 728) although numerous females have been reported.

To say briefly a few more things about the spiritual practices of *nakws’aati*, one of their primary activities was cursing individuals through the use of small “dolls” to utilize a sort of “contagious magic” (de Laguna 1972: 764) that relies on its imitative power. In order to construct a doll, the *nakws’aati* or their bewitched assistant must acquire some part of the person, including clothes infused with their sweat, dirt scraped of their skin, food that fell from their mouth, and hair or fingernail clippings; these objects are called “witches dirt” (de Laguna 1972: 764) or “witches stuff” (de Laguna 1972: 730). This “stuff” or “dirt” is twisted up into a bundle or doll “around an inch long” (de Laguna 1972: 730); the material from the victim’s body helps bind the doll to the victim, and the *nakws’aatí* also says the victim’s name while creating the doll (de Laguna 1972: 730). This constitutes the “contagious” aspect of the magic: contagious magic has power because there is a physical link (in this case the dirt) between the effective object (the doll) and the intended recipient (the named victim). Added to this “dirt” are other items that indicate how the victim should suffer; in one case it was “a bit of red flannel [fashioned] as a protruding tongue, which produced such a swollen throat that the victim could hardly swallow” (de Laguna 1972: 730). These secondary items are the “imitative” aspect of the magic: what you do to the doll indicates the manner in which the victim will be affected.¹¹ The whole thing is then typically placed in a grave or in the corpse of a dog:

¹¹ Imitative magical principles govern many other aspects of Tlingit spirituality: amulets intended to bring wealth, for instance, should include small bits of copper (a traditional wealth item) or money (cf. de Laguna 1972: 664, 667).

These dolls are usually taken to the graveyard and put with the remains of some dead person, formerly the ashes. Now that bodies are no longer cremated, witchcraft is said to be even more effective, for the little images can be stuffed right inside a corpse, and as this rots, so the victims fall sick. In one specific instance, the image made of clothing scraps was put inside the carcass of a puppy that was sunk in the water. "You can't have a dead dog in your possession or they will tie you up for witchcraft. A rotting dog is stronger than a dead person." (de Laguna 1972: 730)

As indicted in this passage, the word "grave" here could be misleading. Traditionally, almost all Tlingit were cremated four or eight days after death; only the *íxt'* were not burned. Those who were cremated had their ashes and bones placed in a wooden box fixed on the end of a tall pole, itself traditionally sparsely decorated with one or more heraldic crests. These mortuary poles were the first type of exterior "totem pole," in Tlingit *kootéeyaa*.¹² After contact, possibly due to the widespread use of iron tools, *kootéeyaa* became even more common and elaborated (Emmons 1991: 194), to the point that they were frequently erected even when there were no graves to house on them, and that may be why many people don't associate *kootéeyaa* with "graves" today. Although I'm not sure I've ever seen it spelled out in these terms, it would not surprise me to learn that mortuary *kootéeyaa* were raised up precisely to keep the *nakws'aatí* away from the remains.

However, even placing the ashes at the top of a tall poll did not keep the *nakws'aatí* away. In order to prevent the exercise of *nakws'aatí* magic, people would be assigned to keep watch over the grave.

The first night after the remains (body or bones) are placed in the grave there is some chance that a sorcerer may visit the grave for evil purposes. So four or eight men of the clan of the deceased stand watch to try to catch the prowler. If he is caught, the watchers may beat or even kill the sorcerer. Such evil persons are able to enter the grave house through a small crack. (Olson 1967: 116)

¹² I was once told by a Tlingit language teacher that *kootéeyaa* translates as "the thing that holds the knowledge"; in comparison, they said, the word for pen or pencil, *kooxéedaa*, means "the thing that writes the knowledge."

Sometimes the *nakws'aatí* came as a human being, other times they took the form of an animal, generally birds, which would, to my way of thinking, have made it easier to fly up to the grave box at the top of the *kootéyaa*, although *nakws'aatí* could also fly in human form, and in one extreme case, a *nakws'aatí* was said to have “climbed the post of the gravebox with his tongue” (de Laguna 1972: 731). Once the guards spotted the *nakws'aatí* and chased them off, striking them with fists or clubs, and in later eras shooting at them with guns, the *nakws'aatí* usually took back their human form when retreating.¹³

As previously mentioned, the only people not burned were *íxt'*. Their bodies were preserved so that their spirit would be more likely to enter their replacement.¹⁴ Rather than being burned, their remains were carefully laid out in a grave house or sometimes a cave.¹⁵ Their bodies were thought not to rot (even the grave house itself was thought to decompose evenly, thus keeping the house level) and their bodies and gravesites continued to hold dangerous spiritual powers long after their death.¹⁶

Besides going to graves to place their dolls, *nakws'aatí* are also said to dance in graveyards cavorting with the spirits of the dead,¹⁷ even to the extent of having sexual relations with ghosts. According to Olson (1967: 116), all *nakws'aatí* have one of two motives: “Either he wishes to have intercourse with the [the spirits of the] dead or to work magic against some person they wish to harm . . . [One informant] told of a young woman who tried to persuade him to go with her to the cemetery. She declared that intercourse with the (spirits of the) dead was more pleasurable than sexual intercourse with the living.” Olson (*ibid.*) also indicates it was hard to obtain information about *nakws'aatí* because “to admit much knowledge of black magic or necrophilia might give rise to suspicion of practicing them.”

There was a great deal of stigma associated with having a *nakws'aatí* anywhere in one's family (Olson 1967: 116–117). However, the condition itself was largely seen as involuntary:

¹³ Cf. de Laguna 1972: 732

¹⁴ Cf. de Laguna 1972: 673

¹⁵ An anthropologist well versed in Tlingit culture once described to me the importance of caves, especially coastal caves, in terms of the intersection of land, sea, and sky; caves concentrate these three powers into a single nexus point.

¹⁶ Cf. de Laguna 1972: 699

¹⁷ Cf. de Laguna 1972: 732.

It would appear that all known witches were originally ordinary persons who had been recruited by witches [often as their assistant]. There is no evidence that anyone was believed to have been born a witch, nor that anyone deliberately set out to become one, although many were believed to have submitted willingly to the evil influence of another. Once thoroughly infected, the new witch seems to have been controlled by his own evil power, helpless to desist from injuring others, even if he should desire to refrain. (de Laguna 1972: 728)

The people who “submitted willingly to the evil influence of another” were seen as having some sort of character flaw, a “moral weakness” (Kan 1999: 19) or even a physical weakness that made them susceptible to the penetrating influences of a *nakws'aatí*. High ranking people, in contrast, were seen as having bodies and minds that were “more pure, ‘harder’ and ‘heavier’” (Kan 1999: 10), and this seems to correlate with the fact that “a righteous as well as physically and morally pure person was described as ‘strong’ or ‘solid,’ that is, impenetrable to the witch’s spirit (de Laguna [1972]: 735)” (Kan 1999: 19). People became “hard,” “heavy,” “pure,” and “solid” in part through “physical and spiritual exercises” (Kan 1999: 14) including immersing themselves in cold water then having their already traumatized flesh beaten with spruce branches when they emerged, as well as mental exercises such as concentration or “meditation” (Kan 1999: 9) practices, mainly undertaken by “aristocratic youngsters” (Kan 1999: 10).

In her doctoral dissertation, Barbara Iliff (1994: 59) describes witchcraft as “the illicit use of spirit power for anti-social ends.” Another way to put this is that those who want to become a witch do so for personal reasons. Kan (1999: 19), in delineating some of the motivations towards becoming a *nakws'aatí* and why their practices made them so reviled, closely parallels Iliff’s comment:

The witch was the antisocial person par excellence who violated the most fundamental principles of the moral order—moiety exogamy (by committing incest), deference toward one’s dead matrikin (by harming primarily his close matrilineal relatives), and respect for the dead (by visiting the cemetery to have sexual intercourse with ghosts and by putting a doll representing his victim into the grave). In other words, witches brought together the fundamental categories of the sociocultural order that were supposed to be kept separate. . . . Witches were supposed to harm their victims out of jealousy and,

as I have already said, jealousy was most common among close matrilineal relatives competing for resources or the attention of a third person but having almost no culturally sanctioned means of resolving their conflicts.

Hence we can see that Kan offers a largely functionalist view of witchcraft: it offers a vent for tensions for which the society has no release. “Beliefs about witchcraft revealed the seriousness of the underlying strains and contradictions within Tlingit sociocultural order, particularly the discrepancies between cultural ideology and social reality” (Kan 1999: 20). He further stresses that witchcraft accusations were a powerful social control mechanism fostering the oppression “of the weak by the strong, of those on the bottom of the society by those on the top” (ibid.). Whether it is oppression or not, it seems the suppression of witchcraft by *íxt’* could be viewed as rebalancing the social order; to reverse Iliff’s formulation, shamanism epitomizes the authorized use of spiritual power for socially acceptable ends.

As one last note about witchcraft, once a person had been infected with the *nakws’aatí* spirit, the only way to cleanse them and remove the evil was by a confession made under duress. “It is only through his confession after torture that he himself can be released and his victims rescued. His trial and sufferings are as necessary for his ‘cure’ as for theirs.” (de Laguna 1972: 728) Both de Laguna (1972: 737) and Olson (1967: 116) report that a *nakws’aatí* has “lids” (like box lids), “covers,” or “clamshells” inside them that allow them to hide from *íxt’* and ordinary people, and may reflect how many times they have been bewitched; in order for the confession to cleanse the *nakws’aatí*, these lids have to be removed first,¹⁸ and the only way to do that is through torture: using physical punishment to break open the lids. This torture could involve starving the *nakws’aatí*, beating them with thorny devil’s club branches, forcing them to drink salt water, locking them in a dark cellar, or tying their hands and legs together tightly behind their back, contorting them into extremely uncomfortable positions.¹⁹ Although it was not unheard of for the *nakws’aatí* to die under these sorts of

¹⁸ Olson (1967: 116) reports that one woman who believed herself bewitched actually committed suicide because, although she wanted to confess to her crimes and admitted she was bewitched, she could not effectively confess and rid herself of the *nakws’aatí* spirit because her “covers” could not be removed.

¹⁹ Cf. de Laguna 1972: 735–738.

extreme interrogation techniques, that was by no means the goal of the practice, if for no other reason than if the *nakws'aatí* died, their victims died with them.²⁰ After the lids were broken open, the confession of the *nakws'aatí* could be made, effecting their exorcism, and they would help the villagers locate their doll and then immerse it and themselves in water (often, but not always, salt water), thus destroying its power.²¹

Before moving on to the interactions between Tlingit and European spirituality, we should discuss a concept called *haa shagóon*, which Kan (1999: 6, 15–16, etc.) commonly defines as “our origin/destiny” or “our moral order.”²² Elaborating on this definition, Kan (1999: 6) says, “The clan’s totemic animal(s), the crest(s) representing them, as well as all of the other representations and manifestations of these crests (e.g., dances, songs, ceremonial clothing, lands owned by the clan, etc.) collectively constitute its *shagóon*.” Since the Tlingit believed that when

²⁰ Cf. de Laguna 1972: 722; similarly, destroying or burning the doll before the confession would also kill the victim (de Laguna 1972: 730).

²¹ Cf. de Laguna 1972: 730.

²² Here I should point out that many Tlingit nouns are what linguists (and linguistic anthropologists) sometimes refer to as being inalienable, that is, they cannot be divorced from another idea or referent often represented syntactically in Tlingit by a pronoun. For example, in Tlingit the parts of the human body are inalienable: the Tlingit word *jin* translates as “hand,” but in conversation it would almost never be used as I just have here, as if it were an abstract idea that one could speak of independently of its referent or owner. In Tlingit, I would always say something like *ax jin*, “my hand,” *i jin*, “your hand,” or *du jin*, “his or her hand” (the pronoun *du* doesn’t differentiate between male and female); I would give it an owner. To paraphrase a Tlingit language teacher I know, to speak of body parts like *jin* without an associated pronoun would be as disturbing as talking about disarticulated hands lying on the beach. Similarly, Tlingit kinship terms are inalienable. As a linguistic anthropology professor I know once put it, this way of speaking can be thought of in light of the fact that you can’t be *an* aunty without being *someone’s* aunty; you can’t be *a* father without being *someone’s* father. It would seem that in this same way, based primarily on my research in Tlingit dictionaries and grammar books, one should not talk of *shagóon* as an alienated abstract entity: it should always be something like *haa shagóon* (“our origin/destiny”) or *ax shagóon* (“my origin/destiny”); although cf. de Laguna 1972: 813—can *shagóon* ever be personal, *ax*, or is it always collective, *haa*? Hence, although Kan, de Laguna and her informants, and even the Dauenhauers (a renowned husband and wife team deeply entrenched in contemporary Tlingit culture and linguistics), will occasionally mention *shagóon* without an owner, in my inexperience with these terms, I will play it safe and continually refer to *haa shagóon* as an inalienable entity so as to avoid even the possibility of committing a Tlingit *faux pas* by discussing “disarticulated” ancestors.

a person dies, some part of their nonmaterial attributes survived and were reincarnated²³ generally into a new member of the same clan,²⁴ we can also see why he considers the clan's ancestors as part of *haa shagóon*, insofar as *haa shagóon* determines “who's going to be born through us” (de Laguna 1972: 813). Recently, when speaking to a Tlingit language teacher (who is herself non-native, but married to a native, and actively involved in the culture) about some of the topics raised by this paper, she very enthusiastically took up the idea that in talking about what I called the “circular time” implied by Tlingit reincarnation beliefs (namely, that who we are in this generation is entirely encompassed by who has been reincarnated from the past, and who in turn will be reincarnated into future generations), she then put together the phrase “our ancestor/descendant” as another way of translating or at least thinking about *haa shagóon* that might help those unfamiliar with the culture understand this circularity—our ancestors are our peers and will be our descendants.

The interactions our ancestors had with the world are symbolized by the crests, songs, and other cultural activities and artifacts that collectively fall under the term *at.óow*. The English–Tlingit Dictionary: Nouns, most commonly called the “Tlingit Noun Dictionary” (Davis and Leer 1996 [1976]: iii), glosses *at.óow* simply as “possession” (Davis and Leer 1996 [1976]: 95), while the Dauenhauers offer this fuller discussion:

The word *at.óow* means, literally, “an owned or purchased thing.” . . . *The “thing”* may be land (geographic features such as a mountain, a landmark, an historical site, . . .), a heavenly body (the sun, the dipper, the milky way), a spirit, a personal name, an artistic design, or a range of other “things.” . . . Ancestors . . . can themselves be *at.óow* . . . *At.óow* can also be spirits of various kinds: shaman spirits and spirits of animals. . . . Through *purchase* by an ancestor, a “thing” becomes *owned* by his or her descendants. The purchase and subsequent ownership can come through money, trade, or peacemaking, as collateral on an unpaid debt, or through personal action, usually involving

²³ Cf. Kan 1999: 20–21.

²⁴ Cf. de Laguna 1972: 767–781 for a general discussion of Tlingit reincarnation beliefs, as well as 1972: 781–790 for a discussion of Tlingit names, including their role in reincarnation practices.

loss of life. In Tlingit tradition, the law is that a person pays for a life he or she has taken. Payment may be with one's own life, with someone else's life as a substitute, or with something of great value. Hence, if an animal (or natural object or force) takes the life of a person, its image may be taken by relatives in payment, and the descendants then own this image taken in payment. . . . The clan histories and other stories recall how such an event happens in the life of an ancestor or progenitor . . . (1990: 14–16, emphasis in original)

To recapitulate, *at.óow* is formed as part of the clan's interaction with the world, often involving the death of an ancestor. These past events are symbolized in heraldic crests, stories, songs and other cultural forms; they become a mnemonic device that helps the clan members remember their ancestors: “so you know who you are, and where you come from,” as my grandfather once told to me in explanation of why he told me the traditional stories of our people. The identity of individual clan members, then, is shaped by *at.óow*, in the sense that *at.óow* informs their sense of history (or “origin,” in Kan's terms) and will continue to inform the lives of their descendants. Unlike Kan's formulation, in the Dauenhauer's treatment *haa shagóon* refers specifically to “an immediate parent and also human ancestors . . . who are not *at.óow*” (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 2002: 19).²⁵

It is the combination of these two, *at.óow* and *haa shagóon*, that constitute *haa shuká*,²⁶ which means

literally, “ahead,” or “before.” It refers to that which is before us or has gone before us in time—predecessors, “one before,” “one who has gone before,” those born ahead of us who are now behind us, as well as those unborn who wait ahead of us. . . . These concepts are difficult to define, partly because the terms overlap but are not synonymous. In general, “shuká” is most often used

²⁵ The Tlingit Noun Dictionary (Davis and Leer 1996 [1976]: 81) translates *du shagóon* as “his [or her] ancestor;” when I asked a Tlingit elder about it, the definitions they offered for *haa shagóon* (with the caveat: “how can I make this simple so you'll understand?”) were “ancestors” or “before you,” with a sense of both the ones who came before you and the simple past: what has come before.

²⁶ It would seem that like *haa shagóon*, *haa shuká* should also be considered an inalienable term.

for the images or heraldic designs, and at.6ow for the material thing or object made with the design. (Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer 1990: 19)²⁷

Hence, in light of the difficulty in defining these terms, we can see that Kan's treatment of *haa shagóon* significantly corresponds to the Dauenhauer's treatment of *haa shuká*, insofar as both imply a sense of past merged into present and future, with the actions of ancestors partially determining or at least ordering the lives of their descendants.

Under very extreme life threatening circumstances, Olson (1967: 110) reports that the Tlingit would pray to *ax shagóon*: "The only being who might be classed as a god [among the Tlingit] is an ill-defined 'creator' or 'ancestor.' The only prayers used seem to be limited to a plea to this being . . . *xátgáxltlákě'ktl akcági'n ya'h* (let me have luck, my Creator).²⁸ The same concept of Creator is in the only other prayer I learned of, *k!a dutl ká'nz akcagu'n* (have pity on me, my ancestor). These are spoken with the face up-turned."²⁹ Hence we can see that

²⁷ The Tlingit Noun Dictionary defines *du shuká* as "[his or her] crest," while the elder I asked about *haa shagóon* split the difference between the Dauenhauers and the Noun Dictionary, at first offering "looking ahead," with the sense of the future, as her definition of *haa shuká*, and only confirming it could mean "crest" after I probed.

²⁸ A common theme in Tlingit spirituality is that when one encounters dangerous spiritual forces, such as the fearsome *gunakadeit* or one of the other wealth-brining monsters, as well as when passing too close to an *íxt'* grave, one should appeal to that power for luck or wealth (cf. de Laguna 1972: 674, 700, 820–822). That "bring me luck" request is an almost incommensurable idea of how to respond to danger as compared to a typical Western response, which would probably sound something more like "don't hurt me." It has imbedded within it an idea that although dangerous and even potentially deadly, powerful spiritual forces can be turned to constructive ends by demonstrating the proper respectful attitude—for instance, in the two cases just mentioned, with the *gunakadeit* and the *íxt'* grave, one has to take care to prepare oneself spiritually before the encounter (either in general by maintaining a respectful attitude at all times and keeping up one's spiritual well-being through habitual purification observances, in the case of a random encounter; or purposefully, if you know you have to pass a grave or expect or even seek out an encounter with a wealth-bringing monster); one generally also has to ritually cleanse oneself and follow a strict set of taboos or *ligas* afterwards in order to receive the benefit of the encounter (if not, one might die). This theme dovetails into the discussion of *kóoshda* above—although dangerous, there is a way in which their destructive power can be constructively turned if carefully and respectfully approached by the knowledgeable *íxt'*.

²⁹ My grasp of Tlingit is not nearly good enough to provide an alternative transla-

there is a spiritual underpinning in even the deepest layers of Tlingit society, leading me to conclude there is no firm distinction between spiritual and social life in traditional Tlingit culture.

Moving into the next section of my paper, it would be impossible to understand Tlingit and European spiritual interactions without saying a few words in preamble about Christianity. Of course, Christianity means different things to different cultures at different times in different places, and those differences are especially prominent in how the Russians and Americans effected their colonization efforts. The Russians penetrated Alaska with mercantilist zeal, enslaving first the Aleuts then the Koniag in their mad dash for profits, furs, and tribute. Missionary work came late to Russian-America, hitting the Aleutian Chain some 40 years into the occupation, and only spreading slowly from there. Although as mentioned in the introduction, Southeast Alaska was spotted by Chirikov in 1741,³⁰ the first real Russian presence in *Lingít aaní* (“Tlingit territory”) wasn’t established until Baranov arrived in 1799 some 60 years later, and missionaries weren’t common until some 30 or 40 years after that—famed Russian Orthodox missionary Ivan Veniaminov, mentioned above, didn’t arrive in Southeast Alaska until 1834, for example, and didn’t begin his missionary work in earnest until almost the 1840s.³¹ Furthermore, although the Russians were able to conscript the natives of the Aleutians and Kodiak Island, they never successfully subjugated the Tlingit. Hence, while missionary work further west was almost an afterthought of conquest, in the Alexander Archipelago, it formed more of a spearhead of colonization, a front wave that tried to seduce the Tlingit into working for the Russian fur trade.³² Grinev (2005: 265–66) mentions resistance to this

tion, nor is my grasp of the orthography good enough to offer a transliteration from Olson’s system to the modern Tlingit spelling conventions, but I just wanted to point out that the words he transcribed as “akcági’n” and “akcagu’n” are the same as, or forms of, *ax shagóon*, “my origin/destiny” or “my ancestor/descendant.”

³⁰ Chirikov never successfully set foot in Tlingit territory. Instead, he sent ashore his only two long boats near a Tlingit village and never saw them again, implying they were killed or they deserted—with this last alternative, a possibility often overlooked in official reports, being a point often made by some of my professors.

³¹ Cf. Kan 1991: 365–366.

³² Seduction, of course, has several meanings, but I do not necessarily mean to use it in a pejorative sense here. What I mean is that the Russian Orthodox missionaries tried to present Christianity in such a way that it would appeal to the Tlingit’s own

seduction among the several reasons that Tlingits did not immediately take to Orthodox Christianity:

Christianity was not accepted by most Tlingit for several concrete reasons: these Natives were independent, Russian–Tlingit connections (especially during the first 20 years of the 19th century) were unstable, the shamans held authority, and the Tlingit clearly realized the threat to their independence that Christianity posed. Veniaminov wrote: “However, I think with complete conviction that though the Koloshi [Tlingit] are in need of enlightenment by the Religion of Christianity, they do not quickly agree or accept it; because (in the words of one very sensible Kolosh) they think with the acceptance of Christianity they are placed under the same influence and authority of the Russians as the Aleuts, whom they consider nothing more than slaves or serfs in the service of the Russians.”

It is of particular importance when trying to understand this passage to know the Tlingit’s attitude towards slavery. Grinev (2005: 81) paraphrases Olson (1967: 17) in his report on the stigma of slavery: “Being enslaved shamed not only the slave but his whole clan. A mortal insult for a Tlingit of high rank were the words ‘Son of a slave!’ or ‘Your ancestors were slaves!’” Hence the idea that becoming a Christian was similar to voluntarily becoming a slave of the Russians made the whole prospect of conversion anathema to the Tlingit mindset.

Even after Veniaminov arrived in Sitka in 1834, conversion of the Tlingits was slow. “Only after a smallpox epidemic (1835–1839) did the number of Christian Tlingit begin to grow noticeably. The shaman’s decreasing influence fed this trend, as did the colonial administration’s flexible politics and the start of Orthodox missionary activity among the Tlingit in the early 1840s.” (Grinev 2005: 261) Although Grinev lists several influences at this time period that substantially changed the Tlingit outlook on Christianity, it is the smallpox epidemic that Kan

sensibilities, in order to draw them in willingly, “under their own steam,” rather than subjecting them to “conversion by the sword,” as it were (cf. Kan 1999: 100, 104, 375, etc.). I fully expect that just as a noble lover (as opposed to the wanton cad), many missionaries thought they were doing what was best for the Tlingit, giving them a gift of love, rather than crassly attempting to get something out of them they would not otherwise willingly give, knowing full well that giving it will harm them (which is the pejorative sense of “seduction”: taking advantage of someone).

(1999: 96) places the most weight on: “To understand the effects of this epidemic on the Tlingit one has to try to establish which causes they may have attributed to it.” He mentions that while most if not all diseases were traditionally attributed to *nakws'aatí* (as mentioned above), in this case the Sitkan *íxt'* probably knew the Russian fort was somehow involved in spreading the sickness. In the natural course of things, these *íxt'* attempted to use their *yéik* to drive the disease away from their village, but met no success. Kan appends his narrative at this point to mention that many Tlingit attributed the lack of success of the *íxt'* of their day to not following their restrictions stringently enough; if they had only been more like the old *íxt'*, their villages would have been saved. This aside helps to demonstrate that the Tlingit did not think the practice of shamanism as such was flawed, only that its temporary incarnations were. However, a more salient point linking the plague to the decline of shamanism, other than a lack of faith in contemporary *íxt'*, is the undemonstrated but supposed high die-off rate of *íxt'* attending to a flood of sick patients, supported by the documented fact that a great many elders died of the pox, thus eliminating “the upholders of traditional superstitions” (Kan 1999: 98).

Kan (1999: 97) also suggests that one of the largest motivators towards Christianity at the time of the epidemic was the offering of Russian medicine by the fort physician to the natives. This largesse simultaneously prevented the deaths of the Tlingit who took the vaccine, and demonstrated the Christian's friendly intentions. Additionally, given that the Tlingit probably still saw curing diseases as a manifestation of spiritual power, then the success of the Western medicines would have lent support to the efficacy of Western spirituality, namely, Christianity. In general, however, as elsewhere in the world, Christian forms blended into and were molded by native beliefs.

Only those aspects of Russian Orthodoxy that made sense in terms of the traditional world view, for example body crosses [similar to traditional amulets and charms], were accepted by many, though certainly not all of the Sitkans. It seems that the Tlingit treated Russian culture, and specifically Orthodoxy, as they did the cultures of the neighboring coastal societies—they were interested in being exposed to the ways of the newcomers and willing to borrow practices that seemed useful and attractive, without seriously modifying their own way of thinking about the world and acting within it. (Kan 1999: 172)

Similarly, we read in Iliff (1994: 42–43): “As aspects of traditional social structure were absorbed into Native church leadership, so could personal spirit beliefs be translated into Christian mysticism.”

In any event, while the Russian Orthodox church enjoyed some success following the epidemic, it was largely under-funded, relying on the Russian–American Company (RAC) to pay for its schools and missionary activity; the RAC in turn hoped the Church would be able to supply it with organized, “civilized” workers. “It was not an easy alliance but one of necessity for both; the Church needed economic support and the trading companies required the organization and control of Natives exerted by the missions” (Iliff 1994: 32). However, Grinev (2005: 259) reports that the RAC, not satisfied with its end of the bargain, curtailed its funding of the mission schools: “because of the restricted means available to it, [the RAC] could not provide large-scale instruction in reading and writing to the Natives inasmuch as there was no guarantee that the Tlingit ‘would work off’ the cost of their instruction.” The costs of running not only the schools but also the trading posts themselves and eventually the whole colony proved too much, so with the decline of the fur trade, Russia ultimately sold Alaska to the Americans in 1867. It is probably not an exaggeration to say this sale brought about one of the greatest periods of change for the Tlingit.

Unlike the Russians, who were interested in exploiting Alaska and, due to their small numbers, had to behave very diplomatically with the Natives, courting Tlingit leaders, offering them for example medals from the Czar or items with the Russian double-headed eagle emblem (which some clans eventually took as crests), the Americans did not seek Alaska for its natural resources, since the territory had, so the popular opinion said, been depleted—that’s why the Russians were selling it, after all; they most likely sought land as an area to expand into and so sought to subdue the native population, building off of their experiences with the various Indian wars with continental US tribes. To highlight how different the power distributions were under Russian and American colonial rule, we need only contrast the razing of the Russian forts at Yakutat and Sitka in 1802 (demonstrating Tlingit power to the Russians) with the bombing of the Tlingit villages in Kake and Wrangell in 1869 and Angoon in 1882 (demonstrating American power to the Tlingits). One of the starkest differences between the Russians and Americans, however, was in the forms of their Christianization.

Under the American flag, Orthodox priests were slowly replaced with Protestants, especially, in the early period, with Presbyterians such as Sheldon Jackson. This influx of Protestant missionaries began to impact Native life, starting with the Presbyterian Mission opened in Sitka in 1877. Unlike Veniaminov and other Russian missionaries, who adjusted their preaching to suit Tlingit ears, and played a rather more patient game luring the Tlingit into Christianity,³³ the Presbyterians wanted the Tlingit to accept America into their hearts along with Christ.³⁴ Hence, whereas the Russians relied on native labor throughout Alaska to feed their fur trade, meaning they did not dare disturb traditional life-ways too drastically (lest it undermine their own conscription of this economic base), the Americans were only too happy to force the Tlingit to adopt American ways: speaking English, becoming Christian, going to school, entering the blue-collar workforce. In other words, they wanted the Tlingit to bite the bit, the whole bit, and nothing but the bit, as it were, of the yoke of capitalism. It was in this era that most Tlingits began converting to Orthodoxy as a shield from and a form of protest against American and Protestant ideals, in part because Orthodox worship was more similar to traditional Tlingit spirituality and because Orthodox churches were more likely to conduct sermons in the Tlingit language.³⁵

Having treated some of the background behind Tlingit and European interactions along the spiritual front, one of the most characteristic moves by the Tlingit was syncretisation. De Laguna (1972: 682) reports that some of her modern-day informants began thinking of the *yéik* of *íxt'* in terms of "angels."³⁶ Kan (1991: 375–376; 1999: 259–260) reports that at least one *íxt'* claimed to have a "Russian" *yéik*, as well as reporting that *íxt'* began using Christian paraphernalia and prayers in their rituals (Kan 1999: 83, 172, 374). He also indicates that average Tlingit citizens may also have been more inclined to adopt certain Christian paraphernalia, especially body crosses, mentioned above as fitting into the old customs of carrying protective amulets; similarly Christian prayers may have fit into the old manner of praying to *haa shagóon* in times of danger (Kan 1999: 172). On the other end of the spiritual

³³ Cf. the comments on "seduction" in note 32 above.

³⁴ Cf. Kan 1999: 204.

³⁵ Cf. Kan 1999: xxviii, 220–221; 1991: 368.

³⁶ Cf. de Laguna 1972: 723.

spectrum, Olson (1967: 117) mentions a case from 1925 involving a *nakws'aatí* dressed up like an Orthodox priest, carrying “a human skull pierced through the dome suspended from a cord. This he was using as a censer, chanting the Christian litany, his wife giving the replies.” Hence we can see European spirituality in its Christian guise was seen as a powerful spiritual force capable of being harnessed for extraordinary positive and negative ends, as well as serving the more mundane needs of the average person.

Interestingly, there is at least one example of the reverse process being done by a European, none other than Baranov himself. Grinev (2005 [1991]: 254) relates the story of Baranov cultivating a reputation as a *nakws'aatí*, “to the point that when one time (in 1810) on the shore a rocket was launched, the Koloshi [Tlingit] . . . said that this was Baranov flying”; only *nakws'aatí* were said to fly.³⁷ He adds that part of Baranov’s efforts to cultivate his image as a “sorcerer” (Grinev 2005 [1991]: 254)³⁸ included hiding a suit of chain mail under his clothes, then asking a Tlingit to shoot him with an arrow: when it bounced harmlessly off the mail, the Tlingit became convinced “of his spiritual power” (ibid.). Indeed, this intimidation tactic was apparently so strong, “possibly only Baranov’s presence in Novo-Arkhangelsk [Sitka] in the winter of 1805–1806 kept the Tlingit from attacking the garrison of the fort, which was weak from hunger and illness” (Grinev 2005 [1991]: 254) after the Tlingit attack of 1802, mentioned above.

Another common theme in Tlingit/European relations was the suppression of shamanism, usually by missionaries and military officers. The Russian Orthodox priest Kamenskii (1985 [1906]: 84–85), who was stationed in Sitka around the turn of the century, relates the story of one Captain Glass,³⁹ of whom he says, “Hunting shamans was his favorite pastime and sport.” This Mr. Glass would track down shamans, invite them aboard his ship, inquire as to their powers, then claim he himself was a shaman, proceed to hook them up to a live battery, and

³⁷ Cf. Kan 1991: 375; de Laguna 1972: 486, 730–733.

³⁸ Cf. the discussion of witchcraft above for the ambiguities of the term “sorcerer”; I suspect whether Grinev means *nakws'aatí* or *íxt'* by “sorcerer” (and it’s possible Baranov himself didn’t know he was building himself up as a *nakws'aatí* and hence painting himself as a villain rather than a champion), the Tlingit thought of Baranov as a *nakws'aatí*, because of the reference to flying.

³⁹ Cf. Kan 1999: 225.

shock them in front of their fellow villagers. “The shaman’s body began to twist. His own people, witnessing his strange and funny poses and hearing screams and moans, became frightened” (Kamenskii 1985 [1906]: 84–85). Finally, the good Captain would shave their heads; a shaman’s hair, usually styled in tangled dreadlocks, was a sort of badge of office and seen as the seat of his power (de Laguna 1999: 684). Hence this act, which simultaneously stripped him of his uniform and his power, served both as a potent symbolic gesture to the villagers and as a blow to the *ixt’* himself, who saw himself as violated.

In addition to the defilement of living *ixt’*, it became increasingly common for Europeans to desecrate the graves of dead *ixt’*. In traditional Tlingit society, the grave of an *ixt’* was a dangerous place. Going near one could “result in a spirit intrusion” (de Laguna 1972: 699), that could manifest itself as a tumor or other growth, sickness, or even death.⁴⁰ Because the graves were seen as such potent objects, Kamenskii (1985 [1906]: 79) was led to exclaim: “The Indians are greatly surprised that the white people treat the remains of the dead so disrespectfully; but what amazes them even more is the fact that the whites get away with such sacrilegious acts.” However, there is a curious notion that is often expressed by de Laguna’s informants in various contexts that helps me understand this paradox: why can the white people get away with robbing graves? Because they do not believe in the power of the *ixt’*. In reference to a particular type of amulet, discovered in an archeological dig, one of de Laguna’s informants proclaimed, “They used to believe in all that. Now they don’t believe, so it kills all the power of that” (de Laguna 1972: 660). Similarly, “Jack Ellis (1892–1952) explained that . . . this [sickness from visiting *ixt’* graves] affects Indians because they believe in it, not Whites who don’t get scared” (de Laguna 1972: 674). Lastly, another one of her informants said, “All the doctors [*ixt’*] die off when the White people came, because nobody believe it any more” (de Laguna 1972: 671). Perhaps we will never know to what extent this opinion was a sort of defense mechanism for explaining why, in hindsight, the old power died (because no one believed in it any more), versus how much of it was a traditional viewpoint regarding the nature of Tlingit spirituality (belief was always seen as fundamental to power). However, there is at least some evidence that Tlingit spiritual

⁴⁰ Cf. de Laguna 1973: 674 and note 8 above.

power was based on belief: “The more tribe you have, the more people in the tribe, the bigger that [the shaman’s spirit power] is. That’s why, a small tribe—their shaman isn’t strong” (de Laguna 1972: 682). De Laguna attributes this correlation of spirit power with tribe size to the fact that when an *íxt*’ conducts a ritual, his clan mates sing along with him summoning and directing his *yéik*. I take her to mean that the more people there are behind the *íxt*’, supporting his power, lending him their belief, the greater his power.

At the same time that the power and influence of shamanism was waning, witchcraft was on the rise. In part, this was due to the efforts by Europeans to “rescue” accused *nakws’aatí*, as reported by Krause (1956 [1885]: 203): “The unfortunate ones [two accused witches] succeeded in escaping to the missionary who hid them until they could go south on a steamer.” Similarly, Kamenskii (1985 [1906]: 90) reports:

Under the Russians, witches found refuge in the fort [Novoarkhangel'sk, a.k.a. Sitka] and remained there forever. At the present time, relatives of a *nakws’aatí* try to appeal secretly to the police, if such can be found nearby. Not infrequently visiting fur traders and merchants, informed by these relatives, defended the unfortunate ones and came to their rescue.

Besides these rescue attempts, Olson (1967: 117) reports: “It is said that grave sorcery is on the increase in recent times because of the law which offers protection to the sorcerer and punishes the watchers at the grave.” This last item references the practice of relatives of the dead standing guard over the grave mentioned above. The practice of burying the dead also helped facilitate witchcraft, since it became easier to access dead remains. In any event, fear of *nakws’aatí* remained strong in Tlingit society until well into the modern era. In his preface, Olson (1967: v) reported that “as recently as 1957 the village of Angoon was in a state of mass hysteria over charges of witchcraft.” He also wrote that “sorcery, witchcraft, and black magic are much practiced even to the present day, despite the fact that nearly all Tlingit are at least nominal Christians” (Olson 1967: 115).

Similarly, despite the fact that shamanism was waning, it took a long time to die. “As late as the 1950s there were still some individuals in conservative communities who, while not full-fledged shamans, were reputed to be fortune-tellers and spiritual healers” (Kan 1991: 371).

I think this phenomenon is due in part to what Iliff (1994: 39) calls going underground: “It seems plausible, then, that a modified brand of shamanism, with some of the same structural patterns but without the visible accessories, or with new accessories derived from the dominant culture, survived the so-called decimation of the profession by going ‘underground.’” That is to say, while full-fledged shamans disappeared, spiritual practitioners in some form or other continued on. Indeed, I have heard personally of some individuals who, while not shamans in any real sense, retain some elements of spiritual understanding into the present day (or the recent past, in the case of those now deceased).

For confidentiality reasons, I’m afraid I have to be somewhat vague in what I say about this point. In part, I am referring to someone I’ve heard of who died before I was born, but who some people called an *íxt’* (and others *nakws’aati*). I’m not entirely certain what all their powers included, but they certainly included predicting the future: this person reportedly predicted their own death, including accurately predicting when they would die, how long their body would remain undiscovered, and who would discover their body. They also reportedly helped someone get rid of an item that was bringing them bad luck, whereupon the streak of bad luck ended. They also knew a lot about traditional plant lore, and could make many of the traditional medicines. However, it is my understanding that they lacked many of the trappings of an *íxt’*: for example, to my knowledge, this person never cut any tongues, they had no assistants, and I don’t know that they had any shamanic regalia; but to be fair, not all historical *íxt’* had these trappings either. Besides this individual, I have also heard of other contemporary Tlingit who attempted to take on some of the practices of an *íxt’*, but who almost universally abandoned their attempt because it brought on too much bad luck.

Other than approximations of *íxt’*, I have also heard tell of other people’s spiritual encounters, and have had a small number of them myself. In terms of my own experiences, some are too private to recount here, but one of my childhood memories is of playing with some friends in the woods on the hill below my house (we lived in a very remote area well outside of town); there was a family who rented a lower lot from us and had set up a trailer there, near where we were playing. They had a small boy, and as we were playing we saw that boy suddenly appear, as if he came out from behind a tree and ran for the trailer. I still distinctly remember the look of the brown Carhart jacket and blue jeans he wore, and his pale blonde hair. We ran after him towards

the trailer, and when we got there, no one was home: we looked in all the windows, and everything was dark and quiet. Years later, I found out that a land otter trail ran down the hill beside our driveway, near where we were playing, and ever since then I've had to wonder if we had seen a *kóoshda káa*. I never asked any of the others with me if they remember the incident. There was also a night I spent in my home town not too long ago, where due to a comedy of errors I was forced to spend the night outdoors. As I sat alone on my grandmother's porch in the dead of night, with the whole town asleep around me except for a stray cat on my lap keeping me warm, I heard an awful sound that started like car brakes screeching but slowly dissolved into an organic warbling sound. I might not have been so afraid of it had it not been coming directly from the small island near our village where we bury our dead. I remembered, in that moment, something a friend once told me: "No one ever told the old spiritual monsters: you don't exist, we don't believe in you anymore."

In terms of other people's spiritual encounters, a professor of mine once described an incident they had heard about involving a tourist ship that saw dancers in traditional Tlingit regalia singing and drumming high on a cliff in Glacier Bay (the traditional homeland of the Hoonah Tlingit). When the ship got back to port, the tourists and tour company wanted to thank someone for sending those dancers, but no one took credit for them, and no one other than that ship full of people saw them again. The professor speculated it was some message from the ancestors telling these visitors they were welcome, and a sign that as a people we must be doing something right.

From other people, I have heard of hunters who practice the traditional forms of sharing (giving portions of their catch to others, hunting for those who can't hunt for themselves) who have had a deer come up to them, kneel down, bow its head, and offer itself to them; the ironic thing is that these hunters aren't spiritual people at all, they're devote atheists, and they couldn't understand why, on another hunting trip, one of their hunting partners thanked his dead father for sending them a deer. This same hunter, who thanked his father, once told me that if he closed his eyes, he could "see" the other people in the house around him, through the walls, as if each of them were a red light; he was surprised I couldn't do it myself, I think. When I talked with one of my professors about this incident, they said they had heard stories of *íxt'* who saw people as light. I have also heard an elder say that when

they're at a *koo.éex'*, they can eat and eat and eat and not get full. This attitude relates to a traditional belief that the food eaten at a *koo.éex'* feeds the ancestors it is held to honor, so this person was effectively saying they can feel the ancestors taking nourishment from what they ate, I think. And of course, the *koo.éex'* itself is a continuation of spiritual practices with ties back to the web of traditional beliefs, one strand of which was shamanism (Worl 2000: 159).

Back to the main topic, one final factor in the Tlingit–European spiritual interaction was the effort to eliminate the traditional Tlingit matrilineal clan system. Indeed, Kan (1985: 201) describes Kamenskii as viewing “‘intemperance’ [possibly either alcoholism or potlatching] and the ‘clan-based mode of life’ as the two greatest evils that had to be fought.” Grinev (2005: 266), paraphrasing Kan (1985: 202), states that at least part of the reason the Tlingits resisted conversion to Orthodoxy, was “their fear of the new religion’s undermining their traditional system of inheriting property and rank—one of the bases of Tlingit society.” In particular, Kan (1985: 203) cites the hesitancy of the Tlingit to undergo an American, Christian marriage, “since children of such a marriage could appeal to the American court for support of their claims on their father’s property, including lineage houses and clan regalia.” Similarly, Christian missionaries attempted to eliminate the traditional memorial feast, the *koo.éex'*, which was an important ritual for maintaining, and to some extent, creating the power of the clans,⁴¹ as well as retaining balance between the moieties. As an example of this suppression, in the statutes of the Archangel Michael Society of Mutual Aid, founded by Kamenskii in Sitka, initiates must swear to “. . . c) renounce old pagan ceremonies and rituals; d) not participate in other pagan festivities; . . . i) not to perform any memorial feasts for the dead” (Kamenskii 1985 [1906]: 111).

However, despite the efforts of the Orthodox brotherhoods, such as the Archangel Michael Society, and the limited success of conversion by Christian priests, many Tlingit still only gave lip service to Christianity. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest that at least some Tlingit joined the Church and the brotherhoods in particular to enhance their status among other Tlingit and, more importantly, among their white neighbors. Specifically, the Tlingit were seeking to better their

⁴¹ See Kan 1999: 23.

economic prospects: “The first converts included . . . a few native clan leaders courted by the Russian–American Company and attracted by the splendor of the Orthodox ritual and the possibility of establishing ties with the high-ranking company officials who acted as their godfathers.” (Kan 1991: 366)

Conclusion

As with the introduction, the idea of a conclusion is somewhat unfamiliar to the Tlingit aspects of my personality. A guest speaker in one of my classes, an anthropologist who focuses heavily on Alaska Native oral traditions, once explained to us that elders almost never explain their stories, and rarely offer explanations even when pressed for them, because traditional stories almost always had multiple levels of meaning, allowing the listener to glean from it whatever they could, and often finding different meanings in the stories as they progressed through life. A child will see one thing, an adult another, and an elder something again entirely different. Each of these interpretations is in some sense correct, and no one interpretation excludes the other. In fact, learning how to parse out the different meanings behind stories could be seen as part of the traditional curriculum of many Alaska Native education systems, as it were: learning wasn’t a passive series of rote memorizations; it involved an active effort on the part of the learner, including participating in the activity being learned, such as hunting, observing how elders performed their chores, such as how they sliced their fish before drying it, or through active cognition, as in interpreting traditional oral narratives. With that said (and with the acknowledgment that my paper does not rise to the level of a traditional story polished by the countless number of hands that have passed it down for thousands of years), I shall nevertheless attempt to offer some closing words as to my intentions for this essay.

Although the original nucleus for this paper was an exploration of how shamanic practices among the Tlingit changed during the two main contact eras, Russian and American, the more I dug into this topic, the more I realized shamanism was not an isolated activity among the Tlingit, but was part of a wider network of spiritual activities that even encompassed the organization of the social order itself, insofar as our ancestors or *haa shagóon* could be prayed to for protec-

tion, and how high ranking individuals were seen as having greater spiritual resistances to *nakws'aatí*. At the same time, spirituality itself had social dimensions: low ranking people were often driven to witchcraft because they had no socially sanctioned means to win redress for perceived wrongs, and conversely, the ability to name someone as a suspected *nakws'aatí* (meaning they might be tortured) gave the *íxt'* at least some degree of political power. Hence, I was forced to disagree with Olson (1967: 111) when he says that "shamans. . . among the Tlingit . . . were as important in the realm of the supernatural as chiefs were in the social life," for the simple reason that I'm not entirely certain there was a firm division between the social and spiritual life of the Tlingit, nor a strong division between the natural and supernatural world, nor even the mind, body, and spirit. Instead all of these forces were part of an interconnected whole, like Geertz's "web of meaning."

This idea that there is no firm distinction between spiritual and social life can be seen to some extent even in Western culture. Among Christians, for example, there are people whom I've heard called "Sunday Christians," who regularly attend Sunday service, and maybe a few of the major holiday celebrations as well, but largely limit their spiritual activities to that once-weekly ceremony. Conversely, there are other Christians to whom spirituality is something that permeates all aspects of their life, including the social sphere. To these people, whom I might be tempted to call "committed" or "fully engaged" Christians, their career, their hobbies, how they treat their kin, who they associate with (or how they associate with them), perhaps even their political affiliations can be charged with spiritual significance. Each of these social activities could be practiced in ways considered sinful or immoral: some careers might be more or less sinful or immoral than others (adult bookstore owner versus public school librarian), as could certain hobbies (gambling versus fishing), and similarly it might be sinful or immoral to treat or not treat people in certain ways (it might be sinful or immoral to turn away a relative or someone in need), or even simply to associate with certain people, unless for charitable ends (it might be sinful or immoral to hang around drug users, even if not participating in their consumption, unless it is to help them overcome their addiction). Conversely, it is not outside the realm of possibility that belonging to a certain church might put one in contact with certain people that could advance one socially, say by networking contacts for business or

political advancement (a practice we saw might have been carried out by early Tlingit converts to Christianity).

Clearly, if one's choice of friends or career can have spiritual significance, and conversely if spiritual paths can have social ramifications, then the line between spirituality and sociality is becoming blurred. However, just as we can categorize some Westerners as "Sunday Christians" or "fully engaged Christians," it seems reasonable to think there are people we might call "potlatch Tlingit" and those we might call "fully engaged Tlingit," both contemporarily and in historical times. In my own life, I have seen people, especially people under 50, who attend Tlingit religious ceremonies, such as the *koo.éex'*, but who seem to regularly practice no other forms of traditional Tlingit spirituality, and others, largely elders, who appear to be much more aware of the spiritual significance of their daily lives. Similarly, given the stratified nature of traditional Tlingit culture and the fact that higher ranking people seemed to have greater spiritual training and therefore possibly greater spiritual understanding (at the same time they could afford to pay *íxt'* for their services), while lower ranking people had to resort to witchcraft more often and were more susceptible to witchcraft accusations, it seems reasonable to conclude, at least tentatively, that in the past positive spiritual forces held greater weight in the lives of the Tlingit nobility than in the lives of commoners or slaves, for whom negative aspects of spirituality may have been more prevalent.

Finally, although the arrival of Europeans brought with it their diseases, their socioeconomic systems, and their religious practices, all of which in their own way contributed to the relatively rapid demise of traditional Tlingit spirituality, here we are more than 200 years after "contact," and Tlingit school children have school wide "potlatches," dance in traditional regalia on the school grounds, and learn the old songs and stories from the mouths of their elders in the classroom, as I myself did as a child. Indeed, even one of the most central foundations of modern Tlingit spirituality, the *koo.éex'*, is not only continuing, it has wrapped itself in the cloak of Orthodox ritual, under the guise of the "forty-day party,"⁴² a sign of the continuing adaptation of Tlingit spirituality. Hence, although the fire of shamanism has dimmed, it has not yet gone out completely, and, as Tlingit anthropologist Rosita Worl (2000: 159) puts it: "while it

⁴² Cf. Kan 2000: 145–147.

is unlikely that shamanism as it was once practiced will be among the traditional elements to be revitalized [alongside other elements of Tlingit culture, such as language], it is not inconceivable that new forms of shamanism could be initiated and become reintegrated within the ideological framework and practices that have survived. In fact, a few Tlingit are now exploring this very possibility.”

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To paraphrase something Tlingit elder David Katzeek (*Kingeiski*) once told me, one of the most important values in Tlingit culture is that we should take care of each other. In the course of writing this paper, many people took care of me, too many to thank individually. Some names I would like to call attention to, however, are Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer and Ádám Molnár, who offered me some good editing advice for an early draft of this paper; Steve Langdon, my advisor in graduate school, a professor under whom I have taken several classes about anthropology in general and Tlingit and Northwest Coast cultures in specific (including the class wherein I wrote a very early draft of this paper), and with whom I've had many illuminating conversations about Tlingit spirituality; Rosita Worl (*Yeidiklats'okw*), who through the course of several classes helped me put traditional Tlingit culture in context within the modern world; Dan Monteith, who first initiated me into the wonders of anthropology; Florence Marks Sheakley and D. Roy Mitchel IV, who have each taught me in their own ways many important lessons about the Tlingit language; other professors and teachers too numerous to count, who have all contributed to my growth as a scholar and a student; Frederica de Laguna (posthumously), Sergei Kan, Richard and Nora Marks Dauenhauer, and all the other authors whose books helped me research this topic; all the friends and colleagues who had conversations with me, however so brief, that helped me put my thoughts in order for this paper; and last but not least, my relatives, including my parents, my aunts and uncles, my grandparents, and my cousins, who raised me up in the heart of Tlingit culture, and shared with me so many of the things it means to be Tlingit. To all of these people, and to all those who I have not named, but who have shared my path, and shared their wisdom with me, I say *gunalcheesh!* Thank you!

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KYLE WARK was raised in Hoonah, Alaska, the largest Tlingit community in the world at approximately 900 people. His first educators were his Tlingit elders, who told him many traditional and personal stories, and included him in the traditional subsistence practices of his tribe. He excelled in science, math, and music in high school, and went on to study Western classics, principally philosophy and math, at St. John's College, in Santa Fe, NM, where he later got a Masters Degree in Eastern Classics. He lives in Anchorage, AK, where he is pursuing a Masters in Anthropology with an emphasis in Tlingit culture.

Some Fieldwork Notes on Bashkir Folk Medicine

DÁVID SOMFAI KARA and LÁSZLÓ KUNKOVÁCS

BUDAPEST

We, László Kunkovác and Dávid Somfai Kara, two Hungarians, spent one month in September of 1996 among the Bashkir living in the Ural Mountains.¹ We were invited by Khisametdinova Firdaus, the minister of education in Bashkortostan (Bashkiria), a native scholar who had been doing fieldwork with the Hungarian Turkologist József Torma for many years.² We met her in the Bashkir capital, Öfö (Russian Ufa) and she helped us to conduct fieldwork in the counties inhabited by a Bashkir majority.³

The Bashkir accepted Islam in the 14th–15th centuries and their pre-Islamic native religion left only some traces in their folk beliefs. The cult of nature is not attested, but the respect for ancestor spirits (*atababalar ruxi*) is still strong among them. Sometimes they bake a sort of bread to please ancestor spirits because they believe that the smell of it attracts them to the fireplace of the house.⁴

¹ The Republic of Bashkortostan is inhabited by 1.5 million Russians, 1.2 million Bashkir (*bašqört*), and about one million Tatar (mostly *täptär*) according to the 2002 census of the Russian Federation.

² Due to the complicated relationship between the Hungarians and the Bashkir (see Golden 1990: 242–248), the Bashkir are preferred subjects of Turkological research in Hungary. József Torma (1942–2000) conducted fieldwork among the Bashkir, studying their popular beliefs between 1986 and 1991. He published the fieldwork materials he collected on Bashkir folk medicine in Hungarian (Torma 1997), but this book is hardly known outside Hungary. The Hungarian scholar gives a detailed overview of the history of research on Bashkir folk medicine (Torma 1997: 16–25).

³ The Bashkir language and traditions were best preserved mainly in the southeastern counties (Yılayır, Böryän, Baymaq, etc.) we visited. Northern and western Bashkir tend to speak Tatar.

⁴ The smell of the fat was used to feed the spirits of the dead and other good spirits living near the house (my [DSK] fieldwork material, Baymaq, Bashkiria, 1996). See also Torma 1997: 47.

The Bashkir believe that illnesses can be caused by evil spirits (*šaytan*, *yěn-pärěy*, *albaθti*, *ubir*, *šürälě*)⁵ and witches (*sīyxīrsi*⁶ and *mäskäy*)⁷ or if someone is touched by an evil eye (*küð těy*- literally ‘to be touched by the eye’). These illnesses can be healed and prevented by charms and other means of magical healing.

There are no religious specialists among the Bashkir who invoke spirits in ecstasy as shamans do. I, Dávid Somfai Kara heard about *kürädä* ‘fortune-tellers’ (literally ‘seers’),⁸ who can see and fight with demons, but during my (DSK) fieldwork the local Bashkir could only show me their tombs. Healing activities are now practiced by female healers (*imsě äběy*) who know the healing methods. The Bashkir do not believe that these specialists are chosen by the spirits or that they learn their healing methods from such spirits. These female healers learn their methods from their mothers and grandmothers and pass them on to the next generation.

There are various Bashkir healing methods, but *im-tõm* is a general term for folk medicine. Torma translates the verb *imlä-* as ‘healing by body movements’, which is a derivation from *im* ‘remedy’ (Torma 1997: 113–114). He translates *im-tõm*⁹ as ‘superstition’ or ‘charm’, and mentions various types of charm used to heal *arpa* ‘sty’ (1997: 103) and *ödlök* ‘puerperal or childbed fever’ (1997: 85).¹⁰ In a book on Bashkir ritual folklore we find 48 types of charm (Söläymänov 1995: 60–95) in the chapter on *im-tõm*.

During our field trip, we observed four types of *im-tõm* (including two types of charm) that happily complement the otherwise very rich material we find in Torma’s book. These are: (1) returning the lost soul to the body by casting lead (*qõt qõyõw*) to counter fright and heartache,¹¹ (2) removing the superfluous souls from the body (*ös yän*

⁵ These kinds of demons are all considered to be various forms of the Islamic concept of Satan.

⁶ ‘Koldun’ia, volshebniša, charodeiĭka’ (Uraksin 1996: 545).

⁷ ‘Obzhora, vurdalak’ (Uraksin 1996: 451).

⁸ ‘Vorozheia, gadalka’ (Uraksin 1996: 320); Rudenko 1925: 310 and Torma 1997: 17.

⁹ The word *em* is of Turkic origin while *dom* is Mongolic in origin. The hendiadys *em-dom* is pronounced *im-tõm* in Bashkir, cf. Szalontai-Dimitrieva 1982: 175–176.

¹⁰ Torma explains the word *ödlök* as ‘the demon of some recurrent strong illness’ (Torma 1997: 85 and 168 in the index), while Uraksin translates it as some other kind of complication ‘oslazhnenie’ (1996: 479).

¹¹ Torma 1997: 117; Söläymänov 1995: 60–62.

imläw) to cure stomachache,¹² (3) measuring the brain (*měyě ülsäw*) and moving it back into place to quell headaches,¹³ and (4) writing payers on a piece of paper (*döya yađiw* or *bětěw*) and putting the paper into water to protect against the ‘evil eye’.¹⁴ Somfai Kara recorded the healing methods and the texts of the charms, and Kunkovács took pictures during the healing sessions.

Returning the Lost Soul to the Body by Casting Lead

The *qöt qöyöw* is the Bashkir name of a healing method that aims to return a lost soul by means of casting lead. The word *qöt* in Bashkir is the equivalent of Old Turkic *qut*;¹⁵ Torma translates it as ‘a soul bringing good fortune’.¹⁶ We observed this Bashkir healing method as it was conducted by a 71-year-old female healer (*imsě*), Fayđa Xäsän-qıđı Äbsälämovna, in the small village of Yuldıbay in Yılayır County (Russian Zilairskiı raion). She healed a little boy who had gotten frightened by something and was crying all the time. The Bashkir believe that if someone is frightened it means that the *qöt*, ‘the spirit of good fortune’, in the body has flown away.¹⁷ So it has to be returned. During the healing the female healer returns the *qöt* to the body, which is symbolized by casting lead. Hence the name of this healing procedure is *qöt qöyöw* ‘pouring the spirit of good fortune’.

At the beginning of the healing process we witnessed, the healer melted lead in a saucepan containing hot grease. When this was ready, the boy’s mother made her son sit on the threshold (*tufa yěgěn*) of their house and covered his head with a piece of white cloth. The healer put a pot filled with cold water on the covered head of the child and placed the lid of the pot under the boy’s feet. Then she poured the melted lead

¹² Torma 1997: 83, 84, 96, 98, 99, 101; Söläymänov 1995: 75–78.

¹³ Torma 1997: 115; Söläymänov 1995: 84.

¹⁴ Torma 1997: 29–30.

¹⁵ Clauson 1972: 594. The word *qut* has an extensive literature, see e.g. Bombaci 1965–1966.

¹⁶ Torma 1997: 167 (in the index).

¹⁷ The *qöt ös-* idiom literally means ‘the spirit of good fortune flies away’, but it is used with the meaning ‘to become frightened’ in the modern language.

(*aq quryaş*) from the saucepan into the pot of water, while saying the following charm:

qǒrayt qǒtǒm, kil qǒtǒm

ǔyǎng bĭnda, qǒtǒm

aγĭn hĭwǒday aγĭp kil

aq baliqtay yǒǒǒp kil

ǔyǎng bĭnda, qǒtǒm

qǒrayt qǒtǒm, kil qǒtǒm

γazrayĭl fǎrǔštǎ, kiltǔr qǒtǒm

ǔyǎng bĭnda, qǒtǒm

qǒrayt qǒtǒm, kil qǒtǒm

*Qǒrayt*¹⁸ my *qǒt*, come my *qǒt*!

Your master is here, my *qǒt*!

Like flowing water, flow here,

Like a white fish, swim here!

Your master is here, my *qǒt*,

Qǒrayt my *qǒt*, come my *qǒt*!

Azrail angel,¹⁹ bring my *qǒt*!

Your master is here, my *qǒt*,

Qǒrayt my *qǒt*, come my *qǒt*!

From the shape of the solidified lead one can recognize the kind of animal or thing that has frightened the child. In the case we witnessed, the shape of a dog was discerned. Then the healer gave the solidified lead to the child's mother and explained the reason why the child had become frightened (pl. 10). They wrapped the solidified lead in a kerchief and fastened it to the child's shirt over his heart. After the healing the healer poured the water under the threshold and said a blessing (*salawat*) in Arabic. When the grease cooled down and hardened she rubbed it on the child's forehead, palms, and chest.

After the Bashkir accepted Islam, the genuine Turkic concepts of the soul²⁰ changed fundamentally,²¹ but in *qǒt qǒyǒw* healing the concept of *qǒt* or a sort of 'soul that leaves the body' can be observed.

¹⁸ The word *qǒrayt* does not have a specific meaning and it is only used in this charm.

¹⁹ Azrail is the angel of death in Muslim mythology (Arabic *'Izra'ĭl*, see Wensinck 1990).

²⁰ Among the Altai Turks breath and soul (*tĭn*) are one concept, but there are other forms of souls in the human body. The *kut* is a soul or spirit that provides luck and happiness. The *jula* and *üzüt* are soul forms that leave the body in case of illness and death, respectively (Potapov 1991: 30–31, 46–56; Somfai Kara 2002: 300).

²¹ The Bashkir use only the word *yǎn* (from Persian *jān*) for soul.

Removing the Superfluous Souls from the Body

The healing method called *ös yän* in Bashkir, literally ‘three souls’, is applied when a child has stomachache. The case we witnessed was performed by a female healer (*imsě*) Gäynäkamal Latif-qïdï, of the Üθärgän clan, a 70-year-old woman from Bikbaw village on the River Haqmar. While the *qöt* can fly away (*qöt ös-*) and the lack of it can cause illness, the name *ös yän* ‘three souls’ suggests that superfluous souls can also cause illness. According to Bashkir belief, two superfluous ‘dog-souls’ (*ět-yän*) cause the stomachache (Torma 1997: 85). These souls are harmful spirits, and from the text of the charm we find out that they come from wind and water. In the folk beliefs of many Turkic peoples, water is definitely the home of various kinds of harmful spirits.²² Wind can also carry all kinds of illnesses.²³

The essence of the healing method is to chase away the two superfluous souls. Gäynäkamal Latif-qïdï stroked the child’s stomach with a shoe to soothe it. Her purpose in doing this was to separating the two harmful souls from the good one. Then the child was gently squeezed between the wings of the door of the house three times (fig. 1) to drive those souls out of the body.²⁴ During the healing, the following charm is recited:

<i>nii qiθahing? ös yän qiθam</i>	What are you squeezing?
	I squeeze the three souls.
<i>ikěwěn ültēräm, bëräwěn qaldiram</i>	I kill two of them and keep one of them.
<i>běr yän, ikě yän, ös yän</i>	One soul, two souls, three souls,
<i>qayða hiněng makaning</i>	Where is your abode?
<i>taš harayðing ేశëndä</i>	It is inside a stone palace.
<i>ikě yändě ültēräm</i>	I kill two souls,
<i>běr yändě qaldiram</i>	And I keep just one soul.
<i>běr yän, ikě yän, ös yän</i>	One soul, two souls, three souls,
<i>hiwðan kilhāng, hiwγa kit</i>	If you come from the water, go to the water.

²² Data from my (DSK) fieldwork material (1996, Qulsarı, Atıraw, Kazakhstan).

²³ The Kazakh and Kirghiz also blame the wind for stomachache, e.g. Kazakh *jel ötti* ‘wind entered’ (from my [DSK] fieldwork material, 1994, Shımkent, Kazakhstan). Maybe this is the reason that a powerful demon was called *Yel-böke* in Old Uighur.

²⁴ This healing is also described by Torma (1997: 99, and see also index: 168).

yěldän kilhäng, yělgä kit
qayǝan inděng, šňnan säq

If you come from the wind, go to the wind.
Wherever you entered, go out
from there!



Fig. 1. The healer (*imsë*) gently squeezes the baby between the wings of the door three times to chase away the harmful superfluous souls from the patient's body (Bikbaw village on the Haqmar River, southeastern Bashkiria). Photo: László Kunkovács, 1996.

Measuring the Brain

The third healing method we observed is based on the idea that the cause of headache is that the brain has become mispositioned. There are various names for this healing: *měyě ülsäw* ‘to measure the brain’, *měyě töšöröw* ‘to force down the brain’, *měyě qayiw* ‘to shake the brain’ (Torma 1997: 115), or *měyě ultiriv* ‘to make the brain sit’ (Söläymänov 1995: 84).

Our informant, Ğäliyä Timərbulat-qıdı, a 68-year-old female healer (*imsě*) from Mullakay (Baymaq county, Böryän clan), used the phrase *měyě ülsäw* ‘to measure the brain’. At the beginning of the healing, she measured the patient’s head with a piece of string (pl. 11 *a*) from all directions to estimate the position of the brain inside the skull. Then she asked the patient *töštö-mö?* ‘‘Has [your brain] fallen?’’ and the patient answered *töštö* ‘‘It has fallen.’’ If the brain is not in the right position it has to be moved back to its proper place. To achieve this the *imsě* held the string tight around the patient’s head and hit the hand she was holding it with her other hand a couple of times to shake the brain (*měyě qayiw*) and move it back to its proper place (*měyě ultiriv*).

Writing Prayers on a Piece of Paper and Putting it into Water

The last healing method we observed was a continuation of the previous one (measuring the brain) performed by the same healer. The patient lay down and the healer started another healing procedure with the help of a written Arabic prayer (*döya*). First she selected the appropriate prayer from the *Koran* and wrote it down on a piece of paper (*döya yađiw*). She put the paper into a cup of water before taking it out and blowing on it a couple of times (fig. 2 and pl. 11 *b*). She also blew on the patient. At the end, the patient had to drink the water in the cup.²⁵ It is believed that the

²⁵ I (SKD) have observed a similar kind of healing among the Kirghiz (fieldwork material, Nařın, Kirghizstan, 2002). It was called *ičirtki*, literally meaning ‘something to be drunk’ (see also Baialieva 1972: 112). Siberian Turkic shamans also speak to or blow inside a cup of water (my [SKD] fieldwork material, 1998, Xöndergey, Tuva) to heal people.

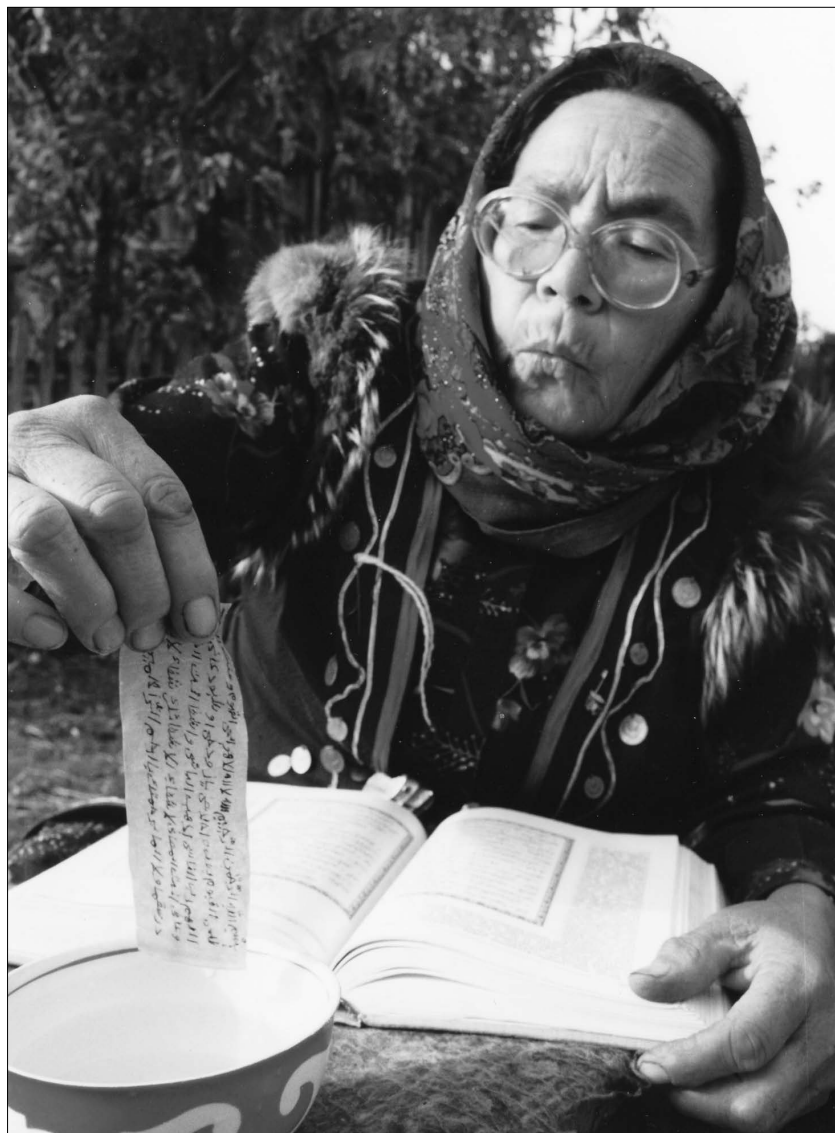


Fig. 2. After the patient lay down on the ground, the healer (*imsĕ*) sat next to him and read some prayers from the *Koran*. She then wrote one of the prayers on a piece of paper, put the paper in a cup of water, took it out again and blew on it and the old man a couple of times (Mullakay village, Baymaq county, southeastern Bashkiria).
Photo: László Kunkovács, 1996.

healing power of the prayer passes into the water. The prayer is usually taken from the *Koran* and the water gains its healing power because of the holy text. Water containing evil prayers can also harm people.²⁶

Some Conclusions

In Bashkir folk medicine there are no religious specialists or shamans who are initiated by the spirits and who fall into trance to communicate with them. But they preserved a rich tradition of folk medicine usually practiced by old women. Torma argues that the Bashkir have a system of folk medicine (Torma 1997: 122–124) which has the following main elements: (1) magical protection for children, (2) cultic eating, (3) name giving, (4) demons of illnesses, (5) symptoms and diagnosis, and (6) healing methods (*irimla-*, *arba-*, *imlä-*). Folk medicine is based on Bashkir folk beliefs that include some elements related to Siberian Turkic native religion, such as concepts of soul. By analyzing Bashkir folk medicine we can arrive at a better understanding of the transformation of folk beliefs. Another interesting aspect is the processes that led to the disappearance of religious specialists initiated by the spirits (like shamans) among the Bashkir. Why were their functions taken over by healers (*imsĕ*), diviners, or simply old members of the society?

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²⁶ This kind of “cursed water” can be observed among the Kirghiz as *dubalagan suu* ‘water cursed by a prayer’. In the *Secret History of the Mongols* (§ 272) Ögödei khan was possessed by demons (*ada*) and the shamans gave his brother Tolui ‘cursed water’ (*jükergen usun*) to transfer Ögedei’s illness to his body (Ligeti 1971: 245).

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Book Reviews

GULNARA AITPAEVA (Chief Editor). *Mazar Worship in Kyrgyzstan: Rituals and Practitioners in Talas*. Bishkek: Aigine Research Center. 2007. ISBN 978-9967-24-092-6. 531 pp. + 28 color plates.

Scholars from Russia and the Soviet Union have done substantial research on the folk beliefs and native religions (popular Islam) of Central Asian peoples. The most significant of these was Vladimir N. Basilov (1992), but there were also native researchers, e.g. the Bashkir Abubakir Divaev (1899) or the Kirghiz Toktobübü Baialieva (1979). In the post-Soviet era no thorough research has been done on this topic in the former Soviet Republics, even though popular Islam has flourished and developed in the last fifteen years.

Although western scholars also turned their attention to post-Soviet popular Islam, no serious books dedicated to this crucial topic have been published. Finally, in 2007 a book on *mazar* worship was published in Kirghizstan by the Aigine Cultural Research Center (see www.aigine.kg), and the book was also published in Kirghiz.

The research center, a NGO, is directed by Gülnara Aitpaeva, who also founded it and is the chief editor of its publications. She is one of the first Kirghiz researchers to have introduced western anthropological methodology to Kirghiz ethnography, and she used to give lectures on cultural anthropology at the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek. The Aigine Center, sponsored by The Christensen Fund (USA), organizes systematic research projects to collect data on sacred sites (*mazar*) and rituals connected to them.

The book under review is on the *mazar* worship only in Talas Province (called *oblast* in the book). Talas Province is a sacred place in itself because of Manas, the greatest legendary hero of the Kirghiz, who according to oral tradition died and was buried here. The goal of Aigine's Sacred Site Project is to collect and publish data from all the provinces of Kirghizstan. The second book, on İsik-Köl Province, will

appear in 2010, and it has already been published in Kirghiz (Aitpaeva 2009). Right now fieldwork is being conducted in Jalalabat Province.

The book on the sacred sites of Talas Province is divided into two sections. The first provides data on the sacred sites: oral history, visiting regulations, guardians of *mazar* sites (*šayik*, *čirakči*) and people visiting them, rituals held at the sacred sites, and *mazar* worship in the Soviet era. All the data were collected from local people who were practicing *mazar* worship in one way or another.

The second section describes sacred sites from the researchers' perspective; it includes ten articles written by mostly Kirghiz and Russian scholars, with the exception of Nathan Light (Miami University, Ohio). At the end of the first section we also find papers from a workshop called "Major Contemporary Ways of Understanding Rituals," held in Talas in 2006.

I myself have been doing research on popular Islam in Central Asia, among the Kazakh, Kirghiz, and Uighur peoples since 1994, and I have also recognized the significance of the sacred sites. Usually, they are related to the tombs (Arabic *mazār*) of Muslim, mainly Sufi, saints (Arabic *awliyā'*). They are not only places of pilgrimage and prayer, but they have also become centers of popular Islam where religious specialists conduct various rituals for visitors. But among the Kirghiz, tombs are usually replaced by natural features (rocks, valleys, trees, springs, etc.). The spirit of a holy person lives in or owns a site which has a healing or magical power. This is similar to the animistic concept of owner spirits of nature (Altai-kizhi *ee*) that is common all over Siberia.

The book under review contains a full list of sacred sites in Talas Province and its districts (*rañon*, called 'region' in the book) with descriptions and oral history. Many of these *mazar* sites were not worshipped during Soviet times and people revitalized them by praying and holding rituals in those places. The book introduces the term *kirgizčilik* (the Kirghiz way). Local people use this expression as an emic term for popular beliefs that do not belong to the official Islamic faith. They also use it as a term for the ability to communicate with the spiritual world through rituals based on those beliefs. Nevertheless, the Kirghiz view it as part of their faith in Islam.

In the book we can read about the *dubana* (from Persian *dēwāna*) and *kuuču* religious specialists (healers) and the epic story-tellers (*manasči*), who also go through spiritual experiences at sacred sites before they receive their special abilities and obtain their roles in soci-

ety. We find detailed descriptions of many emic terms used in Kirghiz popular Islam: (1) various sacrifices: *kurmadikka čaluu* (sacrificing livestock), *tülöö* (wishing), *sadaga* (charity); (2) spirit-invoking rituals: *zikir* (praising God), *jar* (inviting spirits); as well as *šam jaguu* (lighting candles), *jeti nan* (seven loaves of bread for the spirits); (3) healing methods: *dem saluu* (healing with breath/conjuration), *emdöö* (magic cleaning), *köčürüü* (driving away bad things), *eziŋki* (magic water), *tütötkü* (magic smoke); and (4) being holy (gifted by spirits): *ak kiyüü* (putting on white clothes).

The emic terms are explained by informants, usually religious specialists. These descriptions help researchers to better understand the beliefs and rituals of the region.

At the end of the book there is a glossary of 154 terms related to Kirghiz beliefs. Some are religious terms, but there are also words related to folklore (like the *Manas* epic), Islam, or traditional life.

Although the book is not a linguistic work, the authors should have used a better transcription system for Kirghiz words. Their system is quite confusing, e.g. *y* stands for the close back vowel *ɨ* (IPA *ʉ*) as well as for the consonant *y* (IPA *j*), so the word *ziyarat* ‘pilgrimage’ is transcribed *zyarat*, but at the end of a syllable the same consonant *y* (IPA *j*) is transcribed as *i*. I also do not understand the use of a hyphen (-) after nonverbal (nominal) stems, e.g. *bai*’- (*bay*) ‘a wealthy person’. In Turkic philology and linguistics we use them only after verbal stems, e.g. *emde*- ‘to treat by incantations’. Verbs should have been given in their stem forms, not as gerunds (verbal nouns), e.g. *emdöö* (stem *emde*-), *uchuktoo* (stem *učukta*-).

In the glossary we find information about Bübü Mariam, a contemporary religious specialist from Bishkek. It is not clear to me why information about her was included in the glossary. I also do not understand why the authors use the transcription *surah* (Kirghiz *sürö* and Arabic *sūra*) for ‘a chapter from the *Koran*’ when all other terms are given in Kirghiz.

However, apart from these minor philological problems, the book is a wonderful collection of up-to-date data on Kirghiz popular Islam and folk belief, and the articles are also useful in understanding some of the problems of cultural phenomena.

The authors of the book have broken the tradition of Soviet ethnography in linking some elements of Central Asian folk belief to shamanism. The religious specialists of popular Islam were termed shamans

(Basilov 1992), while the book calls them ‘practitioners’ and ‘healers’. Even though the term shamanism is very ambiguous and debated by anthropologists, ‘shaman’ as a religious specialist could be used in popular Islam just as in the native religions of Siberia. It expresses better their complex role in society and their ability to communicate with spirits. In popular Islam the spirits (*arbak*) also choose young people and give them power (*kasiyet*) to conduct rituals. Then they invoke these spirits and communicate with them.

The big difference between Siberian shamans and Central Asian “spirit mediators” is their religious background. In Central Asia spirits and sacred sites all receive their special abilities from the Almighty God (Allah) and spirits only mediate His will or grace to the people. Practitioners of popular Islam are very religious Muslim people. They always fulfill their religious duties (five times prayer *namaz*, etc.). They strongly believe in Allah and that everything happens according to His will. So they consider *kirgizçilik* “the Kirghiz way” as their way of worshipping Allah. Sufism (or Islam mysticism) also has its own way of worshipping, and popular Islam incorporated many elements from Sufism just as it did from the pre-Islamic beliefs of Inner Asian nomads.

For many centuries religious specialists conducted rituals and worshipped sacred sites by legitimizing them through Islam. Unfortunately, nowadays Muslim fundamentalists attack these popular Islamic movements as being pagan. That is why people in Central Asia try to avoid referring to a ‘shaman’ as a religious specialist and shamans themselves emphasize their strong belief in Allah and Islam. But scholars should recognize the strong link between some elements of Kirghiz folk belief—including *mazar* worship—and Siberian native religions, including shamanic practices.

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BUDAPEST/BLOOMINGTON

DÁVID SOMFAI KARA

HARALD HAARMANN and JOAN MARLER. *Introducing the Mythological Crescent. Ancient Beliefs and Imagery Connecting Eurasia with Anatolia*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag. 2008. ISBN 978-3-447-05832-2. 172 pp., 65 figs., 8 maps, 16 color plates. €39.80.

Many attempts have been made to combine archaeology and shamanism. On the one hand rock "paintings," carved figurines, and burial sites, etc., were interpreted with the help of shamanic texts, and on the other hand the origin and first forms of shamanism were "detected" in the Paleolithic and Neolithic. In the second half of the 19th century universal evolution was the guiding thread in the comparison. Later, Soviet scholars followed the same line, calling their ideology "historical materialism." The simple and nontheoretical pan-shamanism has never lost its roots: explaining everything from everywhere as remnants of a shamanic "world view": the oyster-size figurine of the "Venus of Willendorf" as well as the Hungarian "Holy Crown" of King Stephen I (970–1038 A.D.).

However, during the last century archaeology underwent many significant changes, thus rendering the "old" connection of archaeology and shamanism out of date. The number of finds and their interpretation increased enormously. Stars of the new archaeology, such as Gordon Childe, Colin Renfrew, Marija Gimbutas and others, initiated at least three "revolutions" in archaeological interpretation. From the vast territory of the Soviet Union hundreds of previously unknown sites have more or less recently been excavated. And still more finds are available only to the participating archaeologists.

Eventually it became clear that all these archaeological data needed to be re-examined. But because of the increasing number of new facts it was not easy to find any scholar brave enough to draw up a revised

view of the “archaeology of shamanism.” With help of Joan Marler, Harald Haarmann took on the job. (These coauthors have already published several very successful scholarly or popular books.)

Thanks to Haarmann’s many years of editorial experience, the book under review is an excellent, concise production. It presents the problems succinctly, and the conclusions are clear. Diagrams, maps, and figures enrich the book. The references in the bibliography are numerous, carefully selected, and mostly up-to-date. The reader will find not only English and German publications, but Russian and other works too (which is today a rarity). The carefully condensed subject index at the end of the book helps the reader to navigate around the book.

The book is very useful for the modern understanding of some problems of shamanism. Because the authors deal with so many important topics, it would take a very lengthy review to cover all of them. The reviewer is tempted to stop right here and simply suggest that you read this excellent book for yourself! But it would be unfair both to the authors and to potential readers to leave them without any reflections on the book. So I will mention here some crucial topics.

The book contains an introduction and three chapters. The introduction, or “Prelude,” is a reinterpretation of the concept of “archaeomythology” (especially *à la* Gimbutas). Following that “new trend” of the 1960s, everybody has been tempted to decipher the rock paintings, etc., in the framework of mythology. Haarmann is indirectly a representative of a later phase of “archaeomythology,” and first of all he indicates the most recent dating in archaeology, according to which the oldest paintings and engravings (in the Chauvet cave) are from c. 32,000 B.P., and the oldest three-dimensional artefacts are just as old (20). The new chronology thus adds tens of thousands of years before the oldest written documents about mythology and other subjects.

Chapter 1 describes the actual archaeology of the Fertile Crescent. The authors rebaptize it as the “Mythological Crescent,” saying that mythology, as a system, arose there. Not only “Mother Goddess” figures, or female figurines in general, but the entire archaeological complex in Çatalhöyük can be interpreted as a more elaborate—as hitherto it has been conceived—religious system. Haarmann also stresses the importance of the oldest cave paintings in the South Ural region (Ignatievka), dating from 14,000 and 13,000 B.P. This time dimension breaks all the traditional dating of early “Uralian” (not Uralic, in the linguistic sense of the word) populations and their rituals, beliefs, etc.

Totemism, and female spirits, then goddesses, in Anatolia might be connected with such early sites.

Chapter 2 connects more closely Eurasian figurines and rock paintings with shamanism. The author mentions the local differences, convergence, and amalgamation of the cultures there and stresses their important historical changes—right up until today. According to his assumption the “Sacred Trinity” of the female divinity, the bear, and the birds is the important invariant in early cultures (84). This sacred trinity appears everywhere in Eurasian symbolism. And visual symbolism is not only a reflection of world view and myth; it is in fact a creative, mythopoetical force.

In Chapter 3 we return to Çatalhöyük, but this time to its Neolithic phase. The authors follow here the work of James Mellaart (1967 on) and its reinterpretation by Ian Hodder (1987 on). As became well publicized among archaeologists, Mellaart suggested that the figures found at the site (like the sculpture of a mature woman seated between two leopards) are a Neolithic continuation of older deities. Gimbutas, following Mellaart, stressed the fact that similar goddesses are in fact universal: the Neolithic Goddess is one of the most widespread early representations of religion. Hawkes (1954) criticized from an epistemological point of view the identification of Çatalhöyük finds with Neolithic female religion. Hodder reinterpreted the figures from precisely the opposite angle—in terms of “hunting–feasting–prowess–ancestry,” i.e. as a male complex rather than a female one. The discovery of a bear-forming stamp seal in 2005 added further argument to the discussion.

As a writer and editor the book’s co-author, Joan Marler, once followed the ideas of Gimbutas, and has herself published important works on Çatalhöyük. This is why the final chapter of the book has a long and interesting reinterpretation of Anatolian visual and religious systems.

Since the book deals with many different topics, I cannot enter into details here. The observations I offer will be brief. The new chronology of the “latest” archaeology offers new possibilities of reinterpretation of early forms of religion. Similarly, the new “Russian” archaeology calls for a new interpretation of the prehistory of shamanism. And the Çatalhöyük debates illuminate the controversial theories concerning emerging religions (in the proper sense of the word) in general.

The book is not directly about shamanism, but if we turn the pages of the subject index (looking at entries such as: ancestors, bear, belief system, birds, drum, engravings, guardian spirits, metaphor, mistress

of nature, paintings, reindeer, seals, shrines, totem, trance, vulva, world view, etc., and of course shaman and shamanism) we find useful hints to thinking over many features of shamanism.

Notably there is no theory of shamanism of its own. Thus any help coming from elsewhere will be welcome in building an actual theory of shamanism. With this volume, Haarmann and Marler have published an excellent aid to such an enterprise.

The book contains very few errors. One of the few I noted concerns the spread of Uralic languages into Siberia on page 61.

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BUDAPEST

VILMOS VOIGT

CLIVE TOLLEY. *Shamanism in Norse Myth and Magic*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia – Academia Scientiarum Fennica. 2009. 2 vols. ISBN (soft) 978-951-41-1028-3 xxv + 589; (8), 286 pp., cover illustrations of on both volumes, 5 maps and 11 plates at the end of the second volume. Folklore Fellows' Communications Vol. XCLIV_{1,2} Nos. 296–297. Hard €60, soft €50.

Thanks to the interest of Professor Anna-Leena Siikala (Helsinki), the current editor of the world's most famous folklore book series (Folklore Fellows' Communications, published since 1910), a much awaited compendium has appeared.

Old Norse texts and shamanism belong to different cultures. Nevertheless there has been a long list of pilgrims who wandered toward their

unifying point. When twenty years ago I was reading Siikala's book (1992) on ancient Finnish epic poetry and mythology (first in Finnish, then in English for the FF Communications book series), I wrote to the late Professor Lauri Honko (then editor of FFC) the following: "especially in parts dealing with shamanism frequent and ponderable references to old Norse sources should be examined by a trained scholar of Old Norse." In Scandinavian studies topics such as the World Tree, "trance" in Old Icelandic,¹ and various motifs around Óðinn² have been interpreted by several philologists as traces of shamanism. On the other hand heroes and events in the Finnish epic *Kalevala* were connected to Old Norse texts. Both directions seemed to be plausible, but if somebody had compared the statements by, for example, the Swedish Dag Strömbäck³ or the Norwegian Nils Lid with those of the Finnish Martti Haavio or Anna-Leena Siikala they would have got the feeling that they did not speak the same language. German national ideas about the "ancient" Scandinavian culture imagined a third variant of Old Norse "shamanism," connecting it with Indo-Aryan communities and cult-bearers, *Männerbund*, etc. And not only Otto Höfler and Richard Wolfram but also Jan de Vries, Karl J. Narr, Siegfried Gutenbrunner and others expressed similar ideas. The typological (and not genetic) comparison proposed by the "Soviet" scholars (already by V. M. Zhirmunskiĭ, in an elaborated way by E. M. Meletinskiĭ, and in a concise form by N. I. Steblin-Kamenskiĭ) did not get much attention.⁴ If there remains a *desideratum* concerning Tolley's book, it is that he has not entered in depth the Soviet studies of Old Icelandic. (Otherwise Tolley's knowledge of recent publications in Russian is very good.)

As regards the evaluation of Soviet studies on shamanism (apart from some older publications), the author quotes Sundström's dissertation (2008) about the Samoyed world view. (I was unable to see it, so I can not judge his judgment.)

¹ In my review I use "Old Icelandic" and "Old Norse" more or less as synonyms, and for me the simple word "Norse" is a more vague term.

² Hereafter in my review I try to follow the (very accurate) Old Norse orthography by Tolley, except for direct references to works that use a different spelling.

³ As Tolley's bibliography refers to most of the works mentioned, I will not quote their full titles.

⁴ Tolley Vol I: 7–8 acknowledges the general distinction of religions particular to Åke Hultkrantz.

However, it is surprising that for a long time reliable traces of shamanism in Old Icelandic were not collected into a reader. The sceptical “Inaugural-Dissertation” by Peter Buchholz (1968) was a sober anthology—without general conclusions, but unlocking a sharp discussion (see e.g. Jere Fleck’s papers). Another German dissertation by Harald Motzki (1977) was a terminological survey of shamanism, and it did not say too much about Old German or Old Norse shamanism. Unfortunately, because of the limited number of copies the two German dissertations did not influence many experts.

Tolley is an excellent candidate to publish a companion to the Old Norse shamanic complex. He studied classical languages and literatures, then Norse and Old English, and later Finnish (in Oxford, London, Helsinki, Turku, etc., supported by research and travel grants). It took about twenty years from the start, writing a doctoral dissertation, completing it for a book, and finally reaching the goal: an indisputable handbook on the subject. The author’s knowledge of Finno-Ugric is exceptional (and not just for an Englishman), and in Old Icelandic circles he belongs to the extremely well educated young English scholars (“young Frogs” if I might name them so). His style is clear and eloquent, his mind is open and sober.

The content of the two volumes under review is separated in a practical way. Volume one contains the introductions, descriptions, and textual analysis. Volume two has 144 source texts—in their original language and with fresh English translations. All the texts are briefly introduced, and Tolley has used the best available text editions and translations. The sources consist often of only a few sentences; in other cases we are presented with full narratives. In some cases the (very short) text is given in the form of a digest.

The first volume offers more than we may expect from the title of the book. It describes shamanism, “shamanism” in Europe, and the social context of shamanism; it discusses souls and spirits, cosmic structures, and world views, and, finally, tells us about the shaman’s performance. Both volumes have two tables of contents: a general, introductory one, and then a very detailed one which offers the reader a “thumb index” of the problems discussed.

The first volume starts with a very precise description of the sources: Latin and Greek, English and Scandinavian texts. Then a description of Shamanism in Eurasia (30-odd pages) and of European shamanism (about 40 pages) follows. Here we learn about Old Greek religious

concepts and witchcraft. The functions and roles of the shaman are separately dealt with. Souls and spirits are discussed in a chapter titled “Metaphysical entities”—though their description is far from esoteric or vague. In the chapter “Cosmic structures” there are selected data concerning the pillar, mountain, mill, and tree. The shaman’s performance is, of course, illustrated in a detailed way. The costume and paraphernalia of the shaman also merit a separate chapter. In all cases, first the Eurasian and then the Norse data are published, and their comparison ends in a form of short conclusion. In the chapter “Kindred concerns” the smith and the bear are the main topics.

The composition of the second volume is not exactly the same. After the Eurasian texts about the pillar, mill, tree, etc., the vocation of the shaman and the *séance* (*kamlanie*) follow. The charms and the bear close the chapter. The Norse texts (and other texts related to German traditions) are more topically organized. Here Óðinn, Heimdallr, the *vǫlva* and other witches, *seiðr*, *gandr*, etc., occur in different paragraphs. There are some other, smaller items too.

There are more than 1,000 items in the references. It is a very modern and up-to-date, but still selected bibliography. The source index contains 500 entries. The general index refers to English and Old Norse topics, and covers dozens of pages. It contains not only the most important “shamanic” or “Old Icelandic” terms and notions, but it also ranges from *Aral Sea* and *Aztec legend* to *obscene kiss*, *wool*, and *zigurat*, and even to *μανία* and *Чюдь*. That is the reason I am not going to present a thorough review of Tolley’s views, which might need a whole booklet!

My general opinion is that Tolley draws a double-walled circle around the Old Norse and shamanism connections. In the first, smaller circle he quotes all the sources that have been mentioned by other philologists. Tolley has corrected their texts and conclusions. He has added more similar references, usually from the point of view of literary history. The second, wider circle includes references to shamanism among Eurasian, German, and Finno-Ugric peoples. It shows us the backdrop before which the actual “shamanism” happens. It is absolutely obvious that the aim of the book is not to give a concise picture of (Siberian) shamanism. The author has concentrated on Siberian shamanism insofar as it is relevant for comparison with Old Norse sources. He quotes only a handful of the works of Mircea Eliade, Vilmos Diószegi, or Mihály Hoppál. On the other hand Tolley wishes to give a full register

of Old Icelandic material. Thus, S. M. Shirokogoroff merits one reference, whereas Snorri Sturluson has a dozen more. This part of the book is the more important one, emerging as a companion to Old Icelandic mythology, religion, and literature. In the title of the book Tolley is characterizing the Old Norse topic as “Myth and Magic.” But in fact the written source material is only one part of it. For example, the runic inscriptions build a whole and compound world. In Tolley’s general index *runestones* are mentioned four times. But in Uppland alone we know of thousands (!) of runestones, and if we wanted to describe them it would take an entire book.

As for the method of the study, Tolley follows modern Finnish folklore research (he knows personally most of the leading persons there). Nevertheless, I regard him as an exponent of the modern school of Old Icelandic studies in England. It is a pity that excellent books (e.g. by John McKinnell 2005) have not reached the attention of other scholars of shamanism. Tolley could make use of the excellent book by François-Xavier Dillmann (2006), which stands very close to his own. In the preface Tolley mentions three works that have influenced his researches. Besides John McKinnell (2005) and Dillmann (2006), the third is an archaeological monograph, Neil Price (2002). Among the books by other Scandinavian scholars I mention here a collection of essays by Olof Sundqvist (2007), in which the word ‘shaman’ does not occur frequently, but it is typical in the way the author discusses and develops basic questions of Old Scandinavian rites and religion. A collection of papers (Glosecki 2007) excels in variety of different methods.

Mentioning only some recent books may not shortchange the reader. It is not an exhaustive list, because both topics covered by the book of Tolley have produced an endless bibliography over the last 200 years or so. And the harvest of books on Old Icelandic and shamanism shows no sign of ceasing today.

I have mentioned only some modern books because we can only evaluate Tolley’s book properly if we know about the similar orientation that prevails in Old Norse studies. (Shamanism is too vague a topic to easily make any “theoretical” or “methodological” list of literature. It seems to me that for Tolley the “fieldwork theory” of shamanism is not his priority.

After a careful review of the two volumes I highly recommend their use as a thematic index of important ideas both in Old Norse and in shamanism.

Perhaps I should not forget to praise the excellent layout of the book. Two cover illustrations and the others are romantically selected and decently printed. Tolley runs a private business, producing also English translations of scholarly books. His own English is as enjoyable as his translations of the Old Icelandic texts.

Of course, the reviewer does not agree with all details. And there are a few mistakes or misprints. I list here only samples. The author of the German language book *Steppenvölker und Germanen* is not Gyula, but László, as László is the author's (the late Hungarian archaeologist) surname. *Gorodishche* is not a place name (map 3) but a general Russian archaeological term for 'fortress, fortification'. *Winlandia* is the correct form in the source, but in the General Index a reference to *Vinland* would have been useful.

Tolley gives brief characteristics of the Uralian peoples. We may often notice that such nutshell summaries tend to copy mistakes and express simplifications. The author finds Hungarian source material too far from the main topics of the book, so he does not enter into the problems of Hungarian shamanism (I: 14).

There are many innovative parts in the interpretation or description of the Old Icelandic texts, including for example the "new" dating of *Völuspá*, or a positive review of Fidjestøl's dating of the *Verse Edda*. In the present review I shall not discuss them—except to say that most are very convincing.

It is fortunate that the book has been published in the Folklore Fellows' Communications series, which is the only publication series on folklore with a truly worldwide readership. Thus it will represent Old Norse philology and some ideas of studies of shamanism. In both topics it is an innovative and reliable work.

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Exhibition Review

Trommeln der Schamanen. Ausstellung im Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich, Schweiz. 4. November 2007 bis 3. August 2008. Zur Ausstellung erscheint ein gleichnamiger Katalog von Michael Oppitz. *Trommeln der Schamanen*. Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich 2007. 116 Seiten, farbig. 25 x 13 cm. ISBN 9 78390910548 9.

Some shamans have drums, others do not. Yet, with or without drum, the most common picture of a shaman in our mind is probably a figure holding a drum in his or her hand and drumming. We think of drumming as part of the ritual. The truth is that some shamans and some rituals simply do not use drums. Nevertheless, it was an excellent idea to compile an exhibition which displays shamans' drums. These drums all come from Eurasia, certain parts of which—primarily Siberia—are the *locus classicus* of shamanic practice. This was the last exhibition that Michael Oppitz designed before his retirement, working with the subtle elegance that only a researcher in perfect command of his *métier* can command.

The organizing principle of the exhibition was morphology—more precisely, the idea that although no two shamanic drums are ever the same (either in the collections or in the possession of shamans), yet we can discern some clearly outlined types. Oppitz distinguishes around a dozen different types, which he has illustrated excellently on an impressive map of Eurasia covering an entire wall and welcoming the visitor as he or she enters the exhibition. Moving from west to east, the main types of drums are the following: the drums of the Saami (these exist in two forms, of which the exhibition only shows one example); Northwest Siberian (Nenets, Khanty, and Manshi), North Siberian (Nganasan and Dolgan), mid-West Siberian (Ket and Selkup) drums, and Central Siberian drums (this vast area is represented by Evenki, Sakha, and Yukagir examples).

South Siberian Turkic drums are treated in two groups: the first, the Khakass (formerly Abakan Tatar) is represented by a Khaas (in Russian

kachinets) shaman's drum, and the second, the Altai Turks (formerly Oirot), by Altay-kizhi, Telengit, and Tuba examples.

The Mongol, the Manchu, and the Northeast Siberian peoples, like the Koriak, Even, the Siberian Inuit and Chukcha (*chukchi* is the plural form in Russian) are represented by only a few drums, while the narrow-rimmed, egg-shaped drums of the small ethnic groups living along the River Amur are represented by a slightly greater number—by eight drums. The groups of Himalayan peoples are illustrated by thirty items which are divided into Western, Central, and Eastern types.

Altogether the exhibition displays 81 drums, as well as 31 drumsticks which are easily distinguished by their shapes. Arranged side by side in a single display cabinet, they demonstrate the cultural differences very clearly, as noted by Diószegi (1960), and see also Hoppál (2005).

Unfortunately, the drawings used show the various drums as being almost the same size, but there is no doubt that they contribute greatly to the unified style of the exhibition. Equally enriching are the truly attractive black-and-white line drawings by Robert Powell which illustrate the sides of the drums from Nepal, the methods for stretching the leather (20 plates), and the carved drum holders (16 plates).

As critical remarks I may note that Hezhen is the name of the Nanai in contemporary Chinese usage; also, Managir and Solon Evenki drums, at least at the present time, are not similar to the metal-framed, round Manchu drums, nor do they belong to this group in a typological sense.

The text of the exhibition guide sometimes uses the Russian appellations for the various peoples, including the Russian plural (e.g. *kety*, *chukchi*); in the word *Tubalar* the *-lar* is the Turkic plural suffix, the correct name is Tuba; *Kachinz* is mistakenly derived from a Russian word (Russian *kachinets*, plural *kachintsy*), the correct name of this Khakass group is Khaas; *Barabin* (Russian plural *barabinskije tatory* Baraba Tatars) again ends in a Russian suffix—the Baraba Tatars are a Turkic people living on the Baraba Plains; on page 67 of the catalog the correct version of the name of the place on the Taïmir peninsula which is mentioned is Ust'-Avam.

The photographers did an excellent job—the pictures of the shamans' drums are truly impressive. I would like to note that the photographs of the shamans' drums displayed in the Budapest Museum of Ethnography were photographed by Erzsébet Winter (and not E. Winkler from Dresden, as is stated on the last page of the attractive publication accompanying the exhibition).

Oppitz offers a detailed and accurate description of all of the exhibits (including the drums and the drawings) that is little short of an analysis or mini-essay. The coming generation of researchers on shamanism will find these annotations extremely useful, but few can know what a vast effort it must have taken to amass these data (as does the author of the present lines) and thus appreciate their full value. It must have required perseverant efforts over several decades—something that Michael Oppitz's *oeuvre* is a perfect example of.

The exhibition includes 33 audio samples of drumming, most of them 1–2 (maximum 3) minutes long. These were also selected with exemplary care—recordings exist from all parts of this vast area using a wide variety of sources ranging from old phonograph (wax cylinder) recordings through old film and later video footage all the way to modern digital recordings, some published, others unpublished.

Along with the drums, the quality of sound and the style of drumming also change from people to people (and perhaps even from one shaman to the next). At the end of the publication we can read a mini-essay analyzing the drumming style of Nagar shamans and an extract about the making of the first shaman drum amongst this Nepalese group who have retained so many archaic elements. It must be noted that the best ethnographic documentary about this small people was made by Oppitz himself (back in the 1970s during a field trip of several years; this film is one of the classics of modern visual ethnography). This is why it is almost incredible that we see only one single photo at the present exhibition even though it is well known that Oppitz made famously lovely (black-and-white) photographs during his field trip. (This must have been a part of the design concept.)

The Budapest Museum of Ethnography loaned eight drums for the exhibition and the plan was to display the material in Budapest, too. It turns out that this is not possible. This is regrettable, particularly as Hungarian researchers brought back shamans' drums from their field trips as early as the late 19th century, including Károly Pápai (1888) and János Jankó (1898); as well as throughout the 20th century, among them Benedek Baráthosi Balogh from the Amur region (1913) or Vilmos Diószegi from his trip to Mongolian area of Khövsgöl (1961).

An exhibition in Budapest would have offered a good chance to complement Oppitz's typology with the material collected by Hungarian researchers, possibly by placing the drums in the context of ritual: besides the sound of the drums, it would have been possible to display

film or video footage of the rituals themselves. This task will now be left to the coming generation of researchers.

Fortunately, the author of the present lines had a chance to see the exhibition few days before it closed—and he sends his most hearty congratulations. It can easily be declared that this was a worthy *finalé* to the series of exhibitions designed by Michael Oppitz during the decades he spent at the Völkerkundemuseum in Zürich.

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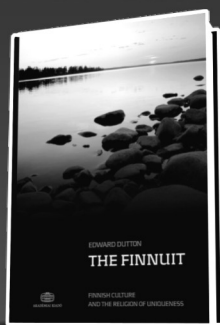
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Plates



1 (a) Paiwan Kulalao shamans sit in front of a pig offering and start to chant and shake the mulberry leaves in their hands. Photo: Hu Tai-li, 2007.



1 (b) In a formal Paiwan Kulalao shaman initiation ceremony, the apprentice crawls through piles of baskets while other shamans stand chanting. Photo: Hu Tai-li, 2008.



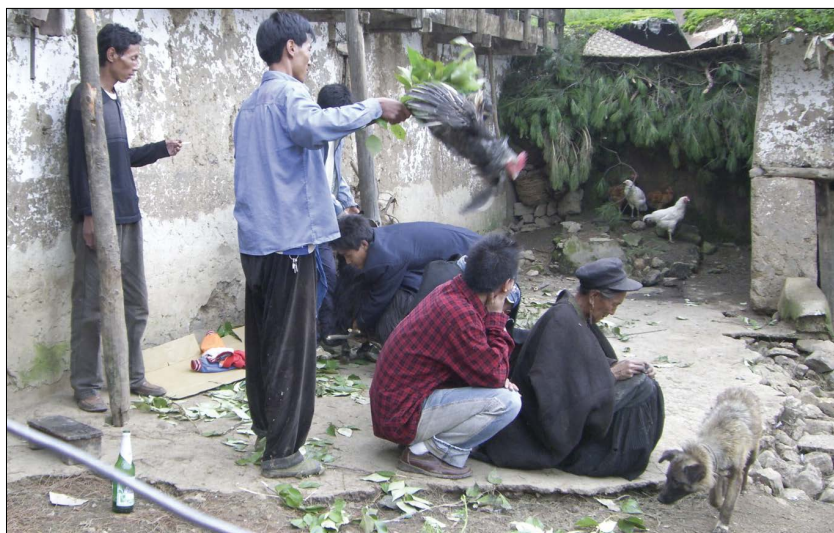
2 (a) A Paiwan Kulalao shaman places offerings on her patient's head to enhance his spiritual power. Photo: Hu Tai-li, 2004.



2 (b) The Kulalao shaman asks the reason for an illness by chanting and moving a sacred bead around a gourd. Photo: Hu Tai-li, 2004.



3 (a) The *bimo*, holding the cock, behind the spirit branches.
Photo: Daniel A. Kister, 2007.



3 (b) The cock is waved over the mother and son. Photo: Daniel A. Kister, 2007.



4 (a) The *bimo* cuts the family threads with a sickle.
Photo: Daniel A. Kister, 2007.



4 (b) The son puts the threads on the artemisia, Photo: Daniel. A. Kister, 2007.



5 The tree in the center of the *ger* erected for the candidate shaman's ritual. Photo: Peter Knecht, 2002.



6 The center tree in the *ger* for the *bariyači* ritual with a nest attached to it during preparations for the ritual.
The woman holding a bowl and chopsticks is the candidate.
Photo: Peter Knecht, 2003.



7 The officiating shaman holds the horse-head staffs while possessed by her *ongon*; the *ongon* is addressing the candidate, who is kneeling on all fours in front of the shaman at the foot of the center tree. Photo: Peter Knecht, 2003.



8 (a) The candidate *bariyaçi* seated at the foot of the center tree. An assistant shaman is drumming for her. Photo: Peter Knecht, 2003



8 (b) The experienced *bariyaçi* treating a patient suffering from a dislocation of the brain in consequence of an accident. Photo: Peter Knecht, 2003.



9 a Bakhta River. Photo: Edward J. Vajda, 2008.



9 b Kyksa River. Photo: Edward J. Vajda, 2008.



10 The healer (*imsĕ*) gives the solidified lead to the child's mother and explains the reason why the child had become frightened. (Yuldĭbay village, Yĭlayĭr county, southeastern Bashkiria.)
Photo: László Kunkovács, 1996.



11 a With the help of a piece of white string the healer (*imsĕ*) measures the head of the patient to determine the position of the brain. Then she holds the string tight around the patient's head with one hand and hits this hand with the other a couple of times to shake the brain (*mĕyĕ qayiw*) and move it back to its proper place (Mullakay village, Baymaq county, southeastern Bashkiria). Photo: László Kunkovács, 1996.



11 b After the patient lay down on the ground, the healer (*imsĕ*) sat next to him and read some prayers from the *Koran*. She then wrote one of the prayers on a piece of paper, put the paper in a cup of water, took it out again and blew on it and the old man a couple of times (Mullakay village, Baymaq county, southeastern Bashkiria). Photo: László Kunkovács, 1996.