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Climbing Trees: The Transmission of Knowledge in Buryat Shamanism*

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This essay is concerned with how shamanic knowledge is passed on. The question is particularly relevant for the areas of Siberia and Mongolia, which are the home of the Buryats and where, in recent decades, shamanism seemed to be in real danger of disappearing. Today, however, shamanic traditions are actively pursued again and may be able to survive political currents. In this article I attempt to elaborate, by reference to a Buryat initiation ritual, the different though interdependent ways in which shamanic knowledge is handed down and kept alive.

The material presented here is based on my fieldwork in Mongolia in the summer of 1996. The research took me to the northeastern part of Mongolia, near the Siberian border. There I met Danzan, a Buryat shaman, who invited me to stay in his small wooden house. Together with his wife, eight children of his own and one adopted child, his parents and various herds and flocks, he lives near the village of Bayan-Uul in the district of Dornod.

I stayed for some weeks, observing different shamanic rituals and taking part in the everyday life of cattle-breeding. One day in June, when the weather was still wet and cold, an unusual event took place. A group of about 30 people arrived at Danzan's place. At his invitation they had come over the border from the Republic of Buryatia and, over the following weeks, six men and women would perform shamanic initiation rituals under his guidance.

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The idea had been formed two years before, in 1994, when Danzan visited his friends in Buryatia. Shamanic activities had been resumed in this region following the demise of the Soviet Union. But when Danzan attended one of the initiation rituals he was alarmed by the obvious lack of knowledge of shamanic practice. An attempt was made to carry out the ritual, but the participants knew neither how to make the shaman's costume and paraphernalia nor how to arrange and decorate the ritual trees.[1] He felt that the ritual had been performed incorrectly and that therefore the ancestors would not accept it and might even, in anger, attack the shamans concerned.

Now, two years later, Danzan's friends were ready to re-enact the initiation under his guidance. Those who had been initiated in Buryatia left their original paraphernalia and costumes at home because they were not allowed to use them and had been asked to make new ones.

Tradition

Before presenting a detailed account of the initiations, I shall give some further information about the shamanic tradition of the Buryats.[2]

In Buryat tradition shamanism is inherited and both women and men can become shamans.[3] The spiritual heredity, the *udxa*, which is the "essence" or the "soul of the ancestors", is passed down from the shamanic ancestors to their chosen descendants. A person who is called to be a shaman normally becomes very ill. If this happens there is no way out but to take steps to become a shaman. If not, the person will die. By participating in the ritual of initiation he will recover and start to be a shaman, accepted by both the ancestors and society.

Traditionally, the Buryats make a distinction between black (*khar*) and white (*sagaan*) shamans. Black shamans have relations chiefly with black and malevolent spirits, whereas white shamans are in contact with white, benevolent spirits. Nowadays, however, there are almost

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[1] The immense loss of knowledge was a consequence of persecution by the Soviet state. Although shamanic activities were also suppressed in Mongolia, knowledge of them appears to be better preserved.

[2] Especially of the Khori-Buryats, living to the east and south of Lake Baikal.

[3] For the sake of easy reading the singular masculine form of shaman will be used, with the understanding that the term includes females.

no black shamans and only a few white shamans. The dualistic principle of black and white-respectively bad versus good powers—has largely dissolved and there is no clear distinction between the two types of shaman. Most are a synthesis of black and white, whereby one "colour" dominates the other. Of the ten Buryat shamans I met in Mongolia, seven were black–white shamans and three were white. None were black. Leading a life as a black shaman is considered risky because negotiating with powerful black spirits can have dangerous implications for one's own life and that of one's family.

The Buryats recognize different categories of initiation. The initiation ritual for white shamans is called *shandruu* and for black shamans *shanar*. Black–white shamans have to perform both. The ritual for white shamans is strongly influenced by Buddhist ideas and its origins seem more recent. In the *shandruu* ritual the "White Old Man"[4] is invoked and the neophyte calls for the "root of the Buddhist origin", whereas in the initiation of black shamans, shanar, the individual ancestors of the shaman are invoked.

Shanar

In the literature the ritual of *shanar* is mostly described as a public consecration or investiture (see Hamayon 1990, Sandschejew 1927–28, a.o.). These terms are correct but, in my opinion, too limited to capture the whole meaning of the ritual. At the time of the ritual the neophyte invokes his ancestor spirits, ascends to the world of the ancestors and receives the shamanic inheritance. After the initiation, after his return to this world, he is changed and will never be the person he was before. He has become a transcendental person who is able to communicate and travel between the different worlds. Therefore, I will use the term "initiation" for the *shanar* ritual. This should be read in its broad meaning, understanding initiation as a transitional threshold into a new period of time and status.

The term *shanar* means 'essence', 'quality', 'nature'. *Shanar,* as Even (1988: 54) has pointed out, is partially synonymous with *udxa* ('essence'), which, as mentioned above, is seen as the spiritual inherit-

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[4] The "White Old Man" is an important ancestor for both Buddhists and shamans.

ance. Both indicate the "essence" of shamanism—one in the ritual performance, the other in the heritage that is presented by the ancestors. It is the pure essence of shamanic knowledge that is passed down from the ancestors to the neophyte, and only with its acceptance and internalizing can a person become a real shaman. Whereas the *udxa* can be seen as the seed of the shamanic power, the *shanar* is the space and the time where the seed, which is planted in the neophyte, begins to flourish.

Steps

There is not a single initiation but several steps of initiations, each of which increases the shamanic power. As the Mongol scholar Rinchen has observed, with every new initiation the shaman receives a "magic soul" (in Even 1988: 55) which he designates as *shanar*. The more steps the shaman completes, the more magic souls he acquires.

According to the shaman Danzan, the Buryats have twelve initiation steps. Danzan, who has completed five, explained that with every step shamanic power and abilities grow. But he also remarked that a shaman of low rank can have the same or even greater power than one of high rank. The shaman's power is related to that of his ancestors. A shaman of the second rank, for example, may be supported by strong ancestors of high rank and have many auxiliary spirits, in which case he is more powerful than a shaman of high rank. Nevertheless, it is important for the shaman to take care of the power and knowledge given to him as, otherwise, the power will leave him.

The more powerful the shaman, the stronger the spirits he encounters. With every new initiation step he needs better protection, which is bestowed by the shamanic costume and paraphernalia. Only by undertaking all the initiation steps does the shaman acquire the whole costume and all his paraphernalia. The neophyte starts with a drum (*khese*), a cap with a fringe (*maikhavs*), a mirror (*toli*) and a whip (*bardag*). At the second step he gets a metal crown with antlers (*uule orgoi*) and two iron horse staffs (*horbi*). At the third he receives his costume. Later he gets a copper mask. From the sixth step onwards the shaman also acquires magic power. Usually a sheep is sacrificed for the spirits in

the ritual. Only at the twelfth and last step is a two-year-old horse sacrificed. If a shaman attains the thirteenth level, he will climb the "father-tree"[5] and fly up to the sky as a bird.

It was also a bird that brought shamanic knowledge to human beings in the beginning. A Buryat myth about the first shaman tells how a hunter caught a swan, who was one of the nine daughters of heaven, hid her feather-clothes and asked her to marry him. They settled down and had eight children. One day, however, the swan found her hidden clothes. She put them on and flew away, back to heaven. Her children became the first shamans. Now, in the final initiation ritual, the myth comes full circle. In the end the magic soul leaves the world as a bird and returns to the upper world.

Time and Space

June is the time of the annual arrival of the swans, the mythical ancestors of the shamans. This time is considered the most propitious for the initiation ritual, which takes three days. During these days the new shaman receives his power, shows his abilities, contacts his ancestors and for the first time puts on his costume and makes use of his paraphernalia.

The initiation is conducted in public. The initiation, though, does not only happen in this world: simultaneously it takes place in another, spiritual world. With the aid of the master shaman, the new shaman is introduced to the ancestor spirits. Since his work will require their help, they are asked to support the new shaman. They must guide him on his trips in this other, foreign world and mediate between him and other spirits.

A yurt (*ger*) is set up in which the new shaman gathers, with his shaman master, two old people called "father" and "mother" and nine children who are called "the Nine". The children have to stay together for three days. They sleep together, eat together and even go the toilet together. They have to stay lined up in the order of their age. For the duration of the ritual the children are not considered to be ordinary human beings: they are the soldiers of the new shaman and protect him

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[5] One of the important ritual trees in the initiation.

by being on guard. Their line must not be broken because, if it were, their power would fail and the novice might be attacked by evil spirits.

In front of the entrance to the yurt birch trees are planted, the exact number being determined by which initiation step is being performed. For the first step nine birches are required, symbolising the nine children. At each subsequent step nine more birches are planted, although the total never exceeds 81. To the north of these small trees three big birches are placed in the earth with their roots: the nest-tree,[6] the mother-tree and the father-tree, which is the biggest.

At the south end of the trees a single birch is set, which is called the *sereg*. In ordinary nomadic life the *sereg* is a stake to which visitors' horses are tethered. In the ritual context, the *sereg* is set up for the horses of the invoked ancestors.

From its top branches to the ground the nest-tree is entwined with a red thread. In addition, a red thread is drawn through the whole grove, connecting all the trees. It starts at the *sereg* and ends at the father-tree, providing a way for the spirits. The birch grove, decorated in colours of gold and silver, is not only a gift for the spirits but also a sacred space where they make their appearance.

Singular Views

There is no such a thing as a "standard" shaman. Shamans vary greatly in so far as each behaves, acts and memorizes in a particular way that reflects his individuality and background. These variations should not be overlooked. On the contrary, seeking "the particular in its variability" (Barth 1994: 352) can give more accurate results than an approach based on the presupposed finding of neat norms and structures.

Even if there is a traditionally prescribed concept and purpose in the ritual, it is interpreted through and coloured by the personalities of different shamans. The story of the six neophytes of Buryatia teaches just this lesson. On close observation it is clear that the performances were not free of misunderstandings or faults. It is, however, these

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[6] The nest-tree, adorned with sacrifices, idols and three nests containing small eggs, refers to the symbolic birth of the shaman.

deviations which make the performance of a shamanic ritual all the more understandable.

In that context I will briefly recapitulate the story of each initiation that I attended. Baatar, a man of sixty, planned to do the white ritual. Unfortunately, it turned out that he was not fully prepared—nobody had told him that an important part of the procedure was the distillation of vodka, and he had not brought the necessary apparatus. To calm his ancestors he had to perform a substitute ceremony, the "golden horse stake" (*altan sereg*). Dulmaa, another neophyte, was not yet ready to undertake the first step of the *shanar* ritual, so she did a preparatory step, the small initiation (*baga shanar*). Her induction was disturbed by malevolent spirits which were sent by an envious shaman. Bato, at 25 the youngest of the group, was the only one who performed the *shanar* with no problems. Sandar and Dulamsüren, a married couple, performed *shanar* together. They needed twice nine children but could not find that many and so had to repeat the ritual the next year. Bayar did the second initiation step. He was the only one with a valid first step because Danzan himself had initiated him in Buryatia.

The examples show clearly that every ritual performance is unique even if there is a common pattern in all of them. The uniqueness also necessitates an individual description of each (Oppitz 1993: 105). I will therefore describe Bayar's experience in more detail. His initiation is particularly interesting because in this case not even the clear pattern of duration was maintained. Instead of the usual three days, Bayar's *shanar* took four days.

Bayar's Initiation

On the first day all the participants had to take part in a ritual washing and a purification ceremony using incense. With this ablution an invisible ring is drawn around the camp and it becomes a sacred space. During the time of the *shanar* nobody may enter the camp without performing the ritual washing.

In the evening twilight all the participants assembled in the central yurt. Bayar was sitting in the northern part of the yurt next to Danzan, the leader of the ritual. He started drumming his shamanic drum but seemed too nervous to sing and to call down his ancestors. Suddenly

his wife stepped forward and sang the first words of the song to him. Although this was quite shameful for Bayar, he became more confident. He began to sing in a firm voice and his wife sat down. After some time he fell into a trance, possessed by his first ancestor spirit. The spirit, manifested in Bayar's body, jumped up, left the yurt and ran in a zigzag pattern through the birches. Even though it was very dark, the spirit recognized that there was something wrong. Angrily, he asked why some of the branches were broken and if Bayar really wanted to sacrifice such trees to him. The damage was fixed at once and the spirit appeared to be content.

However, the next ancestor Bayar called was too powerful for him. In trance, he sang and jumped wildly around the trees before suddenly running off into the wide steppe, and it took all the strength of the four men who ran after him to hold him back. After this incident Danzan asked Manshlai several times how such a thing could have happened. (Manshlai, a son of heaven, is responsible for the *shanar*. It is supposed that he "makes" the shamans.) Manshlai responded that the cause of Bayar's problems was the disbelief of some who were attending the ritual. Danzan ordered a break. There seemed to be no way of going on with the ceremony. Bayar was sitting in a friend's car, crying and drinking vodka.[7]

The next day Bayar did not show up. He was still drinking. Danzan called Manshlai again to ask for advice. Manshlai now said that the ancestors were angry because Bayar had had doubts in the middle of the ceremony. It seemed they were not prepared to support him any more.

However, the following day Bayar was determined to continue and apologised to the spirits and Danzan. All accepted his apology and the ritual could be continued. A sheep was sacrificed and cooked. No part of the animal should be lost or else the spirits would not accept it and get angry. It was late in the evening when the shaman, together with the nine children, circled the birches. They sang and beat the drum.

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[7] For the shaman trance is a medium that allows him to make contact with the spirits. It is important that he knows how to use this instrument of communication and is able to control it. If this is not the case, the shaman will be dominated by the invoked spirits and becomes a puppet in the hands of the ancestors. That is what happened to Bayar. For a discussion of trance see also Hamayon 1993.

The children helped, wearing the newly made paraphernalia. After that Danzan called Manshlai. Manshlai was disgruntled. In spite of the darkness he had seen that the red thread, which connected all the trees and provided a way for the spirits, was torn. It was fixed immediately, but as punishment Manshlai demanded that nobody should sleep that night.

On the fourth day Danzan declared that that Bayar's initiation was complete. Festivities started, and games were played for the entertainment of the spirits and gods. Those present were not simply actors in this play as the games were also enjoyable and helped to release the tension of the previous days. To the accompaniment of laughter and mockery everyone tried to snatch a piece of twitching sheep intestine without using their hands. In another game yoghurt had to be drunk from the centre of a bowl, leaving everyone with a big smile on a white face. After the games the birch trees were burnt as a sacrifice to the ancestor spirits.

The sheep, which had been cooked the day before, was now eaten by the assembled community. Only the shaman himself, Bayar, was not allowed to eat because the meat was his offering to the spirits. Once they have accepted the offering, the meat becomes tasteless because the spirits have eaten the essence of the meat itself.

By the end of the day the difficulties that had beset the *shanar* seemed to be forgotten. Bayar was happy that he had persisted and not lost face. He had learned to master his new powers and could now count on the support of his ancestors. With a second initiation step to his credit Bayar would now be able to initiate other shamans back home in Buryatia, allowing the tradition of the *shanar* ritual to be continued.

Conclusion

Performing a ritual correctly demands the fullest commitment of the shaman and the whole community. Only in these circumstances will the ancestor spirits accept the newly initiated shaman. The precise details of the ritual are prescribed by tradition, but what happens if the transmission cannot be secured? Change and continuity are part of every tradition, but the issue of remembering or forgetting is especially

urgent in shamanic societies. Ancestors are not easy to please and there is an ever present anxiety that neglected or forgotten spirits will take revenge.

Let us first look at the factor of time: what has changed in the ritual during this century? If the *shanar* ritual of today is compared with historical descriptions from the turn of the century, only slight differences are apparent. Some parts of the performance are no longer practiced and others have been altered or added, though other aspects have remained unchanged through time. These unchanging aspects are not in any sense arbitrary. Indeed, they are essential. They make up, as Bloch (1992: 1) has stated, "a central minimal structure or 'core' of the ritual process". If this assumption is correct, it would mean that temporal alteration, as well as regional and individual variation, in the performance of *shanar* have no significant influence on the main content of the ritual.

To clarify that statement let us consider a core idea of the ritual: the symbolic ascent to the sky. In many shamanic societies trees serve as cosmological ladders. By climbing a tree a shaman ascends to the celestial regions. In the course of an initiation it is also a demonstration of the shaman's abilities: not falling is a clear sign that the neophyte is supported by the spirits (Hamayon 1990: 476). In Petri's vivid account we have a report of the ascent to the sky by climbing a tree at a *shanar* from as early as 1928:

> Then he walks to the big birch and begins to climb it. He climbs it with eyes shut as all other shamanic rites are performed; he climbs not straight upwards but in a spiral so as to complete nine turns. While the shaman's body is seen to climb the tree, his soul rises high up to the upper world. Each turn on the birch-tree corresponds to a passage up to the upper world. [At] Each turn on the birch-tree the shaman proclaims what he has seen in the heavens. After having reached the ninth heaven, the shaman sets out on the road back. His body comes to ground spirally after making nine turns. The shamans are said to have climbed down head first formerly, which is, however, not done nowadays. (In Diószegi 1968: 302.)

Today, the memory of climbing trees is still there but this part of the rite is no longer performed. Danzan mentioned, indeed, that it is a good sign if a shaman in trance climbs a tree. However, none of the six

newly initiated shamans did so. Can such absence of a prescribed ritual activity be taken to imply that the transmission of ritual knowledge has failed and that the contacts with the world of the spirits and ancestors have been disturbed? In my view the reason for the absence of this ritual act lies in regional, individual or temporal differences. The symbolic ascent to the sky has not fallen into oblivion; rather, its place has been taken by another element of the ritual. Its execution is different, but the essential message remains the same—that is, the neophyte ascends to the sky. His ascent is achieved by dancing around the birches. Together with the nine children, the shaman circles the ritual trees while singing and drumming. In this way a spiral road is built on which he can dance up to the sky.[8] The idea of ascending to the sky is a core part of the ritual which has been remembered and remains unchanged. That is why it is not so important how the shamans ascend, whether they climb or circle around the trees, but that they actually remember and perform the idea.

How is it possible to maintain and transmit shamanic tradition? The more or less long intervals between initiations pose a severe challenge to the memory, although frequent repetition does not in itself preclude errors: "The frequent repetition of uncontrolled rituals transmitted without special care can lead to a more rapid distortion of a tradition than infrequent recital" (Vansina 1965: 43). Mnemonic devices are helpful. Singular objects, in this case the ritual trees, may serve as an auxiliary tool for remembering the ideas that are attached to a particular ritual element. Other mnemonic devices are artefacts, which are handed down, songs and drum rhythms, as well as spatial constructs, gestures or bodily representation (Humphrey 1996: 138–239).

These memorable forms or actions can be easily produced and reproduced—an important precondition for transmission in an oral culture. In the course of its history shamanism has known neither books nor dogmas; it has always been based on oral tradition. A text found in 1879 in a Buryat village says: "People who profess the faith of the

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[8] The spiral road is also perceptible at the nest-tree. Pinned to the trunk are four red-painted pieces of wood in the shape of kills. They stand for wings, ascending spirally to heaven.

shaman have never possessed any holy books of their own; all teaching and instruction given orally only, and learned by heart, has passed down as tradition." (Partanen 1941: 8).

Nowadays, however, the practice of oral transmission seems to be undergoing change. The shaman Danzan made no objection when the guests from Buryatia took notes during parts of the ceremonies. They noted down unknown or forgotten songs and made drawings of the shamanic costume.

However, this is not a fundamental change in the tradition of oral transmission; rather, it is a pragmatic decision to adopt a new method of learning. As there is no time to memorize the prescribed words, they are written down so that they can be learnt at home. In pre-communist times new shamans were able to take part in shamanic ceremonies. They learnt the songs and drum rhythms, as well as the ritual performances, by observing. They could develop as a shaman because shamanism was part of the daily social life. The notes and drawings of Danzan's guests do not replace the custom of oral transmission but represent a different, probably passing way of learning the ritual.

The acquisition of knowledge about ritual practice is an important step in becoming a shaman. But learning the words of a song, the rhythm of the drum, the elements of a ritual, are just part of the process. The vocation and the essential energy come from another world. It is the ancestors who choose a shaman and give him power.

Looking at the initiation ritual, one can discern two ways of handing down shamanic knowledge and securing its continuity: first, repeated performance of the ritual; and, second, the spiritual inheritance. Knowledge of the ritual practice and the spiritual knowledge of the shamanic ancestor spirits are interdependent and influence each other. On one hand, the ancestors need shamanic practice because only then can there be communication between spirits and men. It is in the sacred space of the ritual that the normally invisible energy is able to manifest itself in the shaman. On the other hand, practice of the ritual requires the heritage of the ancestor spirits, who are responsible for the constant reproduction of shamanic power and energy. It is they who generate the magic souls.

Fig. 1. New shamanic drums. Photo: 1996, Beatrice Kümin.

Fig. 2. Three shamans of different ranks and "colours".
Photo: 1996, Beatrice Kümin.

Fig. 3. Circling around the trees. Photo: 1996, Beatrice Kümin.

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Deceit and Duality: Jacob's Shamanic Vision

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The Jacob story given in Genesis is usually read within the orthodox Judaeo-Christian tradition. However, it contains themes and elements strongly suggestive of a shamanic origin. This paper considers the essential elements of the shamanic tradition and scrutinises the story from this perspective. Such an interpretation gives many elements within the traditional account greater meaning, and some hitherto unconsidered details are revealed as highly significant. Reconstructed as a shamanic narrative, the account of Jacob's visions, his relationships with Isaac and Laban, the matter of the mandrakes, and the encounter with the angel may all be located in a revised framework of understanding. This framework is not reductionist but offers new insights into the significance of the story; placing it within a framework of shamanic practice and healing. Such a reconceptualisation supports the suggestion that there may be a shamanic tradition within Judaism and permits the location of the Jacob narrative within the conventional corpus of shamanic experience.

INTRODUCTION

The mark of an enduring story is that it is susceptible to more than one interpretation. The account of Jacob given in Genesis (27–34) is one such narrative; having been subjected to several forms of interpretation in the past. It has been understood in ways that we might term orthodox; either as a direct and literal account of historical events, or subjected to a variety of explanations arising primarily from the Rabbinical tradition. The Hebrew Bible has traditionally been interpreted on several levels—the literal, allegorical, metaphysical and the mystical (Lancaster 1993). There have also been more heterodox interpretations of Jacob's story, and in recent times the work of Graves (1961) and of Jung (see Read 1979: 367) exemplify this alternative perspective.

However, I believe that a new interpretation, deriving from a shamanic perspective, may cast fresh light on several powerful features of the story and contribute to the discovery of further elements in the account. I will argue that Jacob's experience of initiation is that of shamanic initiation, and that such an understanding casts new light into old recesses of the tale.

First I will summarise the shamanic tradition, clarifying the essentials of the perspective I offer. I will then give a literal account of the Jacob story, followed by a brief review of its interpretation within a shamanic framework.

The Shamanic Tradition

The shamanic tradition is said to be perhaps 300,000 years old and or once have been a characteristic feature of all human cultures. This claim in based in part on cave and rock paintings portraying humans dressed in animal skins or depicting characteristically shamanic activities such as drumming, dancing, and trance (Moreno 1988). It is a tradition with a wide geographical as well as cultural distribution, manifest from Alaska to Australia. Achterberg (1985: 13) defines shamanic practice as *the ability to move in and out of a special state of consciousness together with having the ability to heal with the imagination*. Harner (1990: xvii) has pointed out that shamans *are keepers of a remarkable body of ancient techniques that they use to achieve and maintain well-being and healing for themselves and members of their communities*.

Eliade (1989) identified the criterial feature of the shamanic tradition as *techniques of ecstasy*. The essential principle of shamanism is that someone who experiences the shamanic state of consciousness (Harner 1990; Peters 1989) is opened to an extended notion of their own and human nature; and undergoes a complete transformation of their relationship with the sacred order of the cosmos (Porterfield 1987). Shamanism is about death and rebirth, personal transformation, and the reconstruction of identity and meaning.

While the initial shamanic experience is frequently terrifying and may parallel a near death experience, shamans receive thereby a transformed understanding of themselves and the universe, and of the essentially arbitrary nature of the distinction between the two. In consequence

they may have particular familiarity with plants and animals, rivers and rocks. Shamans may function as the advocate of the ecosystem at the particular point where they are located, and may have a particular responsibility for the oversight of hunting, agriculture, and human and animal fertility.

Once relatively minor cultural variations are set aside, there is a remarkable unanimity within the shamanic tradition, with widely separated cultures giving very similar accounts of the content and consequences of the shamanic experience. The following list is based on Eliade (1989: 13–34) but incorporates additional material.

1. A shaman's apprenticeship begins with an unmistakable call, which may come in a dream, or be associated with a crisis such as acute illness.

2. The shaman may go into desert or mountain seeking a vision to confirm or authenticate the calling. This vision quest may entail some special place of power known for its transcendent properties.

3. The shaman experiences a dream or vision entailing death and dismemberment—stripping away flesh and dislocating bones. There may follow a renewal or rearrangement of the internal organs, ascent to the sky and dialogue with gods or spirits, descent to the underworld and conversation with spirits or the souls of the dead, and the revelation of shamanic secrets. On return, the shaman may receive a new name.

4. Special fragments of iron, rock crystals, or magical stones may be inserted within the shaman's body during reconstruction; or may wear them as power objects or talismans. The shaman may also identify with a particular animal as a source of power and may wear the skin, tooth or claw of that power animal.

5. Apprenticeship is both ecstatic and didactic—it is not completed until ecstatic experiences have been undergone and shamanic technique transmitted. If sickness signalled the original call, recovery is now completed. Eliade (1989: 27) observes that the shaman is, *above all, a sick man who has been cured, who has succeeded in curing himself.*

6. Apprenticeship may contain elements of disorientation and deceit; a "trickster" element in the procedure is not unusual. Castenada's widely-read accounts of his own apprenticeship illustrate this aspect (e.g. Casteneda 1970; 1971; 1972; 1976). Where a shaman's teacher is not the

father, it can be the maternal uncle. In some traditional cultures, as we shall see, the maternal uncle may be specifically responsible for a child's discipline and training.

7. Imagery of heat, light and fire plays a profound part in descriptions of shamanic initiation. Indeed, the Siberian Tungus word *shaman* itself has a clear etymology involving the notion of heat, fire or both—perhaps from the Vedic *sram,* meaning to heat oneself or practice austerities (Peters 1989: 118). Initiation may be experienced as a feeling of "luminous fire" arising within the body (Peters 1989: 60; Achterberg 1985: 34; Harner 1990: 22–23; Walsh 1989: 2).

8. The initiate may have an experience of ascent, commonly mediated through the process of climbing a ladder. This ladder constitutes a stairway to heaven. As Eliade (1989: 391) says, "...symbolic ascent to heaven by stairs in typically shamanic." Berman (1989) has written extensively about the ascent experience, and its relevance to understanding ecstatic experience and its relationship to situations of transition. Some cultures may use a tree (possibly notched to represent rungs) as a ladder, and they may link this to notions of the World Tree, the Tree of Life, and immortality.

9. Highly characteristic of shamanic knowledge are a particular familiarity with the properties of botanical substances and a close affinity with the animal, vegetable and mineral kingdoms.

To summarise, shamanic initiation involves a rite of passage entailing an experience of transcendence, a mythic process of dismemberment or mutilation, and a reconstruction of personal identity. The development of shamanic power is almost invariably expressed as a sensation of heat or light. The successful initiate has thereafter a particular intimacy with natural processes and phenomena. As Kalweit (1992: 17) puts it:

> The shaman is the fool who turns everything upside down, but he is a holy fool. He is holy because he has been healed, because he has gone beyond illness and deception.

The Story of Jacob

The Jacob story begins in Genesis 26, when his mother Rebekah became aware that she was carrying twins who fought within her. At birth the

firstborn, Esau, was covered in red hair. The second twin held on to his brother's heel (Hebrew *acev*) and was therefore named Jacob. Esau grew up to be a hunter and outdoor man; Jacob preferred indoors. Their father Isaac loved Esau because of his hunting skills but Rebekah favoured Jacob. On one occasion (Genesis 24: 33) Esau returned weary from hunting and sold his right of inheritance to Jacob in return for some red pottage.

When Isaac was old and blind he asked Esau to hunt some venison for him. In return for this he would give Esau his blessing, with its implication of primogeniture and inheritance. While Esau was hunting, Rebekah sent Jacob to fetch two young goats. She skinned and cooked these and covered Jacob's neck and hands with their skin to make him feel like his more hirsute brother. Jacob took the meat into his father saying he was Esau. Isaac expressed doubts but blessed Jacob nevertheless. Esau arrived just as Jacob departed and both he and Isaac were distressed at the subterfuge. Esau received an inferior blessing and vowed to kill Jacob once Isaac was dead. Rebekah overheard this threat, warned Jacob, and sent him to her brother Laban in Haran for safekeeping while Esau's anger cooled. Isaac blessed Jacob again in a way clearly indicating that he was Isaac's heir and told him to marry one of Laban's daughters (Genesis 28: 2).

Jacob left for Laban and made camp at night. Sleeping on a pillow of stones, he dreamt of a ladder set between earth and heaven with angels going up and down. The Almighty appeared above it all and promised the land to Jacob and his descendants. Jacob continued his journey and met some of Laban's men who were travelling with the sheep and who were accompanied by Laban's daughter Rachel. In a highly symbolic passage (Genesis 29: 10–13) Jacob rolled away the stone cover from a well, watered the flock of sheep, kissed Rachel, and wept. Laban welcomed Jacob warmly and the two agreed that if Jacob worked seven years for Laban then he could marry Rachel. The wedding took place, but Laban substituted his other daughter Leah. Jacob reproached Laban, who explained that in his country the younger did not take priority over the firstborn. Leah offered Jacob Rachel as well in exchange for another seven year's service.

Jacob agreed, and after seven days was then married to Rachel also, preferring her to Leah. But Leah conceived four times while Rachel

remained barren. Rachel offered Jacob her maid Bilhah and Bilhah bore Jacob two sons. Leah offered Jacob her maid Zilpah who also bore two sons. Then Reuben, Leah's firstborn, found some mandrakes and brought them home to his mother. Rachel asked Leah if she could have them, but Leah refused on the ground that Rachel had already taken her husband and could not have her mandrakes as well. But Rachel offered Leah a night with Jacob in exchange for the mandrakes, and Leah bore two more sons and a daughter. Subsequently Rachel became pregnant and bore Joseph.

After this Jacob asked Laban for permission to leave, with his family. Laban tried to persuade him to stay; then offered him a share of the cattle. Jacob agreed to take all the animals which were speckled or spotted, but used wooden rods magically to make the stronger cattle produce young which were predominantly bicoloured. From this point Jacob became rich in cattle and servants, but it led to an estrangement between him and Laban. So Jacob left Laban stealthily, taking all his family and possessions with him. Rachel also took some religious items which belonged to her father. These were so significant that Laban pursued Jacob despite his start of three days. He intercepted Jacob but failed to recover them. Nonetheless he and Jacob were reconciled, marking their truce by a stone pillar.

Jacob made his way back to his original home and his brother Esau. He prepared for their reunion by sending messengers ahead with presents for his brother. But he separated from his family and on his own wrestled with a stranger from dusk to dawn. The stranger failed to defeat Jacob but dislocated his hip in an attempt to be released. Jacob told his opponent that he could not leave without blessing him, and the stranger did so, renaming him Israel. Jacob left the site of their encounter, met Esau once more, and was reconciled with him.

It is difficult to give a bald and factual account of the story of Jacob, as it is so evidently replete with symbol and layered with meaning. It may easily be read as one of transition and initiation. It is initiatory in that Jacob is required to confront a variety of challenges in order to achieve his own destiny. At the heart of the story is his journey from Canaan to Haran, from his home to that of his uncle, Laban. Both his departure from Canaan and his return are marked by intense visionary experiences which convey the nature of his initiation. His first vision—of

a ladder with angels ascending and descending—is traditionally taken to intimate the nature of his destiny, namely to establish the grouping of twelve tribes as a reflection on earth of the cosmic order, and thus facilitating the building of the Temple.

The second experience is that of wrestling with a heavenly being. This has traditionally been interpreted as a resolution of his battle with his brother Esau, from whom he had originally fled. What had been gained initially through deception and trickery had finally to be won through a direct physical confrontation with his brother's spiritual power.

The story is notably one of transition. Not only does it record Jacob's transition from one state to another, as indicated by his change of name to Israel, but it also seems to mark a key phase of cultural transition. In biblical language Jacob becomes the father of the new dynasty, the *bnei yisrael* (children of Israel). But there is evidence of other transitions, from hunting (symbolised by Esau) to herding; from inheritance by the younger (Jacob; Rachel) to inheritance by the elder; from avunculate to patriarchy; perhaps from the magical to the orthodox.

The Shamanic Interpretation

Jacob's story begins with his dressing in animal skins in order to obtain his father's blessing. This is traditionally understood as an act of subterfuge, yet his mother Rebekah is his accomplice and his father Isaac is at best only partially deceived. The fundamental implausibility of a mother conniving to disinherit her own firstborn needs no emphasis, and Isaac's ambivalence also needs explanation, especially given his reiteration of the blessing after the alleged subterfuge has been revealed (Genesis 28: 3&4). It is hard to believe that Isaac, elderly as he was, could not tell goat from his favourite venison. A possible textual clue may lie in Isaac and Rebekah's shared disapproval of Esau's choice of wives (Genesis 27: 34&35). But a shamanic interpretation would suggest that this is a misunderstood retelling of a preliminary initiation. Jacob had convinced his parents of his shamanic potential, so in ritual acknowledgement and to mark the commencement of his training he dressed in animal skins as shamans seem to have done for ritual purposes since the Palaeolithic. He received his father's blessing and left to commence his training with Laban, his maternal uncle, in a way which

is traditional in many shamanic cultures. I shall return to this point below.

On his way to Laban Jacob has his ladder dream. This dream satisfies the ecstatic half of the shamanic criteria referred to above, and as we have noted the ladder theme is a visionary symbol widely encountered in very many shamanic traditions. The reference to a stone or stones integral to the visionary experience is also recognisably a part of the shamanic tradition. Stones or crystals are common items in shamanic toolkits, and this perspective is supported by later references to Laban's religious artefacts—the *teraphim*—which Rachel steals on her departure.

When Jacob and Laban meet, Laban greets him as *his bone and his flesh* (Genesis 29: 14). While this may have been a conventional kin greeting of the time, its physiological emphasis is also powerfully evocative of the shamanic experience of dismemberment. It could be read as Laban's acknowledgement of Jacob's shamanic potential and their mutual experience of some initiatory ordeal. To emphasise the point, perhaps, in the verse immediately following Laban calls Jacob his *brother,* whereas of course Jacob is in biological kinship terms his nephew. Laban, however, may be emphasising their brotherhood in the tradition.

The shaman is much concerned with fertility—human as well as flock and field—and as we noted above most of the account of Jacob's time with Laban explores this theme. We gather that Laban's herds have been fertile under Jacob's jurisdiction (Genesis 30: 30, 43); but it is the human domain that fertility is initially most striking.

Jacob has married two of Laban's daughters, Rachel and Leah, and also become intimate with Zilpah and Bilhah, two of Laban's former maids given as servants to his daughters. It is notable that the trickster or deception theme is paralleled here, both in Laban's deception of Jacob into marriage with Leah instead of Rachel—his expected bride—in the first instance (on the grounds that the younger cannot be put before the elder) and in Rachel's comment that "With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister" (Genesis 30: 8). Rachel even names one of Bilhah's children *Naptali,* a name which connotes wrestling. It is tempting to see Laban's act of apparent deception as an intentional confronting of Jacob with his own apparent usurpation of his brother (Genesis 24:

33) as would be appropriate if his role was to supervise Jacob's training. It is an instantiation of the trickster theme which characterises shamanic training in some traditions.

To this it might be added that the account of Jacob's deception, when Laban substitutes Leah for Rachel, requires explanation. The text tells us (Genesis 30: 25) that Jacob spent the night with Leah before realising the following morning that he had been deceived. It seems unlikely that Jacob would have been duped to this extent, however convivial the wedding-party, as he was already sufficiently familiar with Rachel to have kissed her. In a story replete with parallels, perhaps one more waits to be identified—that perhaps, like Jacob and Esau, Rachel and Leah were *twins*—but identical rather than fraternal. There is no direct textual justification for this suggestion. It might, however, explain how Jacob was tricked. There is a further point—the substitution of Leah for Rachel could not have been carried out without Rachel's connivance. In that case, an additional parallel might be detected. Whereas Jacob's relationship to his twin was of deceit, that of Rachel to hers was fidelity. Such a reading is endorsed by Laban's explanation of the substitution to Jacob—that in his country it was not the custom to advance the younger before the firstborn. Rachel's honourable behaviour is thus in counterpoint to Jacob's deceit of his own twin brother. Laban and his family have taught Jacob a lesson in loyalty to kin.

All four women ultimately bear children, and at the point where Jacob seeks to leave Laban, after twenty years of apprenticeship, he has two wives, two concubines, eleven sons and one daughter. But an intervention that is highly suggestive of shamanic practice has produced some of these children. This is the episode of the mandrake plants.

Mandrake, as the English name suggests, is noted for its homuncular properties and is associated with fertility. Moreover, in Hebrew it is termed *dudayim*. If the letters of this term are rearranged by the method known as gematria—frequently used to reveal alternative meanings in Hebrew—they form *Ka'adam*, which means *like a man*. Further, *dudayim* is also closely related to the Hebrew *dudi*; which means *beloved uncle* and is markedly similar to the English *daddy*. Laban may be seen as Jacob's beloved uncle.

Rachel asks for these mandrakes, but Leah resists, explaining that the theft of a husband was sufficient without the additional appropriation

of the mandrakes; a powerful and evocative equation of human with botanical. Leah appears to be saying, "not both the man and the mandrake!" But Rachel offers Leah a night with Jacob in exchange for the mandrakes, reinforcing this equation, and Leah agrees. In consequence Leah subsequently bears two more sons and a daughter Dinah. Rachel then conceives and bears Joseph. The theme here is clearly that of sympathetic magic, an interpenetration of vegetable and human fertility, and the equation of mandrake plants with both husband and uncle.

A further episode highly suggestive of shamanic content occurs soon after this juncture, when Jacob asks Laban for permission to leave, along with his burgeoning household. They agree to divide the herds, with Jacob taking only those beasts that are marked or spotted in some way. Such animals were traditionally considered unfit for sacrifice (e.g. Leviticus I: 3; I: 10). But Jacob works a form of sympathetic magic. He peels twigs of poplar, hazel and chestnut and by placing them next to the troughs causes most of the next progeny to be similarly bicoloured, his not Laban's. Hence he appears to trick Laban out of the best of his beasts.

However, this apparently ungrateful behaviour can be understood as an act of magic concluding Jacob's shamanic apprenticeship, marking his maturity as a shaman. Having displayed his mastery of fertility, Jacob is now competent to depart. But he and his household leave by stealth, and Rachel steals some religious items (Hebrew *teraphim*) belonging to Laban. We might interpret this as a form of what some anthropologists have termed *privileged disrespect*—an act that might be disreputable outside the special relationship of maternal uncle and nephew, apprentice and master, but is legitimate within. We shall return to this point below. Laban's hasty pursuit—apparently at odds both with their former intimacy and swift and lasting reconciliation—may be no more than a symbolic conclusion to Jacob's shamanic training, reminiscent of the ritual escape of bride and groom after the wedding that still persists in some cultures.

Jacob's initiation is completed when he contends with the stranger/angel on his way to meet Esau. When the angel realises that he cannot win he dislocates Jacob's hip and asks to be released as it is dawn. Jacob's adversary is a creature of the night. The dark is his domain. It is this, which identifies him as angels as one category of angels charac-

teristically have a bounded existence of this sort (see Kaplan 1993: 170). Jacob is renamed Israel and is blessed, and as he limps away from the site of his encounter, we are told, *the sun arose for him*. It is easy to read this episode as the concluding phase of a shamanic initiation—specifically, as a vision quest, which is undergone in solitary conditions. Jacob has survived the dismemberment experience—symbolised by the dislocation—and as he limps away from the site of the encounter he feels the shamanic heat rising like a sun inside his body. The dismemberment itself is profoundly shamanic in its expression. As noted above, a vision of dismemberment is a significant element in shamanic initiation. Shamans are noted also for physical asymmetry, most commonly manifest in lameness. As Cowan (1993: 92) has observed:

> ...an imbalance of gait, such as limping, having a vulnerable heel, dragging one foot, walking with one foot unshod, stumbling, or hopping on one foot, suggests that the person has been marked by Otherworld experiences.

Cowan devotes four pages of his text to the amplification of this point and its significance within the global shamanic tradition.

As we saw above, the role of the maternal uncle in the life of his nephew has often been a significant one, exhibiting a pattern that has been noted in many African societies. Mair (1965) has referred to it as "privileged disrespect"; but the complexity of the relationship requires a little more explanation.

A nephew may have unique rights and indulgences with regard to his uncle's property, his food, or even the meat he is offering to the ancestors as sacrifice. Mair (1965: 92) summarises Radcliffe-Brown's explanation of this latter phenomenon by suggesting that:

> ...the mother's brother, as the sibling of the tender, indulgent mother, is expected to treat his sister's children with the same indulgence that she does, and so are his ancestors even; that is why he can steal their sacrificial meat.

Other explanations of the curious uncle–nephew relationship exist. For example, it is said that rivalry within a lineage can frequently be more intense than that which may exist in a familial relationship. So alliances may be more easily maintained outside the lineage; and a

maternal uncle is probably the most powerful adult available outside the lineage and hence an obvious choice of ally.

There is also Goody's "residual sibling" theory, which hypothesises that

> ...when a man snatches property from a member of his mother's lineage, he is in a sense acting on her behalf, asserting what Goody calls her 'submerged rights'. He must do this in an aggressive manner, because he is in fact an outsider to the group within which the claims are recognised. (Mair 1965: 94)

All three explanations have a resonance within the story of Jacob's relationship with Laban. Although traditionally regarded as his exploiter (and reviled at Passover), Laban is in fact highly indulgent of Jacob; sheltering him from the vengeance of Esau, allowing him to marry both his daughters, and sharing his flocks with him. His is Jacob's benefactor; the owner of the place where Jacob seeks sanctuary. The magical means Jacob employs to ensure a better share of Laban's animal wealth, as well as the theft of the *teraphim,* are congruent with the especial rights that a nephew may enjoy over his uncle's property. Laban's name has connotations of embarrassment rather than exploitation—it literally means to grow pale, but connotes something very like blushing. Laban may have been embarrassed by the outstanding success of his student.

In short, Rebekah did not send Jacob to Laban as the result of last-minute improvisation. He was chosen precisely because of their kinship relation in a way that is often traditional in shamanic cultures. What I would add is that he might also have been responsible for Jacob's shamanic training, and that the issues of fertility magic that characterise Jacob's apprenticeship with Laban are only explicable in this light.

Thus, the matter of the mandrakes is revealed as a shamanic familiarity with the power of plants in matters of human fertility. What seems to be Jacob's bizarre ingratitude towards Laban exemplified by the sharing out of the livestock becomes revealed as a misunderstood demonstration of shamanic power. Laban's *teraphim* were probably talismans or power objects of some sort—Jaynes (1990: 311) suggests that they were most probably small figurines—and Jacob's theft of them could confirm the Jacob–Laban relationship as a period of shamanic apprenticeship. The

way in which Rachel conceals them from her father's search suggests that they too may have connotations of fertility. The vision of the ladder, rather than unique and problematic, is revealed as a relatively straightforward symbol within the shamanic codex.

His contest with the adversary, the stirring of the sterile dust as they wrestle, the angel's ambiguous answer to Jacob's question about identity, the dislocation of the hip, Jacob's experience of the solar heat rising within him, and his power to achieve a reconciliation with his brother—all these support the notion that this was Jacob's culminating vision quest, addressing the sterile content of the past, confirming his new identity with his new name, and giving him the inner power to be reconciled with his brother Esau. Recalling Kalweit's (1992) comment above, Jacob is the holy fool who having turned everything upside down—Easu's birthright, Isaac's blessing, Laban's household—is holy because he has been healed of his combative relationship with Easu, which began before their birth. He has gone beyond deception. He has gone from Jacob the deceiver to Israel the upright.

Conclusion

A strong case may be made for believing the Jacob story to be a shamanic narrative in origin, though perhaps not understood as such by those who formulated the final version. It is easy to imagine, for example, a later compiler hearing of a son dressing in animal skins to receive his father's blessing and then removing himself to his maternal uncle for twenty years as a story of deceit and disgrace, rather than initiation and training. Such an interpretation is not hostile to the more traditional reading of the story, and as Gershom (1987: 188) notes

> ...we can say that although shamanic practices have probably never been considered mainstream within Judaism, nevertheless there is a persistent and continuous thread of teaching which weaves itself in and out of the Jewish tradition...

It has often been suggested (e.g. Vitebsky 1995: 132) that all human knowledge of the divine as well as the supernatural has its origin in shamanic experience, but this analysis has seldom been applied to Judaism. Thus, the possibility of demonstrating a shamanic element in

the story of a person of Jacob's significance within the tradition is of great potential interest.

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The Language of Shamans and the Metaphysics of Language: Emerging Paradigms in Shamanic Studies

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The language shamans use in ritual, including the language of songs and chants, has been studied by western science primarily as text, in which sound has been spatialized into writing. And language has been viewed primarily as a function of physical changes in the evolution of human consciousness. Emerging paradigms suggest we look at shamanic language as communication on the physical, symbolic and subtle planes for new perspectives on the origin of language and its role in shamanism. Drawing on cymatics, metaphysics and new work in imagining rather than theorizing language, this paper addresses the spiritual function of language, a topic that has received little attention in the ethnographic and historic literature in either socio-linguistics or shamanic studies.

INTRODUCTION

"Shamanism" and "language" have generally been dealt with in the ethnographic literature under separate subfields of anthropology—shamanism under the subfield of religion in sociocultural anthropology; language under the subfield of linguistics. Shamanism has been analyzed primarily as a magico-religious phenomenon. Language has been viewed primarily as a function of physical changes in the evolution of human consciousness.[1] Moreover, the language shamans use in ritual, including

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[1] Exceptions include the work of Helimskij, who points out, in his study of shamanic verse: "There is hardly any doubt that the influence of poetry—and, therefore, according to the above hypothesis, of the language of spirits—should not be disregarded

the language of songs and chants, has been studied primarily as text, in which sound has been spatialized into writing.

In the social and pure sciences today, the search for new research paradigms to encompass our expanding views about the nature of knowledge, and further, about the nature of reality itself, is leading to interdisciplinary approaches in both linguistics and shamanic studies. Recent and upcoming conferences[2] on shamanism, and a recent linguistics conference[3], draw together scientists and practitioners from a broad range of disciplines. Boundaries between disciplines are blurring. The lines separating the subfields of anthropology, and the "hard" sciences from the social sciences theoretically and methodologically, are being redrawn.

Recent work in the metaphysics of language, and also in shamanic studies, suggests we must address not just *what* we come to know, but *how* we come to know. Both fields become inquiries into epistemology, the search for meaning and the nature of knowledge. In this paper, I view shamanic language as communication on the physical, symbolic and subtle planes, providing new perspectives on the origin of language and its role in shamanism. I also address the spiritual function of language in shamanism, a topic that has received little attention in the ethnographic and historic literature.

Background

Much of my own fieldwork as a cultural anthropologist has been in the Arctic and Subarctic regions with Indigenous Peoples in Canada, Alaska, and more recently in Russia; and with ethnic minorities in Southeast Asia. All are shamanic cultures in the anthropological sense though not all people in these culture areas use the terms "shaman" or "shamanic".

While there are many commonalities amongst shamanic cultures, shamanism is a complex and diverse phenomenon. Is it even appropriate

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when viewing the linguistic evolution of Balto-Finic" (Helimskij 1993: 213).

[2] For example, *The International Congress on Shamanism and Other Indigenous Spiritual Beliefs and Practices,* Moscow, June 7–12, 1999.

[3] *Atlantic Provinces Linguistic Association,* Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick, 1999.

to use the singular "shamanism", for example, or is "shamanisms" more cognizant of the temporal and geographic diversity? In the research I draw from for this paper, I use the singular to address underlying commonalities in practice and ethos in several cultures/culture areas, all of which have common origins in Siberia. These are the Inuit/Eskimo of the circumpolar regions, the Tlingit of Southeast Alaska, the Hmong of Southeast Asia, First Nations of Canada, and Indigenous Peoples of Siberia. Although each area is different culturally and linguistically, shamanic language in each context has similar communicative functions on the physical, symbolic and subtle planes.

In some areas—Siberia, for example—shamans say their tradition remains unbroken. In others, the practice subsided, sometimes disappearing altogether, or went underground. Practitioners have been persecuted, even put to death. Universally, shamanism has been devalued, suppressed, even outlawed, by dominant religions and cultures. The marginalization of shamanism and of the peoples who practice it also applies to the languages of Indigenous Peoples. Many aboriginal languages are no longer spoken and many are at risk. It is important to recognize this important link between shamanism and language by acknowledging that at times, the shaman has acted as, "the guardian of linguistic traditions... Especially among the people of the ex-Soviet Union, the shaman texts are always heard, even today, in languages which the authorities had almost succeeded in making these minorities forget" (Hoppál 1999: 58).

Despite long-term policies of assimilation in all the areas I discuss, shamanism has persisted in some form. As a flexible and adaptive tradition, shamanism has syncretized elements of the dominant religion/ideology of an area and time period—Buddhism and Orthodox Christianity in Russia; Christianity in Canada and Alaska; and Buddhism and Christianity in Southeast Asia—which has contributed to the continuity as well as the diversity of shamanic traditions. And in many areas, shamanic traditions are undergoing a renaissance.

Along with an increasing interest in academia and in the communities, there is developing an international discourse on shamanism as a contested field of study, with debate amongst scholars and the lay public as to what it is and what it is not. New Age philosophy uses the term to describe an individual's journey of personal development or self-

awareness but this is not its traditional meaning in shamanic cultures. In traditional cultures, shamans work in the other world on behalf of their community's well-being in this world. "Well-being" is used in the holistic sense of integration and balance of mind/body/spirit/emotion. "Community" also has a broad sense in Indigenous cultures, encompassing the individual, the family, the plants, animals and other entities of the place in which people live, as well as the ancestors and spirits of the subtle world.

At an international conference on shamanism held in Moscow in 1999, anthropologist Joan Townsend proposed a working definition of the term "shaman" which she based on a single *raison d'être* to which all defining characteristics should be related: shamanism interacts with the spirit world for the benefit of those in the material world:

> My working definition of a traditional shaman is a person who has direct communication with spirits, is in control of spirits and altered states of consciousness, undertakes soul (magical) flights to the spirit world, and has a this-material-world focus rather than a goal of personal enlightenment. (Townsend 1999: 32)

Research in shamanic studies is undergoing a paradigm shift in *what* is studied as well as *how* it is studied. Townsend's definition, because it does not question the actuality of the shaman's experience, represents this shift from a biomedical, rational approach to an intuitive, experiential way of knowing that I term "intuitive science". Anthropologist Jeremy Narby, in *The Cosmic Serpent* refers to this coming together of ways of knowing that have been separated in Western science. He writes, "All things considered, wisdom requires not only investigation of many things, but contemplation of the mystery."

The "direct communication" with the spirits referred to in Townsend's definition is effected through a variety of means, including language. But what is language? And can we talk about a shamanic language given the cultural and linguistic diversity of shamanic cultures? Van Deusen's comment that, "The spiritual function of music in Tuvan and Khakass shamanism has been little studied by outsiders" (1997: 24) also applies to the spiritual function of language which has received little attention in the ethnographic and historic literature.

Emerging Paradigms in Shamanic Studies

Shamanic studies continue to be directed by western scientific models. Materialist, symbolic and evolutionary models are embedded in the ethnography of shamanism which has been secularized, objectified (that is, turned into an object of study rather than a subject of study), and decontextualized (or studied apart from its cultural context).

Much of our knowledge about shamanism is material culture-derived. Museum collections are comprised mainly of objects. Curating emphasizes the physical description of shamanic artifacts—costume, paraphernalia, and musical instruments especially drums. Our analysis of such materials, however, has often been from a secular viewpoint without a broad understanding of the ritual context in which such objects were used, or the nature of the knowledge they embed. Considerable work has been carried out on the symbolism of shamanic elements, especially of the drum (as summarized in Eliade, and referred to by Li 1992, for example) but some of this work may need to be revisited. About drum motifs, Hutton writes:

> A lot of these are completely baffling to modern scholars and perhaps always were intended to be unreadable by those not trained in that shamanic tradition. Some certainly represent the geography of the spirit world and the shaman's journey through it, yet the exact meaning of the painted shapes and signs is still often elusive. (Hutton 1993: 21)

Certainly, the inherent power that shamans recognize in drums and other items, including words, is rarely written about.

Film footage and tape recordings are scarcer. While these give a greater sense of shamanic ritual as "event" and of the *praxis* of objects in use, we must consider the context in which such recordings were made and acknowledge their limitations; for example, were they "performance", that is, enacted for the camera as were Edward Curtis' photographs of Native Americans and Flaherty's classic film of Inuit, *Nanook of the North*? For some parts of shamanic ritual, filming may

not be permitted[4] so documentation is partial. Segments of events may not be readable as representative of the whole.

Folklorists over the years have written down the texts of many shamanic chants and songs. These have been analyzed in terms of content but the sensory power of the words that comes from the contextual action of speech or song is not recorded. In the transition from an oral culture to western culture, "...sound has been spatialized into writing, a visually-based textual analysis which can remove us from the sensory world of taste, smell, hearing and touch. If such textual analyses are left to stand alone for the event, they limit our understanding of cultural sentiment" (Laderman and Roseman 1996: 10). Textual representation of the shamanic experience also secularizes it as we rely on our analytical skills and our rational mind for comprehension.

The ethnographic literature on the Arctic and Subarctic regions provides a rich resource from which we continue to draw for information on "classic" shamanism. The cultural orientations of the researchers that are embedded in these interpretations of shamanism continue to influence how we observe, document, analyze and interpret shamanic phenomena today. The resources from which we draw for scholarly interpretations of shamanism are rich in some cultural contexts, especially Siberia, but limited by the ideology of contemporary ethnography.

For example, in an article initially published in the 1950s, Anisimov writes that the "intuition of primitive man inevitably had to reach beyond the limit of his experiences [in order] to substitute imagined reasons for real ones. Under the impact of the feeling of impotence in regard to nature, the imagination of primitive man inevitably inclined towards illusory generalizations, endowing an object with supernatural powers" (Anisimov 1963: 158). Taking an evolutionary perspective, he describes shamanism as a "primitive view" of the world, at a "simple level of development and consciousness". He discusses the "imaginary world of spirits" (ibid: 158) and "the interrelations of the primitive's

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[4] During a *kamlanie* by the Siberian shaman, Bair Rinchinov, the audience was asked not to film when the spirit entered his body. I attended this *kamlanie* at the *International Congress Shamanism and Other Indigenous Spiritual Beliefs and Practices*, Moscow, June 7–12, 1999. Rinchinov is a hereditary shaman from the Buryat-Aginsk region.

rational and illusory views of nature" (ibid: 160). Shamans themselves, on the other hand, describe their experiences not as hallucinatory or imaginary but as real[5].

The western scientific tradition has directed *what* we have documented about shamanism as well as *how* we have documented it. Mircea Eliade's classic work, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy,* is broad-based geographically and historically and remains authoritative but Eliade did not interview a single shaman; nor was it written from his direct experience of the activities described. There has always been controversy in ethnography about how to "get at" the insider's view without compromising the objectivity or critical, "outside" view that traditional western science argues is at the core of "good science". Methodologically, anthropology has relied on participant observation and fieldwork to "enter" another culture but even these techniques (which are being adopted by other disciplines) may not provide the perspective required in this emerging field of study. In his pioneering work in shamanic studies, Michael Harner suggests radical participation[6] as an experiential way of knowing. And shamans themselves are now acting as their own researchers.

The area of shamanism that is well-studied in anthropology is its "this-material-world focus" identified by Joan Townsend above. Current studies in shamanism in other parts of the world such as Laderman and Roseman's work in Southeast Asia provide materialist and secular interpretations of spirit work. Their volume addresses the metaphorical nature of elements of shamanic séance; the mediation, in healing cere-

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[5] For example, "I also saw a vision of a huge garden... I was seeing all of this in clear daylight. It wasn't a hallucination, nor was it coming from my imagination—these were visions": Peruvian shaman, Don Agustin Rivas Vasquez, in "Plant Diets in the Training of a Peruvian Healer" by Don Agustin Rivas Vasquez, as told to Jaya Bear. *Shaman's Drum,* No. 54. 2000: 40–47.

[6] Radical participation goes beyond participant observation. The ethnographer enters as fully as possible into the world of the shaman, seeking first-hand knowledge. Shamanism is a path of knowledge, not a faith. To acquire this knowledge, it is necessary to step through the shaman's doorway. Researchers can test for themselves the reality of spirits (Michael Harner, from presentation given at *International Congress Shamanism and Other Indigenous Spiritual Beliefs and Practices,* Moscow, June 7–12, 1999).

monies, of power relations between social groups; the shaman's séance as venue to express in socially acceptable ways strong emotions that are not acceptable in everyday existence; and the individual—community dynamic that is reinforced through enactment of shamanic ritual.

Shamanic rituals, however, are multi-level events in which all these and other aspects take place simultaneously. Language in shamanic ritual, likewise, communicates on more than one plane—physical, symbolic and subtle—and may mediate several levels of communication—between this world and the other, between the shaman and audience, between shaman and spirit, between the inner and the outer worlds of the shaman, and between the physical and the subtle realms. (Shamans also describe interactions within the spirit world.)

A paradigm shift is emerging in the academic study of shamanism which contradicts the premises on which western science is based—rationality, and reality as observable phenomena. We are undergoing a shift from analysis to experience, from materialist models of culture to existential models. These emerging models acknowledge the subtle realms as identifiable, accessible and describable. Some researchers point to even broader implications, to a shift in consciousness in the sciences and in western thought. Jeremy Narby's *The Cosmic Serpent,* for example, marshals the evidence of molecular biology to argue for an epistemic correspondence between the knowledge of Amazonian shamans and modern biologists. Cymatics, metaphysics and new work in imagining rather than theorizing language, offer new insights into the spiritual function of shamanic language and the epistemology of Indigenous Knowledge.

Studying Language

Can we even talk about "shamanic language"? Probably not if we divide the study of language, as linguistics generally does, into four parts: semantics, syntactics, pragmatics and phonetics, each of which highlights a different aspect of the way language works (Martin and Yakayama 1997: 149). What if we use the term discourse, meaning "language in use" (ibid: 160) instead? "Discourse" focuses attention on the action of language and on interaction between speaker and listener but all these categories orient us to the physicality of language. Perhaps

semiotics[7] or semiosis[8] offers possibilities for understanding language in the shamanic experience. Within the framework of an "ethnography of communication" [the idea] that "text and context are mutually constitutive in performance highlights the active, emergent quality of these events" (Laderman 1996: 3). These perspectives focus attention on the generative nature of language rather than simply on its expressive or symbolic nature.

A broad view of communication suggests language may be viewed on several levels—physical, symbolic and subtle[9]. Much has been written about language as physical, and about shamanic features including words as symbolic[10]. Little attention has been paid to shamanic language as subtle; however, the study of language, like the study of shamanism, continues to evolve. Developments in interspecies communication are leading us to consider language in a broader sense. Anthropology once defined humans through our use of language. Now, we are becoming comfortable with the idea that animals use language. Shamans and scientists refer to the songs of plants. Shamans also describe phenomena—wind, echoes and elements of landscape such as mountains or rivers—as entities with whom they communicate. Recent research suggests shamans may have special abilities that enable their communication on these levels. These possibilities suggest a metaphysics of language.

In ethnographic research, decontextualization to fixed text from the ephemeral event in which shamanic language takes place predisposes us to analysis rather than experience of shamanic language, and to a logical rather than intuitive comprehension. In contrast, "literature", as a creative field, offers possibilities for understanding shamanic language

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[7] "The analysis of the nature and relationships of signs in language" (Martin and Nakayama 1997: 345).

[8] "The process of producing meaning" (Martin and Nakayama 1997: 345) with the goal of establishing entire systems of semiosis and the ways those systems create meaning (ibid: 163).

[9] "Subtle" is used to describe the reality that is mundane or "not material" (for example, Faidysh 1999: 137).

[10] For example, "Words and sounds had a definite symbolism" (Kenin-Lopsan 1997: 132).

that linguistics may not. The volume, *Imagining Language,* as "a linguistics of the singular and the heterological[11]", assembles "the multiple ways in which language has been used or conceptualized in relation to reality". The selections include "bizarre" language practices and "deviant" literary texts. In making their selections, the editors put the emphasis "on the creative ability to imagine rather than to theorize language" (Rasula and McCaffery 1998: xii). The selections, taken from writings of the last three millennia, document many devices, imaginings, and techniques that shamans also describe in their work. Shamanic language becomes more than symbolic or expressive; it becomes generative of meaning. Kenin-Lopsan refers to the creative power of shamanic language when he says about Tuva: "It might be said that shamans created worlds through words" (1997: 11).

About shamanism, Townsend argues that we must "open up our study to approaches other than psychoanalytic, neuro-physiological, biochemical, and reductionist materialist. By definition, "those perspectives require that non-material, spiritual kinds of phenomena cannot exist" (Townsend 1999: 37). She urges that research into shamanism "should not be limited to the scientific materialist/positivist epistemology" (ibid: 35). Likewise, with language, Jolas calls for "a new art of the word...that has nothing to do with the pedantry of modern philology, or the sterile dogmas of 'estheticism.' It is related to the existential, to anthropology, to depth-psychology, to metaphysics" (Rasula and McCaffery 1998: 34). Jolas refers to something of this in the "liturgical, hymnic attitude to the word" of the anonymous poets who created their hymns in "mystic Latin." And he writes that we are beginning to sense the metaphysics of language again:

It is the unconscious vision which created language, and we stand before the task of re-discovering the knowledge of the daemonic-magical things that lie hidden in words and have been lost to modern man.

In the magical texts of the past there are to be found extraordinary sound-formations that refer to the sacred element of language. These forms of ancient wisdom were transmitted liturgically, they represented

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[11] Hetero, meaning "different" or "another".

enigmatic sigils, they had exorcistic potency... the mythological mind approached the hidden or supernatural powers .(Rasula and McCaffery 1998: 44)

"The Sounds Coming Down From Heaven I Am..."

Where does language come from?[12] In physical anthropology, language is attributed to physical evolutionary changes. Other perspectives suggest its origins are outside of the physical realm and outside of the physical body or mind of its speaker.[13]

In this Caribou Inuit shaman's song[14], inspiration is metaphysical, originating "from above." In many traditions, breath is life. This song is called forth through a deep breath which links the shaman's inner life with the outer world and a "power above":

I hear of distant villages
And their miserable catch
And draw a deep breath...
As I call forth the song
– From above –
Aya – haye
Ayia.

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[12] Narby asks a similar question about DNA and the origins of knowledge: "The origin of knowledge is a subject that anthropologists neglect—which is one of the reasons that prompted me to write this book. However, anthropologists are not alone; scientists in general seem to have a similar difficulty. On closer examination, the reason for this becomes obvious: many of science's central ideas seem to come from beyond the limits of rationalism. René Descartes dreams of an angel who explains the basic principles of materialist rationalism to him; Albert Einstein dreams in a tram, approaching another, and conceives the theory of relativity..." (1999: 158)

[13] A.E. writes, "...among the many thoughts I had at the time came the thought that speech may originally have been intuitive..." A.E. is George Russell (1867–1935), a close friend of the Irish nationalist, poet and mystic W.B. Yeats. Yeats' own interest in Celtic shamanism is reflected in his poem "The song of the Wandering Aengus", written in the 1890's. Yeats' Aengus may have been a shaman on a soul journey whose experience took place outside of the mind in non-ordinary reality.

[14] Transcribed in Rasmussen 1930.

In his discussion of Arctic shamanism, Merkur describes the connection between the physical breath and the breath soul:

> ...because physical breath is a function of the breath-soul, breath has a metaphysical dimension. "The souls can speak".[15]

Breath, then, is the language of the soul. What does this make of language? Is it an outer manifestation of an inner world? Is it a gift from the gods? It *is* a means of communication across sound worlds-human and spirit, and across dimensions—the physical and the metaphysical.

Shamans, as well as storytellers, poets, and artists, describe their work as emanating not from themselves, but as being carried out through them. Their words, they say, come from "the spirits", "the spirit world", or "the other world." They pass these words and knowledge on, acting as a conduit from one realm to another—physical/metaphysical, inner/outer. Language may "appear" in this world through séance during which shamans may suddenly be able to converse in a language they have not spoken or understood before. Tuvans describe how, in dreams, shamans may hear words in other languages they do not normally understand (Van Deusen 1997: 100). In eastern Canada, Mi'kmaq elder and Medicine Woman, Jeorgina Larocque speaks about the old language of the grandmothers and grandfathers by which she is given information in healing ceremonies; this is a language most people have forgotten, she says[16]. A Hmong woman shaman spoke about an old language a few of them still know, a language given by the spirits as a means of communication between worlds[17]. Songwit Chuamsakul[18], answered my question about how this language is learned by pointing out, "It is

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[15] Merkur (1992: 92) drawing from various ethnographic sources.

[16] Personal communication, October 26, 1999.

[17] Personal communication, December 1999.

[18] Hmong researcher/academic.

not learned. It is a gift, given by the spirits," making reference to this language as a non-rational, non-thought-based process.

Kyrgyz recorded the first line of a Tuvan shaman's auto-eulogy: "The sound coming down from the heavens I am..." (Kyrgyz 1993: 47). Here, the shaman is a medium for, or a transmitter of, sound. Further, he (or she) *is* the sound, not in a metaphorical or symbolic sense, but in an actual sense. Similarly, landscape and phenomena *are* speech which is also a connection to the divine in this world view.

"A.E." (see footnote 13 above) noted in the ancient literature, the "belief in a complete circle of correspondences between every root sound in the human voice and elements, forms, and colours... Every flower was a thought. The trees were speech. The grass was speech. The winds were speech. The waters were speech" (Rasula and McCaffery 1998: 147). "The roots of human speech are the sound correspondences of powers which in their combination and interaction make up the universe. The mind of man is made in the image of Deity, and the elements of speech are related to the powers in his mind and through it to the being of the Oversoul" (ibid: 148).

The science of cymatics, or the study of wave phenomena, provides a western scientific corroboration of shamanic language as other worldly in origin, of the shaman *as* the sound, and of sound as landscape—physical and subtle, as A.E. describes above. Cymatics was pioneered by the Swiss physician, natural scientist and artist, Dr. Hans Jenny (1904-1972). In his work on wave phenomena, Jenny experimented with animating inert substances through audible sound/vibration. Doctors have applied this work in healing; for example, the British Dr. Guy Manners uses audible sound to balance acute and chronic conditions in body tissue.

Considerable work has been done in studying the effects of shamanic music, especially of the shamanic drum. Michael and Sandra Harner, for example, report on the physiological effects of the drum in shamanic journeying:

First the practitioners call for spiritual help and then enter Nonordinary reality. This is done by going into the SSC, most typically with the aid of sonic driving in a range of about four to seven Hertz, a range that approximately corresponds to the range of theta EEG waves [e.g., see Neher (12, 13); Maxfield (14, 15), and S. Harner (16, 17)]. The sonic driving can be supplied by a live

drum beaten by an assistant, by a rattle, or can be supplied in recorded form through headphones worn by the practitioner(s). (Harner and Harner 1999: 26)

I am not aware of comparable work in the study of language; however, cymatics allows us to begin to comprehend, from the western scientific viewpoint, how through language, and in séance, shamans participate in the creation of the cosmos. Shamanic language, as a vehicle for interaction with the subtle world, is a carrier of consciousness, a bridge between the physical and subtle worlds, and a representation of what is called variously "the divine", the "spirit world", the "other world" or "spirit".

Activating the Inner Senses

Shamanic language is part of a constellation of activities/tools/techniques/vehicles via which shamans interact with the spirit world and which includes

smoke and fire
offerings of food and drink
percussion and rhythm instruments, especially the drum
movement – dance, shaking, gesture
costume
voice – speech and song

The burning of resin-rich plants as incense or smudge produces smoke that in the shamanic event is said to permeate the thin membrane between this world and the other. As it disappears into the air, smoke is said to connect this visible world with the invisible world. Smoke is also offered as a gift to the spirits who are said to like the scent, and "feed off" the smell of the burning offering. Smoke from a fire or smudge purifies and cleanses a drum, or a person in preparation for travel to the other realm.

Food and drink are offered to the spirits in shamanic ritual. Hmong shamans place rice and whiskey on their altars. Siberians offer rice[19],

[19] Rice predated the arrival of Buddhism and was the result of trade with China

vodka and fermented mare's milk. At First Nations' feasts in North America, a plate of food may be offered to the spirits. Inuit hunters return a small piece of an animal they have killed to the land as a gift to the animal's spirit.

The horse is a key symbol in Siberian shamanism. In Southeast Asia, it becomes the shaman's bench which is "ridden" by the shaman to the spirit world. The drum, and the rhythm of the drum, like the horse's hoofbeats in Siberia, is a vehicle of transport in Native North America and across the North. The Hmong, as in other areas with Buddhist influence, use a metal gong. Other ritual percussive instruments in the areas I discuss include the bell, rattles and finger cymbals. The jew's harp or jaw's harp[20], an instrument of entertainment in Western culture, is used ritually in Siberia and also by the Hmong. In Siberia and Mongolia, it is used for entertainment and also to induce trance and heal the sick, although these latter uses are not as yet well-documented. Rhythm is built up from the instruments, the shaman's voice, the steps and other body movements of the shaman, and from the various elements of his/her dress such as tassels and ties, and metal attachments that move and also make sound.

Language is spoken and sung. It may be improvised in shamanic events or recited. Shamanic songs and other texts are recorded in the literature, but analysis and interpretation has generally been by the ethnographer, with little from the emic or experiential viewpoint. As Western understanding of the myths, legends and histories of shamanic cultures derives primarily from written text, so has language been isolated from other elements of the shamanic event. While words are key, they are carriers of meaning in conjunction with the other elements of shamanic séance.

Smoke, along with movement, sound, and offerings of food and drink, activates the inner senses, as Van Deusen describes:

Tuvan and Khakass shamanism is based on the principle that the spiritual world may be contacted through the inner senses in trance. The finely tuned

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(Marilyn McCullough, personal communication, Nov 22, 2000). Siberian shamanism does integrate Buddhist elements.

[20] Of which we have evidence from 1545 though it may have been in use 1000 years ago in iron form (Gohrin, no date).

traditional Turkic *kamlanie* is designed to activate these inner senses and the ways of using them. Shamans often cover their physical eyes during *kamlanie* in order to enhance the visual images seen with the inner eye. Inner smell is aroused by the burning of artysh, or juniper, during the ceremony. The shaman's inner kinetic or touch sense is enlivened by dance movements, mostly connected with the playing of the drum. Inner taste is activated through offerings of food and vodka to the spirits. (Van Deusen 1997: 24)

We may also talk about the "inner ear", but this is not simply aural hearing. It is hearing with the body, through the body. Our inner body rhythms of the pulse and the breath are activated through the interaction of the various elements of shamanic ritual, including language. In the shamanic event, a shaman connects with the vibration of the universe, becomes one with "the sound of the heavens."

Thus, in the shamanic/Indigenous world view, this world and the spirit world are parallel worlds. Western science has separated the "sacred" from the "secular"—useful terms in ethnographic description but this separation is not consistent with the shamanic world view in which the sacred and the secular co-exist.

Language as Mediation

Describing the relationship between the two realms, and how language reflects this relationship, Silva writes about Huichol cosmology and the changing of names on the peyote journey:

Well, let's see now. I shall speak about how we do things when we go and seek the peyote, how we change the names of everything. How we call the things we see and do by another name for all those days. Until we return. Because all must be done as it must be done. As it was laid down in the beginning. How it was when the *mara'akáme* who is Tatewarí [Huichol name for the deity with whom the shaman has a special affinity, roughly translatable as Our Grandfather Fire] led all those great ones to Wirikuta. When they crossed over there, to the peyote country. Because that is a very sacred thing, it is the most sacred. It is our life, as one says. That is why nowadays one gives things other names. One changes everything. Only when they return home, then they call everything again what it is. (in Rasula and McCaffery 1998: 55)

In the Western tradition, too, language reflects the reversal of worlds and the reversal of consciousness that takes place in moving between worlds. Kerner writes about the hidden language of Frau H. Among its characteristics: "...she did not think this language with her head; and... [it]... came from the depths of the heart... She was able to speak and write this language only in a condition of half-awakedness, and when she was awake she knew nothing whatever about it". Further he writes, "Frequently in her condition of half-awakedness she said that the spirits spoke a similar language, in fact she had several times spoken with them against her will as this language threw her into a somnambulist state". Frau H. wrote herself: "Although the spirits read thoughts and have no need for language, yet this language belongs to the soul, the soul carries it into the other world, because the soul rules man and forms his body over there... This language passes over with the soul and forms a soaring body for the spirit." (Kerner in Rasula and McCaffery 1998: 41)

Swedenborg, a theologian, heretic, visionary and scientist (1688–1772) who inspired William Blake and his "Marriage of Heaven and Hell," describes characteristics of the angelic language and how humans, on one plane, communicate with angels and spirits on the other:

> When angels and spirits turn their attentions to people they know nothing but what is given in human language. This is because they so thoroughly enter into human speech that they forget their own; but as soon as their attention strays from humans they're fully absorbed into the angelic language, where they no longer understand a word of human tongues. The same thing happened to me when in my companionship with angels, when I conversed with them in their speech and knew nothing of my own; but when I passed from their fellowship I was back in the human language again... (in Rasula and McCaffery 1998: 136)

Shamanic language connects the speaker with the subtle world. As the authors of *Imagining Language* write, "language partakes of the cosmos as much as it is governed by it" (Rasula and McCaffery 1994: 327), pointing out the connective and reflective nature of shamanic knowledge.

Calling the Spirits: Words as Power

Western scientific interpretation of myths, legends, and stories told by and about shamans derives primarily from written text, emphasizing analysis (rather than experience) of the content and isolating text from other elements of culture and event. The secularization of language and of the role of the shaman and the story-teller has removed much of the power of spoken language, including eliminating the experiential and the resonant. The power of shamanic language is in the action of the words, as it remains in other traditions:

Language in Kabbalah[21] may be, for example:

> (1) a technique of mystical striving; (2) an instrument of creation that is at the same time a component of the created world; (3) a structural homology between the mundane and the divine, and the locus of an encounter between macrocosm and microcosm; and (4) a talisman, or receptacle, for collecting divine emanations... The emphasis on the written text is predominant in Kabbalah, as it is in Judaism in general; but the Abulafian school of ecstatic Kabbalah engages the acoustic dimension of language in ways that bring it into alliance with recitation techniques and sonorous iconography common to Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist mysticism. (Rasula and McCaffery 1998: 329)

Malinowski has written on the magical power of words. Basso, in his work on Apache place names, demonstrated how the name of a place can function as condensed text, evoking and recreating the experience of place. Hood describes how Mayan elders, in whom authority is vested, use oral narratives that seek to transform rather than reflect life,

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[21] The Kabbalah or Cabala is the Jewish esoteric philosophy. In the name, derived from the Hebrew word *kabel* 'to receive', is the implication that it was received in the form of special revelations. Comprised of two systems, the theoretical and the practical, practical Kabbalah is based on the belief that the mystic doctrines can be translated into action such as the performance of miracles. It is also concerned with the use of divine words and names, among other objects, to achieve particular ends. Angels may be invoked, and spirits and demons silenced through amulets and prayer. Without going into further detail, the connections between language in the kabbalah and in shamanism are explicit.

and thus embed recognition of the power of the spoken word. Mayan shamans start their ceremonies with "Heart of the Sky" and "Heart of the Earth". Through these words, they invoke the Divine, invoke the Heart of the Sky and the Heart of the Earth to work through them. The words themselves are very important—they are key words in Mayan cosmology, words of respect. Each Mayan word is like a prayer, an invocation. Further, in the Mayan language they have a resonance, not just a sacred meaning. What does the resonance effect? In Hood's view, it connects with chakra levels in the body that relate to achieving higher levels of consciousness. Mayan ceremonies incorporate a lot of repetitive invocations. Like a chant, these set up a resonance and a state of receptivity that allow one to enter into an elevated state of consciousness and access the Divine[22].

Shamanic activities are based on control of what Mader calls "power elements" in the Ecuadorian Amazon—magical darts, little arrows of light or objects, and spirit helpers. "The knowledge of songs and the possession of magical stones (*nantar*) are further assets of shamanic power", he writes (in Rasula and McCaffery 1998: 370). All these enable a shaman to exercise influence upon other persons' bodies, thoughts and emotions" (ibid: 371). Amongst Inuit, Merkur notes that, "A secret language is employed whenever they converse with spirits. Magic words or spells and magic songs may be used to control both malicious and helping spirits"[23]. In all of these contexts, words are power, not in a symbolic but in an actual sense:

> The Eskimo poet must—as far as I have been able to understand—in his spells of emotion, draw inspiration from the old spirit songs; which were the first songs mankind ever had; he must cry aloud to the empty air, shout incomprehensible, often meaningless words at the governing powers, yet withal words which are an attempt at a form of expression unlike that of everyday speech. Consequently, no one can become a poet who has not complete faith in the power of words. When I asked Ivaluardjuk about the power of words, he would smile shyly and answer that it was something no one could explain; for

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[22] Robin Hood, personal communication, November 3, 1999.

[23] Merkur (1992: 5) drawing from various ethnographic sources.

the rest, he would refer me to the old magic songs I had already learned, and which made all difficult things easy. (Rasmussen 1929: 234)

This strategic use of words as power effects shamanic healing.

Tanaka, in her work on Ainu shamans in Japan, provides insight into the connective or bridging role of words, as well as their activating, dynamic nature. She describes how "prayers are not only verbal expressions but are living actions; they are incantations. Prayers[24] affirm a bond between you and the addressee, be it a deceased relative, a spirit being" (Tanaka 1999: 302). Kira Van Deusen, who is herself a musician and story-teller, discusses this transportive role of sound in Tuva:

Shamanic drumming and chanting play central roles in helping the shaman and other participants in *kamlanie* to open their spiritual ears and eyes and to journey into the inner world. Music transports the shaman on the journey into the spirit world, and musical sounds also call the helping spirits, who especially enjoy hearing their names called...

Süzükei told me that Tuvan shamans use sound as a bridge or tunnel connecting the inner and outer worlds: "There is a bridge in these sound waves so you can go from one world to another. In the sound world, a tunnel opens through which we can pass—or the shaman's spirits come to us. When you stop playing the drum or khomus, the bridge disappears." (Van Deusen 1997: 24)

The transportive and transforming power of words is effected through the speaker, the shaman who receives the gift of language from the spirit world. In this work, word, action [speaking the word] and intent [respect] are inseparable. Meaning is conveyed through the word itself,

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[24] Harner and Harner (1999: 20–21) discuss the limited role of prayer: "Ordinary people and priests in a great range of cultures commonly appeal to these spirits by means of prayer. Although supplication through prayer can often facilitate spiritual help from the other reality, and is indeed part of shamanic practice, prayer is not usually recognized in shamanism as being as effective as journeying into non-ordinary reality to work in cooperation with the compassionate spirits firsthand, or as effective as bringing the spirit to the Middle World to embody it there". Further, "Through this intimate alliance, shamanic practitioners in indigenous cultures are typically expected by their peoples to produce healing results beyond those considered possible by prayer alone".

through the act of speaking the word and the act of carrying out shamanic work, and through the intent of the healer/shaman. Likewise, meaning is contained in the *praxis* of words and music, in the voicing itself which produces resonance. "Without the musical instrument of the drum, without the music composed by the shaman himself, and without his performance of it, [these] archaic determinants lose their emotional force" (Kenin-Lopsan 1997: 140).

Referring to speech as act, Hoppál describes how Kenin-Lopsan collected Tuvan shamans' folklore and writes about one of the two genres Kenin-Lopsan recorded:

> The first is the *algysh,* a song, or prayer, invocation, blessing, request, appeal to the spirits – I use all these European concepts only tentatively since none of them corresponds precisely to the type of text sung and recited by the Tuva shamans. It is, however, certain that the *algysh* is a kind of sacral communication, a "speech act" and specifically an illocutionary performative act. The characteristic of such an act is that it is not a declaration or communication of something but an action performed through speech. Research has not paid adequate attention to this modality aspect of the shamanic song (prayer, blessing, spell) although attempts have recently been made in this direction. (Preface by Hoppál in Kenin-Lopsan 1997a: xiv-xv)

Van Deusen compares the art of storyteller to that of shaman (both having the ability to heal through the spoken word), and addresses the inherent power of words and the care that must be taken to acknowledge this power:

> While there is no ownership or restriction on the retelling of Udegei magic tales by outsiders, as there is among many North American peoples, it is considered spiritually dangerous to speak of spirits or the inner lives of shamans directly. So perhaps the stories are a way to speak of that reality in an oblique way, much as sacred animals like the tiger and bear are called by nick-names. Especially if the teller were a shaman, subtle ways of "speaking around" the subject would protect the speaker. (Van Deusen 1999: 99)

Words convey meaning and have power in and of themselves. The act of speech is also about power and about the activation of power during the shamanic event. Through the act of speech, resonance connects the participants and the shaman with one another, with the place that

surrounds them, and with the subtle world of the ancestors and the spirits. Resonance connects language, action and intent, and mediates between the physical world in which the act takes place and the subtle world to which the shaman travels. In her study of Malay shamanic performances, Laderman describes how the shaman's rationality and emotions are awakened or mobilized through the chanting of invocations and singing of songs. The words are not sacred, she points out, but they do carry power, "a power that proceeds from his breath, the outward manifestation of his bomoh's Wind, without which no amount of study could prepare him for his profession" (Laderman 1996: 120). The Malay shaman must open the shaman's gates and move his "Winds" through the quality of the poetic language of his song. His words strengthen and guard his "gates" (ibid: 121).

Words, in the traditions I have discussed here, strengthen and protect the shaman. They send greetings and reverence to the other world. They invite the powers of sacred ritual objects and of the shaman's helping spirits, guardians and ancestors. And they open the way for the shaman's powers or gifts to be used for healing or reclamation.

Shamanic Language

If we can talk about "shamanic language", what can be said about it?

1. Shamanic language is part of a constellation of techniques/bridges/means of communication with the spirit or subtle world. Western science conceptualizes language primarily as a physical act. Shamanic language operates metaphysically also.

2. The language of shamans is multisensory; it is intuitive and experiential as well as intellectual and ideological.

3. Shamanic language is active and emergent. It *does something* and thus it does more than reflect or symbolize experience; it generates and transforms experience.

4. Western epistemology conceptualizes the past, present and future as linear[25]. The language of shamans transcends time as linear, connecting "this world", physical time with a realm that exists "outside of time".

5. Shamanic language is incantatory. It is experiential and emic, deriving from the experience of the moment and from the experience of the speaker although it may be both repeated by rote and/or improvised.

7. Shamanic language is sonorous (resonant, full, deep or rich in sound). Meaning is generated from the speaking of the words. Words in the shamanic experience do not simply represent power, they are power. Shamanic language is not simply a representation of phenomena, it is phenomenon.

8. Shamanic language is about the process of knowledge as well as about its content. Language is a dynamic link with the subtle world that shamans activate through seance.

Shamanic language merges the intuitive and rational into intuitive science. Western science is beginning to acknowledge the subtle realms or planes of consciousness as existing and describable. It is interesting that in writing down shamanic texts, recorders have often selected a poetry format[26]. Poetry represents in the literate mind, the intuitive and creative; whereas prose generally represents the world of ideas—the rational and ideological.

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[25] Anthropologist Michael Harner describes it this way: A core feature of shamanism is that the Universe is divisible into three worlds: the Upper, Middle and Lower. The Middle World, in which we live, has both its OR [ordinary reality] and NOR [non-ordinary reality] (or non-spiritual and spiritual) aspects, and belongs only to this immediate moment in time. The Upper and Lower Worlds, in contrast, are purely spiritual and are found only in nonordinary reality, where they exist "outside of time".

[26] For example, Kenin-Lopsan 1997a, who relayed this information about materials he collected to Hoppál in conversation: "The shamanic myths are our philosophy. The shamanic hymns (*algyshtar*) are our poetry" (Kenin-Lopsan 1997a: xv).

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Lao BeiZhi Never Had a *Gaigua*

EMMA ZEVIK BOSTON, MASS.

The world outside China now knows the details of the recent modern Chinese history through the work of gifted writers, artists and musicians as well as activists. Their continuing work provides compelling and vital testimony. Yet, these accounts—in novels, memoirs, films—remain the in the voice of their authors—whose lives are full of possibility even against apparently difficult and insurmountable obstacles. These authors had possibilities to get to the West, for education and with assistance of other resources—again, against obstacles and with tremendous personal risk. I repeat *they had possibilities*—not so the peasants, particularly minority group peasants.

The world knows almost nothing about the experiences of the peasants who were not "sent out to the countryside"—rather, they were born *into* the countryside and with very few exceptions remain there, illiterate and poor. In particular, the *duangong*s who are community scholars, keepers of cultural history, epics, traditions—what experiences did they face and what reflections do they now consider? There are few accounts. Funded with a fieldwork grant from the Asian Cultural Council, I collected the life stories of the last living shamans, community scholars though illiterate, of the minority peasants, the Qiangzu.

PRELUDE

"My father's [shaman] tools disappeared during Cultural Revolution. It's a pity. Disappeared. Tools disappeared. After Liberation, my family was identified as a rich peasant. The rich peasant is not as good as the

poor peasant. This is one of the bad identifications. So, how could I carry on my duties at that moment?"[1]

Lao BeiZhi (Fig. 2), is now about 67 years old. He is the *duangong* (shaman) of Village Zai. He began to learn *duangong* songs, skills and rituals when he was ten years old. His teacher was his father who was, at that time, one of several *duangong*s in the village. So he learned *duangong* from 1944 until his father's death in 1952. In 1950, Liberation came to Village Zai, and Lao BeiZhi went to a distant area as a soldier of the guerrillas to help support the frontier.[2]

According to tradition, when an apprentice *duangong* has completed his study, the teacher will arrange for a *"gaigua"* coronation ceremony where the apprentice will receive his monkeyskin headdress, protector animals guides, and the tools of the *duangong*, including the *"yang pi go"* sheepskin drum and other implements for rituals. For the *"gaigua,"* the teacher invites 20 other *duangong*s who gather on the mountain, along with the entire village, to give witness and approval for the new *duangong*'s graduation and coronation.

"Generally, the songs of duangong *is about 72 in whole. But for me, I have about 60. I still don't know the other songs, because my father died so early. After Liberation, the* duangong *custom is not thriving*

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[1] This fieldwork was made possible with a grant from the Asian Cultural Council. I wish to thank Sichuan Conservatory and its Foreign Affairs Office, Prof. Li Zhongyong (President Emeritus), Sichuan Provincial Foreign Affairs Department, and the Wenchuan Foreign Affairs Office. This work was carried out from October 1995 to September 1997 as Visiting Professor, Composition and Musicology at Sichuan Conservatory of Music in Chengdu under the Visiting Scholar China program of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia. Grateful appreciation to my students and colleagues at the Conservatory who provided a first look at the Qiang villages of KaLongGo for National Day, October 1, 1995. Special thanks to Mr. Zou Xiangping for providing introductions and encouragement. With this small report from the field, I offer a modest and admittedly preliminary first look at Qiang culture. I trust that readers will not be too disappointed with its limitations and I look forward to offering future articles with more detailed information.

[2] It is my privilege to know Mr. Lao BeiZhi as both a colleague and teacher. I look forward to continued learning with enthusiasm and gratitude. Deepest thanks to Mr. Mao Yao, research assistant for the fieldwork; Ms. LiYuan Tian and Ms. Xiao Li, research assistants; and to Mr. Zhang Wei, Mr. Chen Zhong, Mr. Yu Yao Ming, and Mr. Tan Qinguan.

any longer. So I couldn't get the other songs. You know, like when you start in the school, when you learn something in the age of a child, it's very easy for you to memorize them and it's not easy for you to forget them."

"After Liberation, the coronation custom was discarded. After Liberation, the duangong *system was not thriving. Nowadays, some department of the government has the intention to revive the customs, but one problem is the economy to organize it. Also, the young people of nowadays are not interested in this custom."*

Lao BeiZhi never had a *"gaigua"* coronation ceremony. Although he studied with his father, a highly-respected *duangong*, for seven years and completed the training, his father died unexpectedly in 1952, just around the same time as Liberation. At the time when he would have had his coronation, Lao BeiZhi himself was a soldier fighting with the troops in the countryside. And after that, when he returned home, the new government abolished the *duangong* system as it "liberated" the countryside peasants and began the social developments that have been part of the modernization plans, including health and education reforms as well as other improvements. So, Lao BeiZhi never had a *gaigua.*

About 15 years ago, Village Zai Village was declared to be "open" and there was a loosening of restrictions for minorities and their customs. People wanted a *duangong*. A family came to him to perform a blessing ritual for a new house recently built. But Lao BeiZhi balked. He never had a coronation. *"But how could I? How could I, without* gaigua*? I am good at* duangong *songs, I'm very good at it. But I'm not crowned."*

It was quite a dilemma. So Lao BeiZhi went to tell his uncle about the situation. His uncle's response was dismay at first, "Oh no, there isn't any *duangong..."* And then, his uncle had a solution. "So you go, you go to do the ritual. This is a permission, this is a permission."

When asked why his uncle had the right to give such a permission, Lao BeiZhi replied, *"He was crowned, he is a* duangong*. He was a crowned* duangong*, but an old* duangong*. He could be a teacher, he could give permission, he was crowned. So my uncle held a special ceremony, to place the headdress of* duangong *on me. He placed many incense sticks on the roof of the house and he told the people: 'Now the society is like this. This man had no chance to be crowned, now I*

declare him to be the duangong. *He is capable enough in all the* duangong *skills. He now becomes the* duangong.'"

"This is a small ceremony. Usually, to hold a ceremony of coronation is a very serious thing. Many duangong*s must be invited to the place. But in my ceremony of declaration to be* duangong, *my uncle didn't invite any other* duangong*s to come take part in it."*

Why not?

"Because there wasn't any other duangong *alive. He is the only* duangong *alive. Just him."*

So, Lao BeiZhi is declared the *duangong* of Village Zai. This was *not* a *gaigua*; it was a declaration. He completed all the training, but missed having the all-important *gaigua* ceremony to crown him. Eventually, more than 30 years later, when social restrictions are loosened and the ceremony could be held, there is only one *duangong* alive, a frail and elderly man. In a simple ceremony of declaration, Lao BeiZhi receives the permission of the last fully crowned *duangong* of his village. At the age of 54, he received the monkeyskin hat and takes his place as the *duangong* of Village Zai, a position long ago abandoned due to the political and economic turbulence of Liberation and the following movements, including the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

As *duangong*, he is the scholar, the historian, and the keeper of the culture, the central axis around whom the entire village revolves. The monkeyskin hat and the *yang pi gu* sheepskin drum are his tools for carrying out rituals and ceremonies; more importantly, they are also vital signs, tangible and visible, by which the villagers recognize his authority, competence and respected position. Just as these tools are revered, the *duangong* himself is the most important sign for the community-at-large. He is the symbol of their heritage and culture, history, past and present. This *duangong* has become a living museum. The question, then, we are exploring here is what effects can be seen to a village and its culture, its heritage, when its most important symbol, the shaman, is surrounded by doubts concerning his education, his authority, his competence.

Lao BeiZhi never had a *gaigua* and everyone in the village knows it. The contradictions in this village are a complex web. Its members, young and old, struggle in their daily lives as peasants working their

fields, attaining some small measure of affluence, modernizing their homes as well as their personal attire. Proudly, they point to a visitor, "There, you must go to see the *duangong*." Yet, beneath the surface, most everyone claims he's not qualified. No one can point out any specific deficiencies. But everyone, especially Lao BeiZhi himself, knows that he never had the initiation ceremony.

Mr. Lao explains his situation quite clearly, *"Oh, just this is the same as the examination system in the ancient system of China. You know, if a student is qualified to pass, to be a scholar, he must take the examination. But if the examination system is discarded, he couldn't be a scholar even though he's qualified. I had finished all the courses at that moment, I just didn't have the ceremony of coronation. Of course, this is the same for qualified students who couldn't pass the examination to be a scholar. This is the same."*

Lao BeiZhi's uncle, the old but fully-crowned *duangong*, in a moment's insight ten years ago leapt to a very creative solution in this declaration ceremony for his 50-year-old nephew. His assessment that society had changed—and that Mr. Lao had, through no fault of his own, had no chance for a *gaigua*—was quite accurate. His response was practical and humane. It was also highly innovative.

As most creative solutions often are, his declaration ceremony has proved also to be controversial for the members of this village. There is no doubt that the villagers, including Lao BeiZhi himself, have an improved economic life, but at the same time, the rich cultural life has declined as can be seen in the modifications in architecture, the language, and the belief system. The losses in this endangered culture are, finally, eloquently displayed in the music and ritual of the *duangong*.

The village, to the outsider's eye, is in the midst of a cultural identity crisis. The grieving over such changes lay below the surface of daily life—unarticulated, unacknowledged. Perhaps the criticisms and doubts villagers direct towards their *duangong* help deflect deeper feelings about themselves as well as the about changes in their lives. The villagers, unable to express the contradictions of their improved economic life with the immense cultural change, can only point to their *duangong* and claim he's not qualified.

Lao BeiZhi never had a *gaigua*.

Overview

The Qiang people are one of the 56 nationality groups living in China today. They inhabit the mountainous regions in the northwestern part of Sichuan Province. Qiang is a name given by ancient Hans to the nomadic people in western China. In their own language, they call themselves "Erma" people, meaning "ourself." The Qiang are recognized as "first ancestor" culture due to their ancient roots; evidence on bones and tortoise shells shows that the Qiang were living in communities in northwestern China during the Shang Dynasty, c. 16th–11th centuries B.C. (Zhang and Zeng 1993). Some Qiangs were assimilated by the Tibetans and others by the Hans, leaving a small number unassimilated. This group gradually moved to the upper reaches of the Minjiang River and eventually became today's Qiang nationality, with a total population of just under 200,000 (1990 census).

The Qiang people hold a belief system based on animism. At the center of Qiang culture stands the shaman, called *Bi* in Qiang language or *duangong* in Chinese. The *Bi* is the keeper of the culture, the scholar of the community. Among his many responsibilities, the *Bi* coordinates the relationships between human beings, spirits and deities for the welfare of all the villagers.

Today, China is modernizing, a result of economic development, with enormous accompanying social changes. These changes are influencing the ancient belief system and traditional customs of the Qiang culture. Although the Qiang people have their own language, most speak Mandarin Chinese, and some few are even learning English in the hopes of obtaining better jobs outside of the village. Therefore, the Qiang language itself could be considered to be an endangered species. In the same way, the *Bi's* skills, knowledge and wisdom, traditionally transmitted orally from generation to generation, are also endangered.

Village Zai has had profound changes on its development. It is an ideal place from which to begin an exploration to observe the changes that Qiang society is experiencing as villagers seek to modernize. In Village Zai, we can see the effects of modernization on the culture in the architecture, the language, the belief system, and, ultimately, the music and dance of the community.

The Qiang language has no written form, but several years ago Chinese linguists developed a script for it and a pilot program was launched in four village schools to teach this standardized Qiang language. The Qiang people live in villages situated in difficult topography. It is a harsh geography, steep mountains with crisscrossing turbulent rivers, which defies homogeneity or unity among the Qiang. Historically dominated by both the Tibetans and the Han Chinese, the Qiang have never been a unified political entity. This is due, in part, to the difficult geographical conditions where they live. Although the recent "opening" policies of China have certainly allowed economic improvements to trickle down to villagers, day-to-day life in the countryside is harsh and difficult. It is quite often the case that residents from villages 10 kilometers apart have trouble understanding each other, if they speak in Qiang language. Often, residents from neighboring villages resort to Mandarin in order to communicate. This intra-diversity among the Qiang can also be seen in their customs, music and dance, and religious practices as well. At the same time, beyond village life, there is a growing urban class, numbering about 600, of professional, educated Qiang. The shamans remain in the villages, many of them bi-lingual, and at the same time, illiterate in Mandarin Chinese. Having memorized the Qiang epics as part of their training, they are the keepers of Qiang history and culture. They have nearly no contact with each other, outside of their village clusters.

Duangong Tools and Implements

The tools and implements of the *duangong* are sacred, handed down from *duangong* to student after the teacher dies. Generally, it is believed that the tools hold supernatural powers, which increase with age. The Qiang have no holy statues for their numerous gods, even at shrines; deities' positions are vacant, represented at most by white stones or incense sticks. The following list will appear comprehensive and complete. It is important to note that no one *duangong* possesses an entire kit of tools. The "toolkit" has been depleted or destroyed, lost or disappeared. Although no one has a complete toolkit, spread out among the shamans with whom I worked, all of the following items are still intact in variable conditions.

White Stone. The quartz stone is believed to provide protection. These are often collected and placed on shelves above doors and windows on homes. There are many legends about the origin of the white stone. To the outsider's eye, the white stone is in remarkable, set against the landscape of mud-blown mountainsides. Although neither Graham (1958) nor Wang Kang et al. (1992) do not include the white stone as a *duangong* tool (it is not special to the *duangong*, all Qiang people collect and worship the white stones), I list it here because I consider it to be one of the most important emblems in Qiang religious practice. According to Graham (1958: 49), "Generally the sacred white stones are not believed to be deities. There are, however, some white stones and other stones not white that are worshipped as living gods."

Language. As discussed earlier in this essay and for the same reasons as those outlined for the white stone, I include language in the *duangong's* toolbag. Just as the hat and drum are worn and played, the texts or the epics and chants are draped around the *duangong*.

Monkey Skull. (Also called the) *Aba Mullah* (Fig. 4) could be considered the most sacred item for the *duangong*. This is the only holy object worshipped and enshrined, often held in a special drawer. Graham (1958: 51) considers the *Aba Mullah* to be the *duangong's* patron deity.

Hat. For some Qiang, this is stitched together from a golden-haired monkey skin. In some cases, the eyes and ears and tail are left on. The hat is usually decorated with cowry shells and small round plaques, made of silver or brass or copper. For other Qiang *duangong*s, the hat is made out of leather, usually five rectangular boards stitched together, sometimes with painted images on each. For all, the hat is considered holy and efficacious.

Drum. Sometimes, the drum is a single-sided sheepskin drum constructed on a wooden frame. Usually, a pair of copper bells is hung inside the drum on a wooden crossbar. The skin is often heated in front of a fire, to tighten the head, useful in producing a pleasing timbre when played with the drumstick often covered with monkeyskin. In other areas, the drum is quite different: a small double-sided handheld drum on a stick, with small balls attached on a leather thong. The stick is held in the hand and twisted or rolled back and forth and the balls,

like a child's toy, bounced around hitting the skins and producing a relatively high, tinny timbre.

Holy Stick (Figs. 5 and 6) Made out of wood, this looks like a walking stick and has three parts: the handle, the middle wooden pole, and the iron tip. The handle often has a head carved into it, sometimes two faces and sometimes just one face. The head is also said to represent the King of Demons, useful for rituals the *duangong*s carries to drive out the devils from a sick person. The staff is rugged and knotted, sometimes appears as a spiral or coil. Graham (1958: 57) suggests the cane represents a snake, which is believed to frighten the demons. He also makes a connection between the holy stick and the sacred cane of the Taoists and suggests that the Qiang borrowed it, making some changes to it.

Small Gong. With a leather handle, this has a tapper inside. Brass or copper, the gong is also used to drive away the demons.

Dagger. Used to kill the sacrificial goat or sheep or chicken. Also used to make small flags and strawman used in ceremonies.

Magic Seal. Usually made from iron or bronze or brass with Chinese characters, this is used to print charms on paper. Graham (1958: 57) states that these look exactly like the seals used by Chinese Buddhists and Taoist priests.

Spell Boards. Wooden printing boards with Chinese characters used to print charms on paper. Often, the *duangong* has two, one long and narrow, the other wide and short. Spells printed with the former board are used to treat the sick; they are burnt in open places or pasted up on walls or burnt then eaten by the patient. Charms produced by the latter board are used for the villagers' animals, pasted up on the pigsty or sheephold to provide protection.

Sacred Bundle. Some *duangong*s have this; it includes horns of wild animals such as mountain goats, sea shells, bones of birds, shoulder blades, claws of hawks and eagles. Small brass horse bells, Chinese coinlike charms, tusks of musk deer, wild boars, bear, leopards, tigers. Other *duangong*s wear a holy necklace—heavy and long, with many of these objects strung on leather.

Horn. Probably from an antelope, this is used to exorcise the demons. Both Graham (1958) and Wang Kang et al. (1992) concur that this is used specifically to relieve pain in a patient with a water ritual. Holding

the horn in a digging posture, perhaps even sticking the point into the ground, the *duangong* chants, "get out and go home" and then pours some water into the ground, where the spirit was disturbed. The patient is then healed.

Divination Book. This is a reference book used to calculate the best dates for life events including marriage, arrange funerals, and predict good or bad luck in making big money. The book contains folding pages of colorful images of people, constellations, the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac. When consulted, the *duangong* uses the pictures selected and gives interpretation.

Postlude

Since the Qiang people are considered to be "first ancestors" of China, their belief system and traditions pre-date Taoism and certainly Chinese Buddhism; although my work focused on documenting the here-and-now, it is no exaggeration to state that Qiang culture could be considered the "first" culture of China. Certainly, Qiang culture of today contains complex influences, including Tibetan, Han Chinese, Buddhist, Taoist and even Christianity. It would be impossible to sort out these tangled strands to uncover the original religious practices; yet, in examining the stories, myths and legends, we can perhaps find a glimpse of some deeper understanding of the human condition as experienced by the Qiang.

The focus of my work in the field was the traditions of the Qiang shamans. The most interesting aspect of working with the Qiang, for me, was the incredibly rich and diverse range of cultural practices among neighboring villages and sometimes, even within village clusters. At the same time, this was also the most challenging aspect of the fieldwork. It is almost impossible to tease out general similarities across Qiang culture. This is quite different from other ethnic groups such as Mongolians, Tibetans and many others.

As I explained above, two villages no more than 10 kilometres apart can have languages that are quite different from each other—not merely slight dialect differences, but completely different words and phrases. This of course has a great impact on the songs and it extends to customs and practices beyond language and song. For example, one shaman

declined to let me wear his monkeyskin hat, explaining to me that it was very holy; however, a shaman from a neighboring village invited me to wear his monkeyskin hat because I would gain protection and possibly wisdom. Here's a second example: One shaman used a drum "team" of young men for funerals in which the team used "female" drums for a woman's funeral and "male" drums for a man's funeral. Since I was female, it was taboo for me to touch the male drums—which makes very good sense. No other shaman with whom I worked used a drum team; moreover, no other shaman with whom I worked described anything similar to these gendered drums.

As I said, the Qiang appear to have a wide range of local variation as seen in the language, beliefs, and ritual practices. This may be due to, or be caused by, in part, the rigorous terrain and difficult geographical conditions where the Qiang live. The Qiang live interspersed with Tibetan and Hui (Moslem) people as well as Han Chinese. Some might view this rich variety of customs as an absence or lack of cohesiveness. In the same way, and perhaps for the same reasons, the Qiang would appear to lack a political unity.

It is my best guess that there are perhaps no more than 20 living shamans today. Those from whom I learned range in age from 62 to 82. This generation of shamans, of a virtually unknown and widely scattered minority group, hold particularly poignant knowledge, having been born anywhere from 1917 to 1927. Each one has personally experienced the multiple turbulances of Liberation in 1949 and the many movements since that time.

Although I began my work intent on collecting music, I quickly became caught up in the life stories of these *duangong*s and their accounts of interrupted initiations. Let me repeat: *interrupted initiations*. This is the topic that repeatedly presented itself to me as I listened to all the details of each particular story and sifted through the apparently divergent complexities of rituals and ceremonies that, at first, seemed so disjointed. So, although they remain nameless in this brief field report, I look forward to the opportunity to introduce each one by name and, in a series of forthcoming articles as my work continues, I hope to offer a deeper examination of their lives. These shamans hold first-hand knowledge of suffering and healing—as individuals, as healers, and as community intellectuals.

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Fig. 1. Qiang Village. Photo: 1996, Emma Zevik.

Fig. 2. Lao BeiZhi. Photo: 1995, Emma Zevik.

Fig. 3. Two *Duangong*s. Photo: 1996, Emma Zevik.

Fig. 4. Aba Mullah. Photo: 1997, Yu Yao Ming.

Fig. 5. Holy Stick. Photo: 1996, Mao Yao.

Fig. 6. Holy Stick. Photo: 1997, Emma Zevik.

Some Recent Chinese Works on Shamanism

GÁBOR KÓSA BUDAPEST

The last decade of the previous millennium witnessed a major revival in the study of Chinese religions. Besides the traditional research areas (Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Chinese folk religion, Christianity, Islam and Manichaeism), more and more research has focused on the shamanic cultures of Chinese minorities.

Unfortunately, researchers of shamanism of other cultures may not be aware of these materials as most have been published in Chinese. Thus, in the following brief review I will summarize some of the books that have been received by *Shaman.*

EVENKI AND OROQEN STUDIES

Wure'ertu's book (1993) contains succinct essays by a great number of researchers and is a general introduction to various aspects of Evenki culture for non-specialists. It discusses the history (1–24), social life (25–50), economy (51–83), natural background (84–114), customs (115–40), folk art (141–87), amusements (188–99) and historical sites (196–207) of the Evenki. In the last chapter a brief overview of the religious landscape includes a discussion of shamanism (208–17). This introduces fundamental concepts and describes the legends, regard for spirits, clothes, rituals, function and culture of Evenki shamans.

Based on their field research, Guan Xiaoyun and Wang Honggang (1998) have written an extensive study of Oroqen shamanism. After a brief introduction, they summarize previous field research (18–63) and then contrast their experience in 1990–95 with the earlier data. In the following chapter (118–48) the authors describe their fieldwork in detail, while the last chapter presents edited versions of the Oroqen myths and

tales collected during their fieldwork. At the end of the book there is a valuable collection of photographs. This book, which applies the western methodology of cultural anthropology, appears to be an important contribution to Oroqen studies.

Sun Yunlai's book (1990) is of interest even for those who do not read Chinese as it deals with the visual arts of the various minorities living in the Heilongjiang area. Although the visual arts of nine minorities altogether are discussed, the real core of the book lies in the two chapters discussing Evenki (1–115) and Nanai arts (128–249). The bulk of these two chapters analyses the pictorial representations of religious art (22–115 and 171–249), though the iconography of everyday usage is also referred to.

Naxi Studies

Bai Gengsheng's interesting book (1999) takes a thematic approach to the Naxi mythological complex. After a concise summary of Naxi history and mythology, he analyses the system of spirits (36–112) and then proceeds to describe Naxi myths on the basis of their content: in the first part the natural myths, with cosmological and etiological subdivisions (113–39), while in the second part myths related to social life are discussed (140–210). The fourth and fifth chapters discuss the temporal (211–39) and spatial (240–73) dimensions of Naxi myths. After some typological (274–315) and comparative (316–61) analyses, in chapter 8 the author summarizes the relationship of Naxi myths to religions (Dongba, Bon, Buddhism and Taoism). The basically shamanic Dongba religion can boast of a great many manuscripts which were collected by J. F. Rock in the 1930s and 1940s. Bai Gengsheng describes the intricate system of Naxi shamanic rituals and its mythological background. As Naxi religion has preserved many elements of "pure" Bon religion, this part of the book is of use to researchers of Tibetan shamanism as well.

Xibo Studies

In the West, Xibo (Sibe) studies have been flourishing for a decade (T. A. Pang, Giovanni Stary, Qi Cheshan). In China these studies were

already in their heyday in the early 1990s. Two important scholarly works are to be mentioned here. The first is a collection of essays (Ke, Fu and Qi 1990) for specialists that approaches Xibo culture from various (historical, linguistic and literary) perspectives. Three of them explore the Xibo shamanic heritage: Zhang Lu analyses shaman songs and dances (233–41), while He Ling offers two essays, one on shaman songs and the other on the relationship of Xibo shaman songs to the Manchu "Nisan shaman". The second book (He and Tong 1993) on Xibo culture was written by two major representatives of Xibo research. This important work is an attempt to reconstruct the history of the Xibo. As most of the evidence derives from the Qing dynasty, the pre-Qing era is summarized only briefly in the second chapter (51–107), while three chapters are devoted to their history during the Qing (108–311). As the authors focus on the historical account and other aspects are discussed only briefly, presentation of the topic of shamanism is rather general (456–63).

Heilongjiang Studies

Liu Housheng gathered important essays (Liu 2000 et al.) presented at a conference on the historical analysis of the Heilongjiang area. Basically, this collection divides into four parts: general historical questions, nationalities, territories, and information/bibliography. Two essays explore the problem of shamanism directly. Liu Housheng (428–38) summarizes the most important works on shamanism by European, American and Asian scholars. Fu Yuguang's essay (439–53) investigates the historical sources to demonstrate how shamanism has preserved the knowledge of what we today call astronomy, geography and pharmacy.

Inner Asian Studies

Zhang Zhiyao is the editor-in-chief of a collection of surveys (both original and translated) on various aspects of the interaction between the Silk Road and Central Asian civilizations (Zhang 1994). The book consists of three parts: a historical overview of the Silk Road (1–89), a historical analysis of the nomadic cultures of Inner Asia (90–309) and, finally, a description of the economic and cultural relationship between

the two. Four essays treat shamanic subjects. Walther Heissig's article on Mongolian shamanism (238–52) and I.A. Lopatin's essay on Gold (Nanai) shamanism are translations. Lang Ying (265–77) discusses the shamanic practice of northwestern Turkic people, and Hadesi (278–87) surveys the tradition of the spirit worship of the Khazaks.

Manchu Studies

Manchu materials have always been an integral part of shamanic studies. Liu Housheng (1990) edited three manuals used at Manchu court rituals. In his introductory essay (2–40), Liu discusses the relevance of the three texts and the relationships between them. Other new Manchu material has been edited by Song Heping and Wang Songlin (1999). Fu Yingren was the narrator of the legend on the origin of the Manchu people.

The "Nisan shaman" has already been the subject of several scholarly investigations. In a new book, Song Heping (1998) analyses it from various perspectives (e.g. the differences and similarities between editions, its literary value, and its indebtedness to Manchu folk beliefs, etc.). Chapter 6 discusses the complex relationship of the Nisan shaman with Manchu shamanic culture (162–199).

General Works

In her new book Meng Huiying (2000) investigates the evolutionary patterns and the fundamental system of northern Chinese shamanism. The author identifies four major conceptual categories in shamanism: the shamanic belief tradition, the shaman's ecstasy, the believers' behaviour, and the social groups that believe in shamanism. She applies archeological, ethnological and economic approaches to trace the origin of northern shamanism. One of the most distinctive features of shamanism, the author observes, is that the religious system and social organization of shamanism overlap; thus, any change in the social system will influence the religious sphere. Applying a carefully structured framework, Meng Huiying offers new interpretations and insights on the issues of the soul, idols of spirits, the three cosmic zones, ritual objects, taboos, and the techniques of sorcery. This study, which in

methodology, material and layout attains Western standards, is an important contribution to the general study of shamanism. The author creatively synthesises theory and practice, general description and specific analysis.

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Book Reviews

MERETE DEMANT JACOBSEN. *Shamanism. Traditional and Contemporary Approaches to the Mastery of Spirits and Healing*. Berghahn Books, New York/Oxford 1999. XIV + 274 p. 10 illustrations. ISBN 1-57181-994-0 (hardback); 1-57181-195-8 (paperback).

This is a most necessary book in the present discourse on shamanism, for it is one in which a specialist in traditional or classical shamanism who is also familiar with New Age shamanism compares the two complexes. On the one hand Jacobsen is a Danish anthropologist who has thoroughly studied the pristine shamanism of the Inuit of Greenland (who she still refers to as "Eskimo"), and on the other she is the first to have done anthropological fieldwork among participants of courses on New Age shamanism.

Many of the early reports of Danish missionaries, secular explorers and anthropologists on Greenlanders and their religion have been available only in Danish and for the first time are presented here to international research in English. Included, for example, are the accounts of the two sons of the first missionary to Greenland, Hans Egede (1686–1758), Poul (1708–89) and Niels Egede (1710–82), and of Heinrich Rink and Henrik Helms from the 60s and 70s of the nineteenth century. The members of the Egede family in particular encountered Greenlandic shamanism as yet undisturbed by European influence. The explorers Gustav Holm, Knud Rasmussen and William Thalbitzer went further north and also had encounters with original shamanism. Detailed descriptions of pristine Greenlandic shamanism from these early sources form the longest chapter of the volume under review, or around two-fifths of the book.

Jacobsen's anthropological fieldwork is in my opinion the sensation of this book. She took part in courses on New Age shamanism in Britain and Denmark with participants also from the other Scandinavian

countries, Ireland, Switzerland, Germany and even Iran. The aims and methods of three of these courses are described in an appendix, one held in Denmark and two in Britain, the latter taking place near Devon and in a village in Oxfordshire.

This enables her to write about modern urban shamanism from within—course members were informed of her intention to collect material for a book through observation and interviews and the permission of participants was sought. She found that most had socially oriented professions (e.g. teachers, nurses, social workers and psychologists) and that they felt disappointed by the everyday practice of their professions, revealing a sense of deprivation of values. They were looking for further deepening of their understanding of the human entity. But also attending the courses were many artists on a quest for new forms of creativity and managers who feared "burn-out". One attraction for all of them was that the courses demanded only minimal preparation, if any, and did not entail being bound to a particular community, as tends to happen with other new religions. Participants could therefore retain their individualistic attitude despite the fact that the courses offered a "sense of belonging to a community albeit for just a few days where each individual matters and where all take an interest in the healing of each person" (:220).

To be fully accepted and obtain interviews with the course members and organisers and to avoid being seen as an intruder or even a traitor, she herself tried, with success, to gain personal experience of the so-called core-shamanism (Michael Harner). She experienced journeying of her soul and encounters with spirits and, like others taking part, gave accounts of her experiences. She even uses her own journey experiences as a basis for research, describing them as "typical in their structure and individuality" (:XIII).

But this involvement did not leave her own mind unimpressed—a well-known problem in anthropological fieldwork. She was obviously influenced by feelings of warmth and solidarity within the groups to an extent that she left her striving for scientific perception, and possibly her own doubts, aside concerning the actual existence of spirits. Thus her own opinions look opalescent: "My intention is to present the patterns of behaviour ... *vis-à-vis* the spirit world, not to query whether the spirits are projections of internal structures", or "...not only is there

a field in ordinary reality; non ordinary reality can be seen as a field in its own right" (:XII).

This is the basis of her refusal to look on trance as "the most important part of the complex of which shamanism is comprised" (:222) and her acceptance instead of a relation to spirits. Relying on Shirokogoroff's famous book *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*, she states "Mastery (of spirits) is crucial to the shaman's function" (:XIII) and tries to underpin this guiding principle by comparing it with the definitions of some well-known specialists on shamanism, such as Rolf Gilberg, Åke Hultkrantz and Ioan M. Lewis. Her definition is problematic, however, since it ignores the fact that many shamans in Central and East Asia do not "master" their spirits in the strict acceptation of the word, but feel themselves possessed by them. Moreover it seems, at least, to presuppose the factual existence of spirits, of which most of Jacobsen's colleagues are probably not convinced—but such definitions are made for discourse with colleagues.

Nevertheless, the results of the book are remarkable. Jacobsen holds that both traditional and New Age shamanism have a constructive influence on their cultures because they prevent deviant behaviour. She states as the main differences between the activities of the Eskimo *angakkoq* and representatives of New Age shamanism that in traditional shamanism the whole society takes part in the shaman's rituals and shares his religious belief, not just a small group "in which the journeying takes place on a highly individualised basis with no common concept of spirits" (:218). The *angakkoq* and his community feared the spirits, which they believed could be aggressive and dangerous. In contrast, New Age "shamans" fear the problems of the real modern world, but their spirits are always benevolent and ready to offer support. Whereas the *angakkoq* gathers ample experience through his own suffering and that of other members of his group during years of apprenticeship, those who attend short courses on New Age shamanism are mostly concerned with their own psyches.

Jacobsen ends her very recommendable book by observing: "The word 'shamanism' ought therefore to be applied to traditional shamanism and the concept of 'shamanic behavior' used to define the acts of the course participants." How we should refer to the coalescence of the revivalistic movements of shamanism and New Age "shamanic behavior"

in non-western (e.g. post-soviet) societies is left as an open question for further discussions in shamanistic research.

KÖLN ULLA JOHANSEN

ALICE BECK KEHOE. *Shamans and Religion: An Anthropological Exploration in Critical Thinking*. Prospect Heights, Illinois 2000: Waveland Press, Inc. viii + 125 pp.

This is one of those books that scrutinise the results of modern shamanistic research and it is, indeed, a very critical investigation, for it does away with most of the findings of this recent literature. The author claims that today's scholars lump together healers, diviners and priests who fall outside the established religions under the label "shamans". And that in creating these stereotypes the scholars have unwittingly raised a racist barrier in their science, a boundary between Us and Them.

The writer who throws out these accusations is a Wisconsin anthropologist, Alice Beck Kehoe, a specialist on the Plains Indians well known for her radicalism. This time it is the uncritical use of our concept of shaman that is the object of her onslaught. Not unexpectedly she concentrates her attacks on Mircea Eliade, who is a bad boy because, as an historian of religion, he collected "obscure publications" (meaning those not known to Kehoe because they are in languages she does not understand). These "second-hand data" he studied "in his quiet, book-lined office", whereas Kehoe and her sympathisers have, as true anthropologists, to do "dirty field-work" and consider more practical problems to which European scholars pay little heed.

Such criticism of Eliade is certainly not new, and I have myself—although one of those excoriated Europeans—raised my voice against Eliade's failure to include spirit visitations (not possessions!) as part of shamanic ritual. Certainly we have made our mistakes, as has every scholar, but Kehoe represents an American school that attacks everything Eliade stands for. She finds that it is appropriate "to look critically at Eliade's method and categorisations, his assumptions and sources". But her procedure is more like a personal persecution than scholarly analysis. It is incomprehensible to me that a person who does not

understand the languages of the sources he quotes can make the judgement that Eliade used "secondary and unreliable sources".

The warpath against the European classicist and religio-historian Eliade characterises the whole book. Thus it is natural that Kehoe dismisses the concept of ecstatic trance, Eliade's "leitmotiv", and supplants it with the idea of "intense mental concentration"—which the trance may contain, but its non-normal focus is the foundation of shamanic experience. The shaman goes into another world, the world of the supernatural, gods and spirits. Kehoe excludes South American therapists and jugglers from the shamans primarily because their ecstasy is [or "primarily" here (to refer to *caused*)] caused by the ingestion of psychotropic plants. However, it is difficult to understand why they should constitute a separate class of therapists when they try to achieve the same psychic states as their northern colleagues. This is not a problem. It *is* a problem, though, when some forms of what is called shamanism are not considered to primarily ecstatic, as in many Buryat instances. However, in spite of her close collaboration with Roberte Hamayon, Ms Kehoe does not refer to this.

It is a principal deficiency of this book that nowhere does the author give a clear definition of a shaman. Perhaps this is in keeping with her basic thesis: "shaman" is a Tungus concept and should not be generalised as a term for a whole class of spiritual leaders, which, according to Kehoe, does not exist outside the Tungus. Their task among the Tungus, she says, is to "serve their communities by using hand-held drums to call spirit allies". This is, to say the least, a meaningless definition. She adds, wrongly, that "to be a shaman is a priestly calling". Kehoe should know that in conventional linguistic usage there is a fundamental difference between priest and shaman: the former serves the gods with humble rituals, whereas the latter acts on his or her own initiative to change supernatural conditions so that a person recovers from illness, avoids accidents and on the whole has good luck. This difference between two sorts of miracle-working men cannot be disregarded as it is the very basis for the definition of a shaman. In contrast to Dr Kehoe, who disapproves of the use of a foreign ethnic term as a general classificatory scientific label, I think that "shaman" is most useful for this purpose. If the Polynesian *taboo* can be accepted as a scholarly term, why not the Siberian *shaman*? Most scholars—and most educated people—think of the skilful performance of a trance, of a medium who in trance transports himself/herself to the unseen, supernatural world. This is what the Tungus shaman is supposed to be able to do, and most Siberian shamans have been seen in this light.

It is obvious that this does not suit Alice Kehoe's "critical thinking", which, indeed, supplants order with chaos. All the rich perspectives we may attain in working with the concept of shamanism (and which the contributions to this journal—apparently not known to her—show evidence of) become lost to us. What remains are diverse facts from here and there that do not form a continuous unit. Which is clearly how Ms Kehoe wants it.

Just as the author dissolves the concept of shamanism, so does she do away with "religion", which is so meaningful to shamanism. Proceeding from the Latin word *religare*, she makes the observation that the major function of religion is "the binding together of persons into a supportive congregation of community". It is this "gregariousness" that Kehoe, in true Durkheimian spirit, identifies as religion. She agrees with Malinowski who, as she would have it, saw the Trobriand Islanders perform a religious ritual when building canoes that was for them "part of canoe-building technology". This is a cheap way of presenting Malinowski's holistic functionalism. However, it suits Kehoe's conclusion that "shamans' efforts function to literally bring together a community, reinforcing the gregariousness that is part of our species' mode of survival". It is evident that Kehoe does not know what religion is, just as she misunderstands the "academic concepts of shamans and shamanism", which in her judgement are rooted in "classical Western primitivism" and go against "ethnographic and historical data".

This is not so. Eliade may have made mistakes, but he was the first author to collect shamanic material from the whole world, from different times and periods. His work is classic. The general attacks on it by Kehoe and others reveal most of all envy and incomprehension. There is, for instance, Kehoe's objection that "ecstasies written up by saints and prophets of the major world religions are slighted in Eliade's book". But, of course, Eliade would not have subscribed to Kehoe's sloppy definition of shamanism. He rightly defined shamanism as belonging to a separate tradition of old hunting ideology (which Kehoe places on an equal footing with the English nobleman's hunting games!). What is to Kehoe a mishmash of isolated traits is to Eliade a systematic wholeness, similar to Ruth Benedict's cultural pattern. This last idea makes no appearance in Dr Kehoe's discussion. If she had applied it in her presentation she might have gained a more lucid understanding of what shamanism is.

A characteristic example of Kehoe's antipathy to patterns and structures is her refusal to perceive a deeper connection between the shaking tent rite of the American Algonkians and the shamanic procedures of

Siberian seers. In both groups we often meet with shamans who are tied up while the room, tent or yurt is darkened, followed by the experience of spirits who give messages or treat the sick. The séance finishes with the return of the light and the shaman jumping up, liberated from his/her bonds. Such similarities across two continents Kehoe ascribes to the agency of fur traders! Not for a moment does she consider the possibility of a common, archaic religious structure. No, transfers in recent times, facilitated "by their emotional and entertainment values", have been at work asserts our narrator.

Kehoe paints a picture of Eliade as an exponent of a theory-loaded European academic tradition that was inherited from the aristocratic upper classes, whereas Americans, who tend to disparage ivory-tower scholars, have formed a "democratic science". Again and again she returns to this contrast between herself and Eliade; again and again she maintains her own simple learning and Eliade's obscuring linguistic brilliance. In a recent article on Eliade and myself she contrasts her own honest historical understanding with us two Europeans and our dishonest historical speculations. She says: "Those of us who consider ourselves honest scholars want to challenge this European legacy twisting, like the serpents of Laocoon, around so many accounts of American Indian religions." Eliade is gone and therefore is unable to speak for himself, but for my part I want to say that Kehoe's "critical thinking" is very foreign to me. We simply do not understand each other.[1]

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Stockholm Åke Hultkrantz

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[1] Kehoe insists (1996: 381) that a cascade of bibliographic citations in six languages (!) obscures my argument. But really!

DIANA RIBOLI. *Tunsuriban. Shamanism in the Chepang of Southern and Central Nepal.* Translated from the Italian by Philippa Currie. 2000. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point. ISBN 99933-10-05-0.

Until only a generation or two ago, Chepang were hunter-gatherers roaming the southern jungles of central Nepal. Following a royal ban on hunting, Chepang have been forced to settle on marginal lands where they dwell in ramshackle huts and attempt to practice slash-and-burn agriculture. Population estimates vary widely, but there are perhaps between ten thousand and thirty thousand Chepang remaining in Nepal. They survive in desperate poverty, facing chronic malnutrition and serious health problems. Almost the only compensation for these unfortunate circumstances has been another royal decree, issued in 1977, that officially re-names the group, changing their name from "Chepang," which carries derogatory implications suggesting "outcast jungle dweller," to "*prajā*," a neutral Nepali word for "subject." However, this has not entered common usage, nor has the new designation become popular among Chepang themselves. The "Prajā Development Programme," founded in 1977 under the patronage of the king's sister, has made negligible progress in improving the material circumstances of this impoverished group, despite having been budgeted significant funds by the central government. As Riboli accurately observes, "rampant corruption in the country and a certain disinterest in the weaker groups has meant that almost none of this funding has been used for real development projects." (14) Given Nepal's current political climate, this situation is unlikely to improve in the foreseeable future.

Although Nepalese ethnographers, including Navin Rai (1985) and Ganesh Man Gurung (1989 and 1995) have published short descriptions of the Chepang, this group remains one of the least studied ethnic groups to be found in Nepal, making this study by Diana Riboli particularly welcome. Rather than attempting a more ambitiously comprehensive investigation, Riboli focuses on aspect of Chepang culture, their "religious" activities (using unreflectively an extremely ethnocentric term that conflates a wide range of indigenous activities). As a result of her focus, the most significant chapter of this book is the third, "General Features of Chepang Shamanism," which comprises nearly one hundred of the 225 total pages of this slim volume. Other chapters briefly introduce the geographical and historical background of the Chepang,

their social structure and ceremonies connected with the life cycle (marriage, birth, childhood, adolescence, and death), the social function of the pande within the community, and the two main Chepang festivals. However, each of these chapters are closely connected to main topic, since, unlike nearly every other ethnic group in Nepal, Chepang apparently make use of only a single religious/therapeutic/ritual specialist. These specialists call themselves *tunsuriban*, although most Chepang refer to them as *pande*, or *jhåñkri*, using words borrowed from Nepali. While the surrounding population generally regard Chepang as uncivilized untouchables, their shamans are held in considerable regard, and are sometimes described as the most powerful in Nepal. Chepang shamans themselves attribute this to their facility to move in both the heavens and the underworld, claiming that shamans of other groups are limited to communicating with the celestial world—a claim perhaps true of the neighboring Tamangs, but not accurate for much of Nepal. As Riboli shows, the *pande* is a key figure in Chepang communities, not only responsible for communicating with spirits but also a diviner, therapist, and psychopomp as well as capable of carrying out the various life cycle rituals (43). Apparently, *pande* even take responsibility for family planning—Riboli provides a fascinating account (182–190) of a ritual to "kill" the womb of a twenty year old woman (the wife of the *pande*'s grandson), to protect her from becoming pregnant again after she had barely survived a difficult pregnancy and lost the newborn child—a unique shamanic endeavor of which I know no other account. The short quote of the relevant chant goes:

> I am killing Sunal Āmā,
> I am killing you...
> I push all the demons,
> before they come back to live in the breast of this woman.
> I push you and nail you down,
> as if I were nailing a piece of iron to a piece of wood.
> In this family another person will die...
> I guarantee this! (186)

In contrast to the shamans of many other groups in Nepal, Chepang pande do not wear an elaborate costume, not even head gear, relying on only a few necklaces beside their drum as paraphernalia. It is the

drum that, in a paraphrasing of the words of one *pande,* "reflects other realities and other cosmic worlds, protects the shaman, is a hunter of malefic beings, and gathers the information necessary to solve any case at hand" (108). It also has responsibility for protecting patients:

Soul of the drum, I am looking after some people,
as I have always done.
O Soul, take care of these people who have turned to me for help,
as I have always done. (184)

The one-sided Chepang shaman drum (illustrated by very good photos in the back of this book) closely resembles that of Blacksmith and Magar shamans, with whom they share other major characteristics as well. For example, the story (134) told of the creation of the first shaman clearly shares a common origin with the "Event of the Creation of Man" and the "Event of Planetary Offering," in my own *Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts* (Maskarinec 1998), and a similar story recorded in Anne de Sale (1991). It is regrettable that Riboli fails to explore these associations with neighboring Nepali groups more thoroughly and instead draws so many tenuous comparisons with Mongolian and Siberian shamans (and even with Southeast Asian, South American, and African practices), a tendency that leads to irrelevant digressions that have no relevance to the Nepali situation. Part of this problem is the lack of recent references. Although published in 2000, the most recent work cited is from 1995, apparently also the year of Riboli's last fieldtrip. Clearly, the book would have benefited not only from a review of contemporary material, but even more from an additional chapter, recording changes and developments of the last five years.

Overall, the book is very readable, even if the translation is flawed by occasional infelicities of expression. Most descriptions have adequate detail, but Riboli's attempts to explain events are often too speculative, relying without clear evidence on pyschologized guessing of what things mean for the participants. There are also some ambiguities in her own accounts. Riboli mentions eight trips "each several months long," (6), but does not tell us the total time that she spent in the field, nor how long were the periods that she stayed in particular villages, although her research sites extend over three large districts and involved more than thirty shamans. Nor does she does discuss her fluency in either

Chepang or Nepali. Internal evidence leads me to guess that she conducted most of her research in Nepali, not Chepang: the glossary contains only 13 Chepang words, compared to 70 of Nepali, and even in the last chapter, describing a festival that she claims "has always been celebrated since the time of the ancestors," (218), all local terms are Nepali, not Chepang. Also, her account is not entirely consistent. One apparent contradiction that needs resolution, for example, is that early in the book (67), Riboli states that "the whole learning process of the shamanic profession takes place during dreams," but later (199) that during annual festivals when novice *pande* are presented to the community, "the story of how the world was created is narrated... to teach the younger generations the myth." To me, this indicates a likely disjunction between what shamans say they do and what an outside observer sees that they do, a distinction sometimes lost in this account. Those annual festivals also include "long chants during which the names of all supernatural beings who have taken part must be mentioned," (200) as well as the stories of creation already mentioned. Riboli provides some examples of these shaman chants, but the book would have been much enriched had it included entire transcripts and complete translations of this important material, or at least more extensive selections. Even without such material, however, Riboli's study increases enormously our record of Chepang shamanism, and it deserves a careful reading by all interested in shamanic traditions.

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News and Notes

A REPORT ON THE FOUNDING OF THE RESEARCH CENTER FOR SHAMANIC CULTURE IN BEIJING

The Research Center for Shamanic Culture (RCSC) was established by the Institute for Minority Literatures in association with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The mission of the RCSC is as follows: (1) to coordinate the systematic investigation and research of shamanic culture; (2) to actively promote academic exchanges as well as establish and maintain good relations with shamanistic research institutes both domestic and foreign; (3) to hold symposia and mount exhibitions on shamanic culture; (4) to publish the Shamanic Culture Research Series and the annual periodical, *Studies in China's Shamanic Culture*. The leaders and office holders of the Research Center elected at its founding in September 2000 are: Lang Ying, Bai Gengsheng, Meng Huiying, Yuan Li, Wang Honggang, Deng Minwen, Wang Songlin, Song Heping, Nuobuwangdan, Seyin, Bamoqubumo, An Mingyu, Huang Zhongxiang, Se Yin, Shi Kun, and Wu Xiadong.

In my capacity as president of the ISSR, I had the opportunity to meet with the director, deputy director, and staff of the Institute for Minority Literatures during my four-week sojourn in China. I spoke at length to twelve members of the Institute staff, who reported on their scholarly work, and so I got an overview of the various research projects in the area of shamanism among ethnic minorities in China. Some of the staff even presented me with their latest publications. (For reviews, see pp. 77–81 of this volume of *Shaman*.)

Before I was due to return home and after I had returned from Manchuria—where I was assembling material on shamanism and availed myself of the opportunity to meet an old Hanjun shaman personally—the ISSR signed a statement of cooperation with the RCSC. In this document

our Chinese sister organization expressed its intention to collaborate with the ISSR and its members (e.g., by providing assistance during field work in China) and the wish of our Chinese colleagues to join the Society. Furthermore, the RCSC as an institution volunteered to organize the 7th International Conference of the ISSR in Beijing in the year 2003. Both organizations agreed to launch a book series in which essential Western writings on shamanism will be published in Chinese. Another series will report on Chinese research projects in English. One of the options suggested for this was the *Bibliotheca Shamanistica* series (Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest), within which nine volumes have been published since 1993.

The RCSC agreed to publish an annual to regularly update the scholarly community on research in China. In return, the ISSR promised to bring out a special issue of *Shaman* in the near future with contributions from our Chinese colleagues in English.

Address:

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BUDAPEST MIHÁLY HOPPÁL

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Álmos and *táltos*

ÁRPÁD BERTA SZEGED

This article discusses the etymology of the Hungarian personal name Álmos *and the Hungarian common noun* táltos *'person with magical powers; one able to make contact with the supernatural; shaman; magician; fortune teller'.*[1]

ÁLMOS

According to independent historical records, *Álmos* [almoš] was the name given to the father of Árpád, the chieftain of the Hungarian tribes that conquered the Carpathian Basin at the end of the ninth century. One of these authentic sources is Byzantine emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus *De Administrando Imperio,*[2] in which the name *Álmos* appears in the form 'Αλμούτζης.[3] The form without the Grecized ending

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[1] The author is a historical linguist specialised in Turkic language history. It is not necessarily his intention, through his etymological explanations, to draw conclusions about (ancient Hungarian) history.

[2] For a critical edition and English translation of his mid-10th-century source, see Moravcsik and Jenkins 1967.

[3] The personal name *Álmos* appears in Constantine Porphyrogenitus' account of the change of dynasties within the Hungarian tribal confederation and reads as follows: "A short while afterwards, that chagan-prince of Chazaria sent a message to the Turks (i.e. Hungarians), requiring that Lebedias, their first voivode, should be sent to him. Lebedias, therefore, came to the chagan of Chazaria and asked the reason why he had sent for him to come to him. The chagan said to him: «We have invited you upon this account, in order that, since you are noble and wise and valorous and first among the Turks, we may appoint you prince of your nation, and you may be obedient to our word and our command.» But he, in reply, made answer to the chagan: «Your regard and purpose for me I highly esteem and express to you suitable thanks, but since I am

may be [*almutš(i)[4]]. The other source is the earliest surviving chronicle written by an unknown author, aptly referred to as Anonymus, after the death of Hungarian king Béla III (1196) in the closing years of the twelfth century. In this source, Árpád's father's name appears in the form *Almus* [almuš].[5]

The name *Álmos*—to the best of my knowledge—has three known etymologies.

According to the first—an etymology which by now has become no more than a curiosity and which no researcher would be likely to identify with—the Hungarian personal name *Álmos* is of Latin origin and tied to the word *almus*[6] meaning 'nourishing, feeding' and it was from this form and with a change in meaning that it became tied to the adjective meaning 'charitable; blessed; beatific; merciful'.[7]

The second etymological explanation[8] links the name of chieftain Álmos to the Hungarian common noun *álom* meaning 'dream'.[9]

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not strong enough for this rule, I cannot obey you; on the other hand, however, there is a voivode other than me, called Almoutzis, and he has a son called Árpád; let one of these, rather, either that Almoutzis or his son Árpád, be made prince, and be obedient to your word.»" Moravcsik and Jenkins 1967: 173. The form Σαλμούτζης also appears in both the Vatican- and Paris-held manuscripts of this source by the Byzantine emperor, but this has already been proved to be erroneous. Cf. Moravcsik 1938: 286.

[4] Németh (1991: 276) asserts that there are numerous examples of word final *-č* ~ *-š* in the forms *Almuč(ï)* ~ *Almuš*, such as the form *Munkás* for the Old Hungarian place name *Munkács* or the form *Andush* for the Old Hungarian personal name *Andich, Andych*, among others. Cf. also Lőrinczi 1957: 87.

[5] This name would be familiar to the later members of the House of Árpád as well, as it was given to Prince Álmos, son of King Géza I, who, according to the Hungarian Chronicle, had been blinded by King Kálmán who died in 1116. In a Byzantine source by Johannes Cinnamus from the second half of the twelfth century, the name of Prince Álmos also appears in the form 'Αλμούζης. Cf. Moravcsik 1988: 195.

[6] See Finály 1884: 91a.

[7] See in the Chronicle by Anonymus. Cf. Ligeti 1978: 258.

[8] This explanation seems to be typical of folk etymology and is rooted in the Chronicle by Anonymus. Cf. Róna-Tas 1996: 187.

[9] Cf. Szabó 1936: 131.

Finally, the third explanation regards the Hungarian name *Álmos* as a derivative of the Turkic verb *al-* 'to buy; to take' with the participial ending *-mXš* and offers the meaning 'bought; purchase (noun)'.[10]

Among the three attempts to explain the origin of this noun, the third etymology which connects the Hungarian personal name to the Turkic languages would appear to be the most frequent in the literature. That fact, however, is insufficient to verify this etymology: the truth value of a scholarly statement—fortunately—cannot be defined by the number of researchers who maintain that view but by the persuasive power of the arguments that support it.

The link to the Latin word *almus* utterly lacks historicity. The supposition that the name of a ninth-century Hungarian chieftain prior to the conquest of the Carpathian Basin would be of Latin origin stretches the limits of scholarly credulity.

The etymology relating the name to the Hungarian common noun *álom* 'dream' cannot be rejected as readily,[11] but even this etymology is based on the incidental linguistic fact that the Hungarian personal name *Álmos* is identical with the adjective *álmos*—and not on any link between the two lexemes that may be seriously entertained in terms of etymology.[12]

The third explanation may also raise doubts. This is primarily because it can be proved that the derivation mentioned above began with the Old Turkic verb base *al-* < Ancient Turkic **alï-* 'to buy; to take' only because in the nineteenth century when this etymology was developed,[13] linguistic Turkologists were only familiar with one verb with the form

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[10] It has become customary to support this Turkic etymology with the fact that a common name for Turkic rulers, *El-Almïš*, actually means 'the one who bought or took the empire'. Cf. Róna-Tas 1996: 187.

[11] Cf. Németh 1991: 275–276.

[12] This is why it is bothersome that the editors of TESz. (1: 142a) place the personal name *Álmos* noted by Constantine Porphyrogenitus—with no comment whatsoever—by the entry *álom*, thus actually implying their support for an explanation on the level of a working definition.

[13] See Kuun 1892: 209; Hvolson 1869: 91.

al- which meant 'to buy; to take'. However, since then we have learned so much more in Turkology thus facilitating a newer explanation for this etymology.

The personal name for Chieftain Álmos—if we assume a Turkic origin—may be derived from another verb which was a homophone of the Turkic verb *al-*, meaning 'to buy; to take', using the same phonological and morphological arguments; however, the semantical argumentation supporting this derivation proves a great deal more compelling.

The meaning of the other Turkic verb *al-* < Ancient Turkic **alï-* may have been 'to be entranced'. The following data may be listed in support of this.

Historical Data:

1. As Marcel Erdal (1991: 645) points out in his excellent book on Old Turkic word formation, there existed a verb **al(ï)-* < Ancient Turkic **alï-* in Old Turkic—which even then could only be found in its derivative forms. This verb served as a base for both the Old Turkic verb *alïk-*[14] 'to fester, to turn septic'[15] and the nominal *alïg*[16] 'bad'.[17]

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[14] In terms of morphology, this is a verb form **al(ï)-(X)k-*. On the Old Turkic deverbal verbal ending *-(X)k-*, see Erdal 1991: 645–651.

[15] Clauson's etymological dictionary (138a) erroneously connects this verb to the word *āl* 'scarlet'. This verb is listed in Kāš.'s dictionary. As Erdal (1991: 645) correctly points out, the edition of this dictionary by Dankoff and Kelly misreads the verb as *eliq-* instead of the proper form *alïq-*. This incorrect form—listed with a question mark—appears in the Dankoff and Kelly edition in this way because the editors consider the verb *alïq-* 'be vile (man); fester, corrupt (wound)' a derivative of the word *ēl* 'realm or province'. The verb form *alïq-*, which appeared five times in a row in the manuscript by Kāš. was corrected four times with a *kasra* by a second hand to the form *ïlïq-*. This may indicate that the status of the verb form was not clear to the person making the corrections—which, in this case, were rather distortions. Erdal may be right in that the proofreader may have confused the verb listed in Kāš. (105) as *alïq-* with the verb *ïlïq-*, which is similar in form and meaning. The fact that these two verbs were confused may be examined in other manuscripts besides the one by Kāš. (Cf. Erdal 1991: 495). This, however, must represent a linguistic fact: the two verbs with almost identical form and meaning might have coincided in certain areas of Turcia. After these introductory remarks, let us examine the texts in which the verb *alïq-* appeared in the dictionary by Kāš. (Dankoff and Kelly 1: 190–191): "*är alïqtï* 'The man was vile or corrupt', *bāš alïqtï* 'The wound festered', The same for anything that becomes spoiled from the

2. On the basis of the Old Turkic verb *alñaḏ-* (Erdal 1991: 485–486; Cl. 149b: *alañaḏ-* 'to become weak, to lose one's strength'; UW 94: *al(ï)ñad-* 'schwach werden') a base form of *alïñ* may be assumed. This base form is considered to be a simplex by Clauson (147a: **alañ*), while Röhrborn (UW 94a: *alïñ*) and later Erdal (1991: 337, *alïñ*) assert that it is likely a derivative of the verb **al(ï)-* discussed above.[18]

The word *alïñ* 'weak' may have provided the base for the verb *alñaḏ-* as well as the verb *alñu-* meaning 'to become weak', which was formed with the verbal ending *+U-* (Cf. Erdal 1991: 474; UW 94b),

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glance of a menstruating woman, a confined woman, or one polluted." The aorist form is *alïqār*, the infinitive *alïqmāq*.

[16] The morphological segmentation is as follows: **al(ï)-(X)g*, on the deverbal nominal suffix *-(X)g* see Erdal 1991: 172–223. However, the form *alïg* itself is not discussed by Erdal where one would expect it, though he does make mention of it elsewhere (1991: 645).

[17] Cl. 315b considers the form *alïg* the secondary form of the word *añïg* 'crazy, stupid, bad'. He lists forms both from historical and modern Turkic languages. Cf. also Doerfer, TMEN 2: § 535 (tü. *alïg* 'töricht, schwächlich'), who does not discuss the etymology of the word, but provides an extensive list of forms from both historical and modern Turkic languages and dialects.

Among the more significant data from historical sources, the Karakhanid form *alïg* '(anything) bad' in Kāš.'s dictionary (44), (see Dankoff and Kelly 1: 106); and the Middle Kipchak word *alu* 'weak' (İd. 22) both undoubtedly indicate a derivative formed with the old ending *-(X)g*. There are forms which indicate that the old verbal base **al(ï)-* may not exclusively have been followed by the suffix *-(X)g* but also *-(O)k*. As an example, I would refer to the forms in Ottoman Turkish *alïq* 'töricht, albern, verrückt, verzückt' (1: 372) and in Koib., Soj., Šor. *alaq* (1: 355) listed in Radloff's dictionary.

Röhrborn (UW 92b) maintains that the word *alïg* 'Schlechtigkeit, Nachteil' is likely a derivative of the verb which Sevortjan (1: 145) reconstructed as **al-* 'den Verstand verlieren'. (Sevortjan—to quote his exact words—postulates the following meanings by the verb **al-*: 'lišat'sja rassudka', 'slabet' umom', 'besit'sja (*o životnyh*)', but also mentions that the reconstruction of the nominal form **al* 'lišivšijsja uma', 'glupyj' is also possible. This would be insufficient, however, to explain the origin of *alïg* since we are unaware of the existence of a suffix *+(X)g*—as Röhrborn rightly points out.)

[18] Cf. also: REW 16a: *alañ* 'unruhig', etc. [< Mo. KWb. 7–8: *alañ* 'verwundert, zweifelnd, unentschlossen'] and 17b: *alïg* 'töricht, dumm, schlecht' with numerous data and cross-referenced with *alañ*. See also Ramstedt (1952: 229): Turkish *alañ* 'Unruhe, Dummheit, töricht', which is connected to the Mo. base form *almai* 'unentschieden, Verlegenheit'. Cf. KWb. 7b; Mo. *almai* (adj. and n.) 'careless[ness], absent-minded[ness], inattentive[ness], forgetful[ness]' (Lessing).

along with its synonym *alñur-*, which was formed with the ending *+U-(I)r-* (Cf. Erdal 1991: 536; UW 91b).

It is no easy task to sort out the Modern Turkic data. We distinguish between two categories:

A) data which can in all certainty or likelihood be tied to the Ancient Turkic verb **alï-* 'to lose one's mental and/or physical strength; to grow weak; to be entranced' as discussed above; and

B) data which may also be linked to this verb; however, at this stage it is best to list them in a separate category.

Category A

Oghuz: Gag. *alïk* 'sumasšedšij, slaboumnyj, pridurkovatyj'[19]; Tu. *alık* 'glupyj, pridurkovatyj; glupo, ošalelo, rasterjanno'[20];
Kipchak: Kmk. *alman*: *alman-talman söyle-* 'lepetat', govorit' bessvjazno'; Sib-Tat. *alañna-* 'byt' glupym, rassejannym, nerešitel'nym'[21]; Kzk. *alañ*: *alañ bol-* bespokoit'sja, otvlekat'sja'[22]; Bšk. *alan-yolan*: *alan-yolan qara-* 'ozirat'sja s opaskoj (ostorožno)'; *alañla-* 'bespokojno ozirat'sja; sverkat', blestet' (*o glazah*)'[23]; Kirg. *alagdï* = *alañ*' rassejannyj'[24];

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[19] Its derivatives are: *alïklan-* = *alïklaš-* 'vygljadet' durakom'; *alïklaštïr-* Caus. 'dovodit' do otupenija; okolpačivat', obmanyvat''.

[20] Its derivatives are: *alıkça*, *alıklan-*, *alıklaş-* etc.

[21] Cf. also *alañnadzïl* 'nerešitel'nyj'. The etymological status of the word *alġacaq* 'bespokojnyj' remains problematic.

[22] Cf. also its derivatives: *alañdat-* Caus.; *alañda-* 'otvlekat'sja; bespokoit'sja; trevožit'sja'; *alañsïz*. The forms which may also be linked to this base are: ? *alart-* 'rašširjat' glaza, taraščit' glaza'; ?*alar-* 'puglivo ozirat'sja, poterjat' blesk; stat' bezžiznennymi (*o glazah*)'; ?*alaq*: *alaq-ǰulaq qara-* 'puglivo ozirat'sja'; ? *alaqtat-* Caus.; ? *alaqta-* 'puglivo (nedoumenno) ozirat'sja'.

[23] Cf. its derivative: *alañlat-* 'igrat' (*glazami*), brosat' (*vzgljad*)'.

[24] Cf. also *alagdïlan-* 'otvleč'ja, zameškat'sja'; *alak* '(*o glazah*) vypučennyj; vypuklyj'; *alaksï-* = *alaskï-* 'byt' zanjatym mysl'ju; ozirat'sja' and further derivatives; *alakta-* 'osmatrivat'sja, puglivo ozirat'sja; pučit' glaza'; *alañda-* 'bespokojno ozirat'sja, puglivo taraščit' glaza' and their derivatives.

SIBERIAN: OIR. *alū* 'glupyj, durak'[25]; OIR.KMD. *alu, alïg*[26] 'glupyj, durak'; KHAK. *alïġ* 'durak; glupyj';
YAKUT: –;
CHUVASH: –;
KHALAJ: –.

Category B

OGHUZ: TU. *allak* III: *allak bullak* 'zaputannyj, neponjatnyj; v besporjadke'; ?*alan* III: *alan talan* = *alan taran* 'v besporjadke, vverh dnom'[27];
KIPCHAK: KZK. *alañġasar* 'nevnimatel'nyj, rassejannyj; legkomyslennyj'; *alañġasarlan-* 'stanovit'sja nevnimatel'nym; rassejannym'; *alañġasarlïq* 'nevnimatel'nost'; rassejannost''; NOG. *alañgasar* 'nevnimatel'nyj, rassejannyj; legkomyslennyj'; *alañgasarlan-* 'stanovit'sja nevnimatel'nym, rassejannym'; *alañgasarlïk* 'nevnimatel'nost', rassejannost'; legkomyslie'; KAR. C *alanġasar*, *alanqasar, alïnġasar* 'velikan, ispolin'; KAR. T, H *alankasar* 'velikan, ispolin'; KAR. C *alas* 'hilost', čahlost', nemoščnost''[28]; KIRG. *alañgazar* 'nedogadlivyj; glupovatyj; legkomyslennyj';
SIBERIAN: OIR. *alā* 'rassejannyj; rotozej, zevaka; glupovatyj, prostovatyj'; ? *alañ* 'bolezn' ovec'; *alañ* 'somnenie; udivlenie'[29]; OIR.KMD. *alañ* 'izumlenie, udivlenie'; OIR.TUBA *alañ* 'udivlenie, nedoumenie; udivitel'nyj, udivlennyj'; KHAK. *alañ*: *alañ as-* 'rasterjat'sja'; *alaray* (dial.) = *alaxay* 'rassejannyj; glupovatyj, prostovatyj; rotozej, zevaka'; *alas* II

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[25] The meaning 'pušnoj [fur (modifier)]' provided in OirRS1. most probably does not belong here.

[26] Baskakov also discusses the word *a(g)lïx* 'glupyj' here, the etymology of which is not clear to me. Baskakov also connects the Russian word *oluh* 'stupid; dunderhead' to this group, although it is not related to the Turkic words discussed here (for an accurate assessment, cf. Fasmer 3: 136–137).

[27] Cf. Sevortjan 1: 134, at *alaman*.

[28] Cf. Sevortjan 1: 132, at *alaz*.

[29] Cf. also *alañzï-* 'somnevatěsja; udivljat'sja' and its derivatives.

'rassejannyj'; *alasïm* 'legkomyslennyj (*o čeloveke*)'; *alax-* 'lišit'sja uma'[30]; Tuv. *alāk-* 'sbivat'sja; putat'sja (*napr. o sčete*)'[31], *alañ*: *alañ kayga-* 'byt' v nedoumenii, nedoumevat''';
Turki: Nuyg. *alañ* 'nedoumenie; bespokojstvo, trevoga'; *alaq* 'bred'; *alaq-ǰalaq* 'puglivyj (*vzgljad*)'; *alaqlaš* Nom. act.; *alaqli-* 'bredit'; puglivo ozirat'sja po storonam'; *alañ-ǰalañ* 'nedoumenie; bespokojstvo, trevoga'; *alañlaš* Nom. act.; *alañli-* 'puglivo ozirat'sja; bespokoit'sja, trevožit'sja'; ?[32]*alman-talman* 'toroplivo, spešno';
Yakut: –;
Chuvash: –;
Khalaj: –.

Táltos

According to the editors of TESz. (3: 832ab), one of the key terms of the Old Hungarian belief system, *táltos,* meaning 'person with magical powers; one able to make contact with the supernatural; shaman; magician; fortune teller', is a derivative, the base word for which is "*tált-*, an ancient inheritance from the Ugrian period." The reconstructed Ugrian form is **tultɜ*.

Károly Rédei (1988: 895) uses the same Ugrian base form in his discussion of the etymology of the Hungarian word *táltos* and basically lists the same Ostyak and Vogul data in support of the Ugrian form **tultɜ* 'Zauberei, Zauberkraft' as the editors of TESz.: Osty. *tolt* 'Riese (eigtl. Zauber)'; *toltn, tolten* 'mit Zauberkraft'; *tolt* 'Fieber', 'Hilfe, Linderung (bei einer Krankheit, in der Armut)', 'ohne (große) Mühe, ohne (viel) Lärm (z.B. Beute) bekommen'; Vog. *tūlt*: *tūltėn, tūltnė* 'leicht, einfach'.

The editors of TESz. as well as Rédei reject the notion that the word *táltos* is of Turkic origin, although Rédei is slightly more careful in his wording: "Die Erklärung von ung. *táltos* aus der Nominalableitung aus dem türk. hypothetischen **tal-* 'schlagen, prügeln' oder *tal-* in 'Ohnmacht

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[30] Cf. also *alaxtïr-* Caus. 'obmanyvat', lgat', vvodit' *kogo-l.* v zabluždenie'.

[31] Cf. also *alāktïr-* Caus., 'sbivat', putat' (*napr. o sčete*); otvlekat', otryvat' (*ot myslej*); otvlekat' vnimanie.

[32] Phonetically, one may justify including this form among the words in category

fallen' (Pais: MNy. 30: 192[33] [...]) ist—wegen der einwandfreien Ug. Zusammenstellung—unwahrscheinlich."

Lajos Ligeti, in his 1986 summary, makes no mention of the word *táltos*, which, of course, indicates that he did not consider it to be a Turkic loan word into Hungarian. András Róna-Tas, however, lists this word as no. 418 on his preliminary list which serves as the basis for his forthcoming book on the early Turkic elements of the Hungarian language.[34]

I personally am of the opinion that we should reconsider the possibility that the Hungarian word *táltos*—similarly to several other words related to the Old Hungarian belief system[35]—may be of Turkic origin.

The reconstucted form of the Turkic word borrowed for the Hungarian noun *táltos* may be **taltučï* (< **tal(ï)tġučï*) 'being entranced'.

The base word for the reconstructed form **taltučï* (< **tal(ï)tġučï*) is the verb *tal-* (< **talï-*), which existed as of the Old Turkic period. The more significant data from language history are listed in Clauson's dictionary (490b), under the lemma *tal-* (*d-*) 'to lose strength; to lose consciousness, to faint'.[36] In addition to historical data, Sevortjan's etymological dictionary (3: 133–134: *dāl-*) provides a collection of Modern Turkic data along with a (partial) list of their derivatives.[37]

Sevortjan, who—having accepted Ščerbak's reconstructed form (1970: 197, Index)—set out from a base form **tāl-* 'ostolbenet'; pogruzit'sja v zabyt'e' and concluded that the meanings of the verbal base may be tied to two basic semantic groups:

A, but semantics may prove a stumbling block.

[33] It must be noted that Bárczi's thorough examination in 1941 (Szófsz.) found that Pais's etymology which claimed that the etymon of the Hungarian word *táltos* may have been the Turkic *talt-* 'to put someone in a trance' followed by the ending *-iš* may be correct.

[34] Here I must express my gratitude to Professor András Róna-Tas for making his working manuscript from 1997 available to me and for giving me permission to use it in my research.

[35] Cf. the following entries found only in the Vallási hiedelmek [Religious Beliefs] section of Ligetis book (1986: 271): *bű, bölcs, báj, ige, igéz, kép, boszorkány, csök, tor (?), ünnep, egyház, gyász, bűn, érdem, bocsát, bocsánik, búcsú, gyónik, terem, bú, örök, koporsó, ül (ünnepet).*

[36] On the causative derivative form of the base verb *-tUr-*, cf. *taltur-* (*d-*) 'to tire out, to exhaust' (Cl. 494b).

A) 'to sink (e.g. in water); to become lost in thought'

B) 'to lose one's senses; to lose consciousness; to fall into depression; to become paralysed, to grow quiet; to become tired, exhausted' etc.

Sevortjan—having grouped the data—noted that semantic field A is characteristic of the Oghuz languages, while B is a feature of languages in the other Turkic branches. According to Sevortjan, another significant difference between the two groups is that the meanings related to field B are quite older than those in group A, which appeared for the first time in the fourteenth century some 500–600 years later. Sevortjan even poses the question whether they should be distinguished in terms of origin as two different verbs which were later contaminated in form.[38]

The more significant historical data for the derivatives of the Old Turkic verb *tal-* (< Ancient Turkic **tāl(ï)-*)—in addition to the derivative formed by the causative ending *-tUr-* mentioned above—are the following:

tal-gān ïg 'epilepsy' (Kāš. 220, Dankoff and Kelly 2: 330)[39]

Chaghatai *tal-ïk-* 'to plunge, to be plunged' (Cl. 490b, cf. Erdal 1991: 649).

Modern Turkic Forms:[40]

Category A

Oghuz: Tu. *dal-* 'pogružat'sja, okunat'sja; nyrjat'; vhodit', pronikat'; vletat', vryvat'sja, vtorgat'sja; pogružat'sja, okunat'sja, uhodit' s golovoj; vklinivat'sja'; zabyvat'sja, načinat' dremat'; vpadat' v zabyt'e'[41];

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[37] Cf. also REW 457b, by the entry for the Yak. *tāl-* 'stolbenet', priostanavlivat'sja'.

[38] Although I myself consider Sevortjan's train of thought discussed above significant, I see no obstacle to considering the meanings listed under point A secondary—as Clauson also suggested (490b)—and, based on the data listed under point B, explain them as being the result of changes in meaning. On semantic connections, cf. the meanings of the Hungarian verbs *kimerül* 'to become exhausted' and *elmerül* 'to sink'.

[39] Cf. Erdal (1991: 384), who points out that the words formed with the ending *-gAn* usually do not indicate abstract nouns; the form listed here is an exception.

[40] It would be reasonable to distinguish between two groups here as well. The data listed in category A are certainly related to the base verb, while those listed in category B may only be connected to it.

Tkm. dial. *dāl-* 'ustavat', utomljat'sja (Sev. 3: 133)[42]; Az. *dal-* 'pogružat'sja, pogruzit'sja, okunut'sja'[43]; Gag. *dal-* 'nyrjat', okunat'sja, pogružat'sja';
Kipchak: Tat. *tal-*: *ar-* – *tal-* 'utomljat'sja; ustavat''[44]; Sib-Tat. *tal-* 'ustavat''[45]; Bšk. *tal-* [without any explanation BRH has the meanings separated under two lemmata] 'ustavat', utomljat'sja; pogružat'sja *vo čto*, otdavat'sja *čemu*; vpadat' *vo čto*'[46]; Kzk. *tal-* 'padat' v obmorok, poterjat' soznanie; iznemogat'; vybivat'sja iz sil; (*fig.*) byt' zastignutym vrasploh i onemet''[47]; Kirg. *tal-*, *talï-* 'zameret', onemet' (*o členah*); stradat' ėpilepsiej; padat' v obmorok'[48]; Cr-Tat. *tal-* 'ustavat', utomljat'sja'[49]; *dal-*[50] 'okunat'sja, pogružat'sja; nyrjat''[51]; Nog. *tal-* 'ustavat',

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[41] The more significant derivatives are: *daldır-* 'pogružat', okunat', opuskat' *čto vo čto*, (*razg.*) zapuskat', pogružat' *čto vo čto*; vtykat', vonzat' *čto vo čto*; (*peren.*) byt' pogružennym v mysli, zadumat'sja', (*dial.*) *dalgı* 'rassejanost', zabyvčivost', nevimatel'nost'; oprometčivost', neobdumannost', oplošnost''; *dalgın* 'rassejannyj, zadumčivyj; pogružennyj v razdum'e (*v svoi mysli*); poterjavšij soznanie; vpavšij v zabyt'e (*o bol'nom*)'.

[42] An important derivative: Tkm. *dālǰïk-* 'zadyhat'sja, tjaželo dyšat''.

[43] More important derivatives include: *daldïr-* 'pogružat'sja (*v dumy i razmyšlenija*)'; *dalġïn* 'zadumčivyj, mečtatel'nyj, sosredotočennyj; zadumčivo, sosredotočenno'.

[44] Cf. also *armas-talmas* 'neustannyj', *armïy-talmïy* 'neustanno, bez ustali' and more important derivatives *talučan* 'bystro utomljajuščijsja, sklonnyj k ustavaniju'; *talčïk-* 'utomljat'sja, ustavat', iznemogat', čuvstvovat' ustalost''.

[45] More significant derivatives are: *talġïn-* 'ustavat'; *talu* 'bol'noe mesto'.

[46] More important derivatives are: dial. *talbauhï-* 'obessilet', iznemogat', vybivat'sja iz sil, utomljat'sja'; *taldïr-* [the BRH lists the meanings under two entries—for no apparent reason] 'natrudit', utomit'; pogružat' *kogo vo čto*'; *talsïq-* 'ustavat', utomljat'sja; iznemogat', oslabevat'; (*peren.*) tomit'sja'; *talïq-* 'utomljat'sja, ustavat'; (*peren.*) tomit'sja'.

[47] More important derivatives are: *talïqsï-* 'nahodit'sja v polusoznatel'nom sostojanii'; *taldïr-* 'sil'no utomljat', privodit' v sostojanie besčuvstvija'.

[48] More important derivatives are: *taldïr-* Caus. cf. *köz taldïrgan* 'oslepitel'noj krasoty'; *talū* 'zamiranie, onemenie (*členov*); obmorok'; *talïk-* 'izmučit'sja, utomit'sja, ustat''; *talït-* Caus. 'utomit', natrudit''.

[49] An important derivative is: *talġïn* 'ustalyj; medlennyj; tihij'.

[50] The initial *d-* is clearly an Oghuz feature. The coexistence of the two forms (*tal-*, *dal-*) in Cr-Tat. is supported by a significant semantic distribution. As we will see, the same phenomenon can be observed in Kar. C.

[51] More important derivatives are: *dalïdžï* 'nvrialěščik: vodolaz'; *dalġïn* 'zadumčivvi.

utomljat'sja, iznemogat', vybivat'sja iz sil; nemet', oslabevat' (*o konečnostjah*); padat' v obmorok, terjat' soznanie'[52], cf. also *ar- – tal-* 'očen' ustavat''[53]; Kar. C. *dal-*[54] 'pogružat'sja, okunat'sja; (*peren.*) uglubljat'sja, pogružat'sja[55]; Kar. H. C. T. *tal-* 'ustat', utomit'sja, oslabet''[56]; Kmk. The base verb cannot be found[57]; Kkalp. *tal-*, *talï-* 'utomljat'sja, čuvstvovat' utomlenie, ustavat', ispytyvat' ustalost'; propadat', umirat'';
Siberian: Oir. *tal-* 'padat' v obmorok; onemet' (*o členah*); ustat'; stradat' padučej; stat' nemym'[58]; Oir.Tuba *tal-* 'padat' v obmorok'[59]; Oir.Kmd. –; Tuv. *dal-* 'padat' v obmorok; terjat' soznanie (*napr. ot sil'nogo udara*); cepenet' (*ot neožidannosti, ispuga*)'[60]; Tof. *tal-* 'bit'sja v agonii; terjat' soznanie; merknut' (*o svete v glazah*)' (TofRSl.); *dal-* 'bit'sja v agonii' (Rassadin 1971); Khak. *tal-* 'ustavat'; nemet' (*o rukah, nogah*); padat' v obmorok'[61];

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[52] Its derivative is: *talma* '(*med.*) pripadok ėpilepsii'.

[53] Its derivative is: *aruv – taluv* 'utomlenie, iznemoganie; nemenie, oslablenie (*konečnostej*); obmorok, obmoročnoe sostojanie'.

[54] On the initial consonant *d-*, cf. note 50.

[55] Its derivative is: *dalġan* 'sosredotočennyj', cf. *bu kišiler iškė dalġan* 'ėti ljudi uvlečeny delom'.

[56] More important derivatives are: C. *talġaq* 'ustalyj', C. *talġïn* 'id.'; T., H. *taldïr-* 'utomljat', pereutomljat''; H. *talmak* 'utomlenie'; T. *talmax* 'id.'; H. *talcïk-* 'utomljat'sja, oslabevat'', C. *talčïq-* 'dohodit' do iznemoženija, iznurjat'sja, slabet'; iznyvat', iznemogat', žaždat''; T. *talčïx-* 'byt' ustalym, izmučennym'.

[57] More important derivatives are: *talqïn* '(*rel.*) molitva (*kotoruju čitajut pri pogrebenii*); (*ust.*) vnušenie'; *talmav* 'tajnye, skrytye motivy (*povedenija*); pomeha, prepjatstvie; sceplenie'; *talčïq-* 'pereživat'; bespokoit'sja, volnovat'sja, bolet' dušoj'. It is important to note that the twin phrase *alman-talman* mentioned above exists in the Kmk. structure *alman-talman söyle-* 'lepetat', govorit' bessvjazno'.

[58] More important derivatives are: *talga-* 'stradat' padučej, besnovat'sja'; *talgak* 'zamiranie, onemenie (*členov*); ėpilepsija, padučaja'; *talgaš* 'besčuvstvennoe sostojanie, utomlenie, onemenie; drema, dremota'; *taldïr-* 'utomit', donesti do obmoroka'.

[59] A significant derivative is: *talkïn* 'nadgrobnaja pesnja'.

[60] A significant derivative is: *daldïr* 'v zabyt'e; mertvym snom'.

[61] More important derivatives are: *talġaxtan-* 'stradat' ėpilepsiej, stradat' pripadkami'; *taldïr-* 'dovesti *kogo-l.* do iznemoženija, do obmorka'; *talǰax* 'ėpilepsija; (*razg.*) padučaja; pripadok, pristup'; *talǰïx-* 'lišit'sja čuvstv, poterjat' soznanie'.

TURKI: UZB. *tol-* 'ustavat', utomljat'sja; pogružat'sja (*v dumy, mysli i t.p.*)'; NUYG. *tal-* 'utomljat'sja, ustavat'; vybivat'sja iz sil; nemet'; terjat' soznanie'[62]; NUYG. DIAL. (JARRING) *tal-* 'to tire, to get tired, to 'sleep' of leg or arm'; YUYG. –; SAL. –;
YAKUT: *tāl-* 'stolbenet'; priostanavlivat'sja, molča stojat' (sidet') odumyvat'sja, stojat' (sidet') kak vkopannyj' (Pek. 3: 2532–2533); *dalbar-* 'ob ocepenevšej rybe vesnoju i osen'ju: vsplyvat' na poverhnost' vody' (Pek. 1: 670); *dalbārïy-* 'cepenet', nemet', bezčuvstvennym delat'sja, zatmevat'sja' (Pek. 1: 671);
KHALAJ: –;
CHUVASH: –.

At the present stage of investigation, the following forms must be treated separately:

Category B

OGHUZ: –;
KIPCHAK: BŠK. dial. *taltay-* 'rastopyrivat'sja'; Kzk. *taltañda-* 'hodit', rastopyriv nogi; (*fig.*) byt' samodovol'nym, samonadejannym'; *taltaq* 'razognutyj; rastopyrennyj'; KIRG. *dal*[63] 'rasterjavšijsja, opešivšij; rasslablennyj, obessilevšij; paralizovannyj'; *dalay-* 'oslabet', stat' vjalym;

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[62] More important derivatives are: *taldur-* Caus. 'utomljat', vyzyvat' ustalost''; *talma* 'épilepsija'.

[63] Sevortjan (3: 134) has already drawn our attention to the highly questionable etymological nominal base which, as the examples listed by Judahin—except for the sentence *aylasïn tappay, boldu dal* 'ne najdja vyhoda, on rasterjalsja' listed with the note *fol'k*—indicate, appear exclusively in the structure *dal bol-* in Kirghiz. At the same time, he also points out that data for this nominal base can be found only in this language, and that the verbal base appears with the initial *t-* in Kirghiz. There is good reason to discuss the status of the nominal *dal* here. We must not assign too much significance to the phonetic problem indicated here. Cf. for example the data starting with the consonants *t-* and *d-* in Cr-Tat. and Kar.C. idioms, in notes 50 and 54. There are other examples in Kirghiz of the *d-* ~ *t-* variation in initial position. Cf. the following forms appearing in the column where *dal* is listed: *dak* I = *tak*; *dakat* = *takat*; *dal, dalā* = *talā*. In terms of semantics, it would be very difficult to consider the Kirg. *dal* in another context. It is another question that—if it really belongs here—this may be the result of a secondary development.

(*peren.*) lišit'sja avtoriteta, obščestvennogo položenija'; *taltay-* 'raskorjačivat'sja'; *taltagay, taltak, taltañ* 'raskorjaka'; KKALP. *taltay-* 'stojat' rastopyriv nogi; rastopyrivat' ruki i nogi'; *taltaq* 'kolčenogij, krivonogij, tot, kto idet, perevalivajas' na krivyh nogah'; *taltaqta-* 'hodit' čut'-čut' perevalivajas' na krivyh nogah'; *taltañ* 'čelovek, čvanlivo iduščij, perevalivajas' s nogi na nogu'; *taltañda-* 'hodit' čvanlivo, perevalivajas', rastopyriv'; *taltayt-*[64] 'raskorjačivat'sja, rastopyrivat'sja'; *taltañla-* 'čvanit'sja, gordit'sja';
TURKI: –;
SIBERIAN: OIR. *talay-* 'razmahivat'sja, zamahivat'sja'; *taltay-* 'raskorjačit'sja'; *taltak* 'raskorjaka'; *taltañda-* 'kačat'sja iz storony v storonu; kovyljat'; mahat' ručonkami (*o rebenke*)'; OIR.TUBA *talay-* 'zamahivat'sja, vzmahnut', razmahnut'sja'; KHAK. *taltay-* 'kazat'sja neukljužim, nepovorotlivym; raskorjačivat'sja, rasstavljat' nogi'; *taltañ* 'neukljužij, nepovorotlivyj; (*razg.*) rastjapa, nedotepa';
YAKUT: *dala-* 'razmahivat' rukami ili orudiem' (Pek. 1: 668–669); *dallay-* 'rasprostirat ruki (*o čeloveke*) ili kryl'ja (*o ptice*)' (Pek. 1: 672);
CHUVASH: –;
KHALAJ : –.

Category C

Forms which may be derivatives of the base **talp(ï)-* must also be separated. Nor, in all likelihood, are these historically connected to the base in question.

OGHUZ: –
KIPCHAK: TAT. *talpïn-* 'mahat' kryl'jami (*o ptice*); silit'sja, pytat'sja (*preodolet' čto-l.*); (*peren.*) tjanut'sja, rvat'sja, stremit'sja *k čemu-l.*'; BŠK. *talpïn-* 'mahat' kryl'jami (*o pticah*); poryvat'sja, stremit'sja *k komu-čemu*; (*peren.*) byt' ohvačennym sil'nym čuvstvom, goret' želaniem, stremit'sja čto-to sdelat', soveršit''; KZK. *talpïn-* 'pytat'sja hodit' (*o rebenke*); stremit'sja k celi; pytat'sja osvobodit'sja ot nevoli'; KIRG. *dalbïra-* 'iznemogat'; (*peren.*) obvetšat', obtrepat'sja'; *dalday-* '(*o komčem-l. ogromnom i neukljužem*) razleč'sja, rasplastat'sja; imet' nesuraz-

[64] The form *tayltayt-* listed in the glossary is incorrect.

nyj, neukljužij, rasterjannyj vid'; *dalpay-*, *dalpïy-*, *talpay-* 'byt' gromadnym i neukljužim'; *talpañ* 'gruznyj i neuklužij'; *talpïn-* 'trepyhat'sja, starat'sja, vyrvat'sja; (*peren.*) poryvat'sja vpered, stremit'sja'; *dalpïlda-* 'razvevat'sja; (*peren.*) govorit' gluposti, trepat' jazykom'; Nog. *talpïn-* 'rvat'sja, bit'sja, starat'sja vyrvat'sja (*napr. o pojmannom zvere*); poryvat'sja vpered, rvat'sja, stremit'sja, tjanut'sja'; Kmk. *talpïn-* 'starat'sja, vyrvat'sja; poryvat'sja vpered';
Siberian: Oir. *talbañda-* 'mahat' kryl'jami'; *talbï-* 'trepyhat'sja, stremit'sja vyrvat'sja; letet', vsporhnut', vzletet'; stremit'sja vpered'; *talbïra-* 'porhat''; *talp ėt-* 'vsporhnut' (*o ptice*)'; Oir.Kmd. *talbï-* 'letet', stremit'sja'; *taltayla-* 'idti raskorjačivšis''; Tuv. *dalbagar* 'raspravlennyj, rasprostertyj (*napr. o kryl'jah*)'; *dalbay-* 'raspravljat'sja'; *dalbañna-* 'mahat' (vzmahivat') kryl'jami; porhat'; (*peren.*) begat', suetit'sja'; Tof. *dalbañnat-* 'mahat' kryl'jami'; *dalbaġar* 'širokij i ploskij' (TofRSl.); *dalbay-* 'byt' širokim i ploskim' (Rassadin 1971); Khak. *talbañna-* 'mahat' kryl'jami; mahat' rukami (*o rebenke*)';
Turki: Uzb. *tolpin-* 'bit' kryl'jami, stremjas' vzletet' (*o pticah*); (*peren.*) poryvat'sja, stremit'sja, ustremljat'sja;
Yakut: *talbā* 'razmahivanie rukoju' (Pek. 3: 2538), *talbar-* 'vsparhivat'' (Pek. 3: 2539); *talbār-* 'raskinut' ruki' (Pek. 3: 2539); *talbātā-* 'mahat', razmahivat' čem-libo (*napr. plet'ju, volosom*)' (Pek. 3: 2539);
Chuvash: –;
Khalaj: –.

Álmos as *táltos*?

This article, as I indicated in the opening statement, discusses the etymology of a Hungarian personal name, *Álmos*, and a Hungarian common noun, *táltos*.

The article concludes that *Álmos*, the name of the father of Árpád, the leader of the Hungarian tribes during the conquest, may be considered a verbal derivative of the Turkic verb **alï-* 'to be entranced'. The Hungarian common noun *táltos* may also be of Turkic origin, and the Turkic verbal base *tal-* (< Ancient Turkic **talï-*), which can be considered the ultimate etymon of the verb, may also have meant 'to be entranced'.

If these etymological explanations prove to be true, we can conclude that Álmos, the father of the chieftain of the conquering Hungarian tribes, held a sacral position.

Accordingly, his son, Árpád, as chieftain of the conquering Hungarian tribes in 895, could hardly have occupied the position of warrior chief, or *gyula*, as he was in fact the sacral leader of the Magyars.

Abbreviations

Az. = Azerbaijanian, see Azizbekov (ed.) 1985
BRH see Uraqsin 1996
Bšk. = Bashkir, see BRH
Chuv. = Chuvash, see Skvorcov 1982
Cl. see Clauson 1972
Cr-Tat. = Crimean Tatar, see Asanov et al. (eds.) 1988
Doerfer, TMEN see Doerfer 1963–1975
Gag. = Gagauz, see Baskakov (ed.) 1973
Id. = *Kitâb al-İdrâk li-lisân al-Atrâk*, see Caferoğlu 1931
Kar. = Karaim
Kar. C = Crimean dialect of Karaim, see Baskakov et al. (eds.) 1974
Kar. H = Halič dialect of Karaim, see Baskakov et al. (eds.) 1974
Kar. T = Trakai dialect of Karaim, see Baskakov (eds.) 1974
Kāš. = Maḥmūd al-Kāšġarī, see Dankoff and Kelly (eds.) 1984
Kirg. = Kirghiz, see Judahin 1965
Khak. = Khakas, see Baskakov (ed.) 1953
Khalaj see Doerfer and Tezcan 1980
Kkalp. = Karakalpak, see Baskakov 1951
Kmk. = Kumyk, see Bammatov (ed.) 1969
KWb. see Ramstedt 1935
Kzk. = Kazakh, see Mahmudov and Musabaev 1954
Mo. = Mongolian, see Lessing et al. 1973
Nog. = Noghay, see Baskakov (ed.) 1963
Nuyg. = New Uyghur, see Rahimov (ed.) 1968
Oir. = Oirot, see Baskakov (ed.) 1947
Oir. Kmd. = dialect of the Oirot, see Baskakov 1972
Oir. Tuba = dialect of the Oirot, see Baskakov 1966
Pek. see Pekarskij 1959
REW see Räsänen 1969
Sal. = Salar, see Tenišev 1976a

Sev. see Sevortjan 1974–1980
SIB-TAT. = Siberian Tatar, see Tumaševa 1992
TAT. = Tatar, see Golovkina (ed.) 1966
TESz. see Benkő et al. (eds.) 1967–1984
TKM. = Turkmen, see Baskakov et al. (eds.) 1968
TOF. = Tofalar, see TofRSl; see Rassadin 1971.
TofRSl. see Rassadin 1995
TU. = Republican Turkish, see Mustafaev et al. (eds.) 1977
TUV. = Tuvan, see Pal'mbah (ed.) 1955
UW see Röhrborn 1977–1994
UZB. = Uzbek, see Borovkov (ed.) 1959
YAKUT see Pek.
YUYG. = Yellow Uyghur, see Malov 1957; Tenišev 1976

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The Tibetan Weather-Magic Ritual of a Mongolian Shaman[1]

ÁGNES BIRTALAN BUDAPEST

This fieldwork-based paper describes a unique Mongolian shamanic ritual of non-Mongolian—in all probability Tibetan—origin. The author, who is participating in permanent field research among the Mongolian populations of Western and Northern Mongolia, had the opportunity to observe a weather-magic ritual performed in and around the tent of Kürlää, a Western Mongolian shaman, in August 1995. One type of weather-magic ritual, performed to bring on rain, storms, etc., is well known among the nomads of Inner Asia and also among Mongolian peoples from the European Kalmyks, through the Siberian Buriats, to the settled Mongolian population of Inner Mongolian China. Analysis of the bad weather-averting rituals of the Buddhist populations of Tibet, China and India and the Western Mongolian ritual reported here enables us to investigate a complex system of multicultural contacts between Mongolian and other cultures and the religious thought of different peoples. The paper describes the ritual and presents comparative tables of the two main types of Tibetan and Mongolian weather-magic rituals.

REMARKS ON YELLOW SHAMANISM

During the nine years' fieldwork (1991–99) of the Hungarian–Mongolian joint expedition in search of Mongolian folklore, customs, rituals and folk beliefs and conducting research on dialects[2], we had the opportunity

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[1] A paper on a similar topic was presented at the 7th Seminar of Tibetan Studies in Bloomington, Indiana by the author in 1998.

[2] This fieldwork was made possible with a grant from the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund, no. T 32087.

to meet practising shamans who represent both the ancient and the syncretised Mongolian belief systems.[3]

In 1992 and 1995 we observed the activities of a hereditary shaman family living in the Uws district of Western Mongolia, and on the second occasion (1995) we also had the opportunity to attend a weather-making ritual performed by a member of the family to terminate a storm with heavy rain and lightning. A ritual undertaken to avert a storm is not typical of Mongolian shaman practices, and our description and analysis offer the first account of this unique and, in its origin, non-Mongolian ritual.

The shaman family in Uws belongs to a particular type of Mongolian shamans, the so-called *šar böö, šariin böö, šar jügiin böö* in Khalkha-Mongolian and also in the language of the Western Mongolian Oirats; cf. written Mongolian *sir-a böge*), "yellow shamans or lamaised shamans, shaman of yellow direction[4]". These practice both traditional and lamaised shaman rituals but in the Buddhist manner. They recite Buddhist texts, use Buddhist objects and make prayer gestures like those of Buddhist monks. As a consequence of the early (17th century) and strong lamaisation of Western Mongolia, the number of "black shamans"—Khalkha, Oirat *xar böö* or Mongolian *qar-a böge*—diminished significantly over the centuries and, compared with other regions, only a limited number of practising shamans remained among the Oirats in the 20th century. Apart from Kürlää and his family, there is at present one other practising shaman in the Uws district. The activities of this young woman, whose name is Amarǰargal, are even more influenced by Buddhist and Tibetan traditions than those of Kürlää's family.[5]

The colour symbolism of Mongolian shamanism is based on the opposition of black and white (i.e. black and white shamanism) and is of Siberian origin. This symbolism refers to the power of the shamans as it relates to their contacts with the spiritual world. "Yellow shamanism" is of later origin and indicates Buddhist influence. Yellow shamanism

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[3] For a short summary of the first five years' activity of the expedition, see Sárközi and Birtalan 1997.

[4] *Sir-a ǰüge-yin böge*, Mongolian *ǰüge*, 'direction'; cf. *qar-a ǰüge-yin böge*, 'shaman of black direction'.

[5] The activities of the shamaness Amarǰargal will be discussed in another paper.

has not been studied in depth; the phenomenon has been touched on on the level of the terminology and of its probable origin. In his short article concerning the colour symbolism of shamanism, Rinchen identifies yellow shamanism as the offspring of white shamanism: "Many of the incarnations of the Buddhist saints in Mongolia with good grace had proposed to the White Shamans and Shamanesses to accept willingly, like their White Ancestor Spirits the new Yellow religion. All the White Shamans and Shamanesses embracing Buddhism received the name yellow shamans and shamanesses." (Rinchen 1984: 23) Further, Rinchen (1984: 24) remarked on the Tibetan character of their rituals. Otgonii Pürew, one of the foremost experts on Mongolian shamanism, defines yellow shamans as follows: "Shamans, who lost the basic content of the Mongolian Shamanism, carry out the (traditional) rituals only formally, worship the terrifying protector deities of Buddhism, are called 'yellow shamans'." (Pürew 1999: 58) He also notes that the central deity of yellow shaman worship is Dayan degereki.[6] According to our observations, in Western Mongolia yellow shamanism has lost even the traditional externals of its rituals (e.g. the use of traditional garment, headgear, drum, Jew's harp, etc.). Of their traditional shaman objects, Kürlää's family has kept only an *ongon*—a representation of protector spirits—on the altar and a mirror. The ritual objects of the shamaness Amarǰargal were without exception of Buddhist origin. A detailed and fieldwork-based analysis of yellow shamanism will follow this article.

A Hereditary Shaman Family in Western Mongolia

Kürlää's family has a long shamanic tradition. They explained that they are native Mongols whose Mongolian ancestors lived in Tuva. They were invited to Mongolia by a Western Mongolian prince to heal

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[6] Dayan degereki (Mongolian), Dayin deerx (Khalkha) or Däin deerk (Oirat) was originally a fertility god who became the main figure in shamanic initiations and was canonised by the Buddhist faith as a warrior god, similar to the Sülde, "holy charisma, genius, spirit", of the ancient religion of the Mongols. During our fieldwork we collected a large amount of material—invocations (in Mongolian and Tibetan), myths and stories—about this god, which will be published in a separate volume in co-authorship with Alice Sárközi. The place of Dayan Degereki's Buddhist worship has been rebuilt at Cagaan Üür in Northern Mongolia. The former site of shamanic and pre-shamanic rituals, a cave, is still worshipped.

his son and remained there because of the political changes at the beginning of the 20th century.[7] There are now two practising shamans in the family: the mother, Yamanaa Čuluun (referred to as Čuluun in the account that follows), and her son Xürelbaatar, who is known in the district as "Kürlää" (in Oirat dialectical form). They belong to the hereditary type of shaman—being "born" to become shamans—and they obtain shamanic power from generation to generation; as the shamaness Čuluun explained to us, anyone in the family can become a shaman. In the socio-cultural sphere they occupy there is a need for their services, so they have the opportunity to carry out several of the traditional shaman practices. The shaman's activities are based on the mutual relationship of the human and spiritual worlds. The basis of Kürlää and Čuluun's activity is also a continuous connection with the numerous *genii loci*—the "environmental" spirits, the so-called *ezn* in Oirat (cf. Khalkha *ejen*, Mongolian *eǰen*)—which cause breakdown of the balance in social and private life, the natural environment, health, etc. We have discussed the fields of activity of the son and his mother in a previous study, so here we provide just an outline to illustrate the background of the weather-magic ritual and its place among other activities.

As already mentioned, the family's activities include almost all of the traditional Mongolian shamanic practices: healing, divining (including the finding of lost property), fortune-telling, performing burial rituals and undertaking sacrifices, such as *seter*. A summary is given below.

1. Healing with the aid of trance but without the shaman garment and drum (which were confiscated from Čuluun's mother, Yamaa, in the early 1960s). Čuluun usually visits patients in their tents and banishes the demons causing illness. There seems to be a mutual sharing of activities between mother and son; usually when the mother goes to heal she does so with the help of "magic formula" *mantra*s and *dhāraṇī*s (Birtalan 1996: 91–92).

2. Finding lost cattle and other property with the help of a shamanic mirror. This activity is Kürlää's task.

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[7] Decision to stay in Mongolia probably happened after the Treaty of Kiakhta (1915); see Birtalan 1996: 87. The detailed story of the family and a lineage of the shamans are given in the quoted article.

3. Sending off the souls of the dead and helping them to find a better rebirth. Buddhist chants are recited for the purpose. The ritual appears to be carried out by the mother (Birtalan 1996: 95–97).

4. Kürlää and his mother no longer perform live animal sacrifice, such as *seter*,[8] using instead two figures representing livestock (a red horse consecrated to the terrifying deity J̌amsran or Beg-ce and a black ram consecrated to Mahākāla) on their altar.

5. Fortune-telling and divining with the help of 41 pebbles or pieces of sheep dung.

6. Pacifying angry spirits and lords of territories or places.

7. Performing the weather-magic ritual to avert storms.

Almost all of their activities were discussed in a previous study, and the rest of this article is devoted to the weather-magic ritual.

Weather-Magic in Historical Sources and Recent Folk Beliefs

According to historical sources, among the Mongols the main aim of weather-magic was to bring on bad weather, storms and lightning for use as meteorological weapons in war. There are many Mongolian and non-Mongolian (Persian, Chinese, European) accounts, most written during the period of the Great Mongolian Empire, which mention the use of weather-magic rituals by the Mongols against their enemies. Examples are *The Secret History of the Mongols*, Juwainī's *History of the World Conqueror* (*Tārīkh-i Jahān-gushāi*, mid-thirteenth century) and Rashīd ad-Dīn's *Collected Histories* (*Jāmi' at-tawārīkh*, early 14th century), along with the later chronicles, such as *Altan tobči* by Blo-bzan bstan-'jin (1655), *The Golden Chronicle* (1651–62) and *The Yellow History* (*Sir-a tuγuǰi*).[9]

In his work, Ádám Molnár (1996) discussed Inner Asian weather-magic in detail, touching also on the Mongolian data. As a reference for traditional Mongolian weather-magic, I would like to quote here only a less-known fragment of the *Sir-a tuγuǰi*, "Yellow Chronicle", describing the flight of the last Yüan emperor Toγon Temür (1333–68)

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[8] Mongolian *seter*, cf. Tibetan *che-thar* (Birtalan 1996: 93, 97).

[9] For details see Molnár 1996.

from China back to the centre of Inner Asia. The Mongols were protected from the Chinese warriors with the help of weather-magic:

Biligtü, the son of Uqaγatu qaγan caused an enormous storm using a rainstone, and all the Chinese soldiers and their horses perished. Some soldiers were hurled at the walls (by the wind). (Shastina 1957: 55, 142).[10]

Besides the historical records, ethnographic and anthropological materials describe several kinds of weather-magic ritual performed by the Mongols to cause rain. The rituals comprise the following types:

1. Making rain or storm by using the so-called *ǰada* (Mongolian *ǰada*, Khalkha *jad*, Buriat *zada*, Oirat-Kalmyk *zad*) stone or *ǰada* root. *J̌ada* is mainly understood to be a certain stone, mostly the bezoar, found in the intestines of ruminants such as cows or goats but sometimes also in the stomach of birds.[11] A meteorite fragment can also be used. The methods employed are those of analogous magic: most often a specialist, called *ǰadači* in Mongolian, puts the stone into water (or his mouth) to cause rain. Among the Buriats in Siberia there is a belief that *ǰada* is a special root, used not only by hunters but also by certain animals (goose, swan, deer).[12] The stormy weather caused by the root is also called *zada*. In Mongolian folk belief, not only professional rainmakers or shamans but also the heroes of folktales and historical personages were able to use the *ǰada*-stone.[13]

2. An Inner Mongolian researcher, L. Qurčabaγatur, mentioned the following methods of rainmaking as being in use even in contemporary times by the Mongols of Inner Mongolia:

(1) Throwing sheep or goat dung (*qorγol, qorγal*) towards the sky.

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[10] *Uqaγatu qaγan-u küü Bilig-tü ǰadalaǰu yeke siγurγan bolǰu kitad ere aqta qoyar ükübe. J̌arimγan čerig anu kerem kürtele čabčibai.*

[11] For a more detailed description see Molnár 1996: 126–134.

[12] It is remarkable that these animals, which could be considered as totemic animals of certain Mongolian tribes (deer, swan), are able to cause *zada*-weather. In addition, the blood of a wolf shed during the *battue*-hunting might cause *zada* (Khangalov 1958: 408; 1960: 69).

[13] For more about the Kalmyk data on *zada*-magic collected by P.S. Pallas, see below.

(2) Chasing dogs and asking the sky for rain.

(3) Chanting songs like "Air of the Heaven" (*Tengri-yin aγar*).[14]

(4) A very common and widespread method of rainmaking is the *qudduγ takiqu,* 'offering at a well'. This ritual is practised by the Khorchins (*qorčin*) of Inner Mongolia. The male members of the community visit the well when the moon rises. Half-naked, they put willow wreaths on their heads and walk around the well. The eldest member of the group (mostly the one who conducts the stone cairn ritual, too) chants a ritual song and the others answer with a magical formula; they then pour water on each other's heads while shouting: "It has started to rain, it has started to rain."

(5) Rituals similar to the well offering are performed at brooks, ponds and rivers. If the participants meet a man on their way to the offering place, they force him to go with them. (Qurčabaγatur and Üǰüm-e 1991: 344)

Spirits and Deities of Waters, Rain and Storm in Mongolian Mythology

The first mentions of the ancient type of *genii loci* such as the *ongγon*, etc., are found in Mongolian translations of Tibetan or Chinese Buddhist texts. Descriptions of their appearance and documentation concerning their representation are only available from later sources (e.g. the lithographs in the encyclopedic work of P.S. Pallas).

The spirits of water are invoked to bring on rain or storms in traditional Inner Asian weather-magic, but there is no clear identification or description of the spirits or deities in the earliest historical sources. In later sources, such as the diaries and notes of travellers and the ethnographic materials of the 19th and 20th centuries, the lords of waters (including rain and storm) are mostly identified with chthonic spirits, the owner spirits of territories or lords of the underworld. According to the latest data (including my own fieldwork material), the territory-owning spirits are responsible for any event pertaining to water. In the current mythology and belief system, conceptions of the spirits of water

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[14] A similar rain song was collected by Kara (1970: 84–85) among the Inner Mongolian Dsharuts.

and earth have merged and territorial or tribal spirits possess the characteristics of water spirits. A clearer concept of water spirits is indicated in the syncretic Buddhist offering texts, but the Indo-Tibetan concept of water lords, the Nāgas, and the Chinese notion of the dragon cult influenced them significantly.

According to the evidence in the offering texts and ethnographic materials, the lords, spirits and owners of the element of water are imagined in both zoomorphic and anthropomorphic forms either as snakes (dragons) or as human beings, and in Mongolian are called *luus*. The *luus* are descendants of the gods, living in Heaven—a reference to the relation of rain to the sky. In Mongolian the spirits and deities of waters are also called *baγumal*, and in Khalkha, Oirat *buumal*, 'the descended', and they live in the middle (human) world and the underworld. In Buddhist versions of the myths about their descent they originate from the world-mountain Mount Meru (in Mongolian, Sümber).

The descended spirits of the middle (and under) worlds, like the shamans, function as mediators between the deities and humankind and, more importantly from the point of view of the members of a community, as *omnipotent* lords and protectors. If the spirit-lords are offended, they cause damage or disaster to the community. The process of most Mongolian shamanic rituals is as follows: 1. the spirits become angry because they have been offended; 2. a religious specialist determines the cause of the harm; 3. a religious specialist pacifies the offended spirit. The purpose of the rain-averting ritual performed by shaman Kürlää was to pacify the offended, angry spirit of the territory.

The Weather-Magic Ritual of Shaman Kürlää

Here I will give a description and an outline of the process of the ritual, focusing on the mutual relation of the following phenomena: the time, the space and the objects, and the communicative situation. The *aim* of the ritual: to avert a storm and lightning. The *place* of the ritual: inside and outside the shaman's tent; inside: on the sacred place, in front of the altar, on the northwest side of the yurt; outside: mostly in the sacred directions north and northwest and in front of the door of the shaman's tent. The *time and duration* of the ritual: the afternoon of 19 August 1995, lasting 2 to 2.5 hours. *Participants:* the members of the

shaman's family and anyone else who arrived during the storm. *Accessories of the ritual:*

1. Garment: because the shaman's costume had been confiscated in the 1960s, the shaman wore his usual clothes with a baseball hat in place of the necessary headgear; the hat was not worn continuously during the ritual.

2. Ritual objects. All the objects used during the ritual belonged to the *altar*. This was placed on the northwest side of the yurt and consisted of the following objects:

(1) *Awdr*, a wooden chest, ritual objects on the chest and several objects above the chest, on the wall of the yurt (Figs. 1–2);

(2) *Körg*, a portrait of the shamaness Yamaa surrounded by a piece of blue sacrificial *xadg* (Figs. 1–2);

(3) *Erk*, Yamaa's rosary, hanging in most cases on the right side of the portrait (Figs. 1–2);

(4) A representation of the protector spirits and of the threefold world conception, an *ongon* (Mongolian *ongγon*)[15], one of the most important ritual objects, symbolising the world with animal figures: a raven (upper world), and 21 snakes made of textile and silk (underworld); some rattles were attached to the *ongon* (Figs. 1–2);

(5) *Tol'*, a shamanic mirror hanging above the altar chest (Figs. 1–2);

(6) *Cögc*, several small goblets (Mongolian *čögče*) for the offering of juniper incense (*arc*) (Figs. 1–2);

(7) *Setr*, two small figures on the chest consecrated to two Buddhist *dharmapālas*. They were marked with a piece of *seter* tassel.[16] The aim of *seter* consecration is connected with fertility magic.[17] The red horse (*ulaan mör*) was consecrated to the "Red Protector" (Bayit Ulaan yidm)[18], the black ram (*xar xuc*) to "Mahākāla" (Bayit Xar maxgal) (Fig. 2).

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[15] A detailed description of the *ongons* in current use by Mongolian shamans is given by Birtalan 1996: 28-46.

[16] Cf. note 8.

[17] The fertility rituals, spirits and ceremonies of different Mongolian populations will be the topic of another article (Birtalan, "Mongolian Fertility Rituals and Spirits", forthcoming).

[18] The figure of the red ram was called Ulaan sakuus, "red talisman", by shamaness Čuluun in 1992. This could be the Tibetan *dharmapāla* Beg-che, by another Tibetan

(8) A Tibetan blockprint, kept in the chest and called *sudur* by the shaman (Figs. 3–4), contained an invocation and magic formulas to Cagaan šüxert (Sanskrit Sitātapatrā, Tibetan gDugs-dkar-mo-čan-ma, Mongolian Čaγan sikürtei), the "Goddess with White parasol" (Fig. 5).

The Process of the Ritual

On the basis of its structure the following division of the ritual can be suggested: 1. the initial phase (purification of the ritual place, invoking the ancestral protector spirit); 2. the investigating phase (invoking the local spirits (*genii loci*); and 3. the pacifying phase (pacification of the angry spirits).

1. Initial phase: purifying ritual, invoking the ancestral protector spirit (shamaness Yamaa):

Kürlää began his ritual inside the yurt. He lit the incense offering (juniper in goblets) on the altar in front of the portrait of shamaness Yamaa, his ancestral protector spirit (Fig. 2). This kind of opening phase, performed with purifying and invoking purposes, can be considered as the usual way any Mongolian shaman ritual might begin. The shaman purified the ritual place inside the tent and invoked his main protector spirit, his grandmother Yamaa. He stood in front of the altar with his palms joined in prayer, a gesture common with yellow shamans and Buddhist monks; a black shaman would never make such a gesture.

2. Investigating phase: invoking the lords of the territory, investigating the reason for the bad luck or calamity:

The shaman took the shamanic mirror from its place (above the altar chest), set it down on the honoured or sacred place of the yurt (in front of the altar) and began to call the local protector spirit(s), the *sawdag*s, which were assumed to have caused the storm. Chanting an invocation to the spirits, he drew the first finger of his right hand clockwise several times over the surface of the mirror. As the shamaness Čuluun explained, the mirror should show the shaman why the spirits had become angry.

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name lČam-sring, Khalkha J̌amsran. The black protector is the Sanskrit Mahākāla, Tibetan Nag-po čh'en-po, Mongolian Yeke qar-a, Bayit Maxgal.

(1) The shaman put the mirror on the altar chest, knelt down before the altar and called the local spirits (Fig. 4). Kneeling with palms together in prayer is typical of yellow shamans. The shaman continued to call the spirits, the lords of the territory. Then he stood up and several times clapped his hands and snapped his fingers to draw the attention of the spirits to his ritual. This is also typical among Buddhist monks—for example, during their philosophical disputes—although hand-clapping is also found among non-lamaised shamans.

(2) The shaman took the Tibetan blockprint dedicated to gDugs-dkar-mo-čan-ma (Bayit *Cagaan šüxert*) and started to recite from it to invoke her protection (Fig. 4). The goddess gDugs-dkar-mo-čan-ma is regarded as a general protector from all kinds of bad luck and calamity. In her image the characteristics of an ancient female protector spirit are merged with the Buddhist phenomenon.

(3) The shaman put the blockprint on his knees and, with his joined palms, touched his three upper *cakra*s (his chest, his forehead and the crown of his head) (Fig. 4). We suppose that this kind of praying may be regarded as a kind of unification with the spirits of Buddhist origin.[19]

3. Pacifying phase: pacification of the angry spirits:

(1) Outside the yurt

Having completed the investigation of why the lords of the territory spirits had become angry, the shaman left the yurt in heavy rain, went to the northwest side of the yurt and lit a fire for the incense offering (Fig. 6). He burned incense in front of the tent as well. The offering of juniper incense serves both as a purification and as a means of reconciling the angry spirits and deities. During this part of the procedure the shaman continued to make the joined-palm prayer gesture.

(2) Inside the yurt

The shaman re-entered the tent several times and continued the pacification phase. He burned incense inside the tent, as well. He called the spirits and asked them to be benevolent and merciful to the members of his community and to travellers.

(3) Outside the yurt

When the rain died down the shaman took milk in a bucket and the offering spoon called *yüsn cacl* 'the ninefold libations', and performed

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[19] This statement requires substantiation by further research.

libation to the lords of the cardinal directions and to all other spirits (Fig. 7).

The storm calmed down and, 2–2.5 hours after the ceremony had begun, a double rainbow appeared in the sky. The participants in the ritual—especially the shamaness Čuluun—considered the appearance of the rainbow to be a sign of the benevolence of the spirits, the lords of the territories.

As far as we know, no similar ritual has been described among the Mongols.

The Origin of Kürlää's Weather-Magic Ritual

In some respects, however, Kürlää's ritual shows similarities with other, also black, shamanic offering rituals undertaken to pacify angry deities or spirits (Mongolian *γaǰar-un eǰen, sabdag* ← Tibetan *sa-bdag*, Mongolian *sibdeg* (← Tibetan *gži-bdag*) who are offended because people have disturbed their domain. This was the main motive for Kürlää's ritual, too. Moreover, the methods used to pacify spirits are also usual among black shamans. The shamaness Čuluun explained as follows:

Altan delkäädään cacaǰ baisan.	"Offered libation for the spirits of the golden world."
Sawdagiin nom umšlǰee.	"Prayed to the spirits of territory."
Arc sang täwǰ kilingiin täälǰee.	"Burning juniper incense offering pacified the angry spirits."

She said that the spirits can become angry for several reasons:

Sawdag yanj büriin yumnaas uurlnaa. [...] *Aa in manaa mongolčuud irt deer üyees sabdag šiwdr* (sic!) *šüteǰ, taxiǰ irsn odoo üyid bol tiim bääxgüi, sawdag šiwdrii sütdeggüi. Tiim učraas uurlǰ kilinglnee. Xün amitn yanj büriin aaš gargaǰ, yanj büriin bodl törǰ, in odaa sawdag šiwdgiin kiling bolǰagaa.*

[...] *Manaa in nutg geleng sawdagtää. Bayin xäärxan gidik inees uragšaa küükün sawdagtää ünees xoišoo geleng sawdagtää. In owaa xangäägii nig taxiǰ šütexgüi, iim bolox učraas üye üyend dogširdg. Odaa näämn sar yür odaa maš kecüü, öwčin jowlong neg ix, yanj büriin awaar garaad, im xoyir sar, tigeed tir odoo dogšin saruud ...*

"There are many reasons why the spirits get angry. Our Mongols used to believe since early times in spirits, offered things to them, but now they do not believe either in local spirits, or in lords of territories. That is why they get furious. People do not behave themselves, do not think properly. There are many bad intentions. This [storm] was caused by the fury of the spirits.

The lord of our territory is a monk. The owner spirit of the Bayan-Xairxan southwards from here is a maiden, northwards from here is a monk. The stone cairn in the Xangai was not offered, that is why they get angry from time to time. It is August now, this is the most difficult period. There is a lot of misfortune, illness and accidents. These months are difficult ..."[20]

A new, and for the black shamans unknown, element of the ritual is the reciting of the *Sitātapatrā* text in Tibetan: *Cagaan šüxertiin nom tangad keleer umšiĭee*. The type of text—and especially the use of Tibetan—belong to the ways of the lamaised yellow shamans. However, not only the Buddhist elements of the ritual, such as the use of Tibetan, the prayer gesture and the recitation of a Buddhist *dhāraṇī* text, but also the aim of the weather-magic ritual seem to be foreign to the original Mongolian context of folk beliefs. As mentioned earlier, there are many examples of rain or storm-making rituals among the Mongols. However, there is only a single instance where evidence is found of a rain-*averting* ritual in the historical sources or ethnographic data.

In his *Travels* Marco Polo mentions a rain-averting ritual, performed in the Emperor Kubilai's court, during which magicians of non-Mongolian origin turned away bad weather and even clouds above the Emperor's palace.[21] According to Polo, these magicians were called "Tebet" and "Keshimur", names that surely refer to their origin.

The Tibetan and Kashmiri magicians in the residence of Emperor Kubilai may have used methods similar to those of contemporary Tibetan weather-makers or Mongolian yellow shamans. Moreover, the Buddhist methods of rain-making merged with traditional methods. From P.S. Pallas we know that later the Buddhist monks also learned Mongolian ways of weather-magic: he reported that the Khalmyk Buddhist monks used the *zada*-stone to bring on rain and recited *tarni* texts (Sanskrit

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[20] A fragment from the audio material recorded in 1995.

[21] See Marco Polo in Yule 1921. I: 301.

dhāraṇī) to several Buddhist images for this purpose. Pallas mentioned a kind of bad weather (clouds) averting ritual that was possible only when the clouds had been caused by another magician.[22]

Further, we would like to demonstrate typological similarities and differences between the Mongolian and the Tibetan types of weather-magic on the basis of our newly collected data and the facts given by Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1956: 467–480). For the Mongolian data we used further fieldwork material, historical sources and ethnographic and anthropological records.

On the basis of the comparative material, one can verify with certainty the distinct difference between the rain-averting ritual and traditional Mongolian weather-magic. Marco Polo's account shows the similarity of the aim of weather-magic ritual between the 13th century Tibetan and the recent Mongolian data collected during our fieldwork. Although the ritual of averting rain became part of the yellow shaman's activity, it shows syncretic characteristics in the recited texts, the prayer gestures, the ritual objects and the process of the ritual.

We cannot verify the continuity of the ritual from Kubilai's time, but we can show the closeness and similarities between the rain-averting ritual of the Mongols and its Tibetan counterpart.

The following comparative tables sum up the two main types of Tibetan and Mongolian weather-magic rituals.

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[22] "Sie wollen auch im Stande sein aufsteigende Wolken zu vertreiben, wenn sie durch ähnliche menschliche Zaubereien entstanden sind; welches sie daran erkennen wollen, wenn solche Wolken zuerst, als ganz kleines Gewölk, am Horizont aufsteigen." (Pallas 1776–1801. II: 348).

	MONGOLIAN	TIBETAN
Aim	1. bringing on a storm or rain and using it as a meteorological weapon (in the historical sources and in folklore) 2. bringing on a storm to avert drought or provide cover for the stealing of cattle (in the anthropological data)	1. pacifying the angry *klus* 2. purifying them of human sins
Designation of the ritual	1. *ǰada bariqu* 'using *ǰada*-stone' 2. *qur-a boroγan-u takilγ-a* 'offerings for rain'	*khru gsol* 'washing, purifying ritual'
The process of the ritual	*ǰada bariqu* (as described in later sources) 1.1. reciting magic formulas *tarni* (to Očirwaani*, Manǰšir**, Xonǰim***) 1.2. putting a *ǰad(a)*-stone into a vessel with water and pouring the water together with the stone in the direction from which the rain should come *qur-a boroγan-u takilγ-a* 2.1. offerings at a well or brook (half-naked men can participate) 2.2. men wearing willow wreaths pour water on each other	1. reciting *mantras* 2. pouring yellow-coloured water from the washing vessel (*khrus bum*) on to a mirror (*me long*); the mirror reflects the *klus*, polluted by the sins of men 3. reading of the three *Klu 'bum* by the priests 4. women of the community circumambulate the monastery carrying the volumes of the *bKa' 'gyur* and the *bsTan 'gyur*; the participants pour water on each other

* Kalmuck Očirbani, Khalkha Očirwaani ← Sanskrit Vajrapāṇi.

** Kalmuck Manzšir, Khalkha Manǰšir ← Sanskrit Mañjuśrī.

*** Kalmuck Xonǰim, Khalkha Xončin, Mongolian Qongsim ← Uyghur ← Chinese Guanshiyin ~ Sanskrit Avalokiteśvara.

Table 1. Typology of Mongolian and Tibetan rituals for inducing rain

	MONGOLIAN	TIBETAN
Aim	pacification of the *sawdg*, (*sawdag*) averting storm, lightning	pacifying the *klus*, averting hail, lightning, storm
Name	*sawdgiin kiling täälx* 'stopping the anger of lords of the territories'	
Leading person	yellow shaman (*sir-a böge*)	weather-magician
Belongings, objects, methods	1. altar (*širee*), with all its objects (cf. above) 2. mirror (*toli*) 3. *Cagaan šüxert* text (*Čaγan sikürtü sudur*) 4. juniper incense (*arc*) 5. milk (sacred food), libation spoon (*cagaan idee, yüsn cacl*, cf. Mongolian *čaγan idegen, yesün čačuli*) 6. *mudras*	*tarjanī mudra* reciting the *nanaagadzamuntea mantra* (7 times versus 21 times) burning mustard seeds, *gser skyems* libation throwing salt on the embers, reciting *mantras* and throwing it away *ser srung*, the skull of a raven, snake, mule, dog or monkey, is filled with pieces of paper with astrological signs drawn on them

Table 2. Typology of Mongolian and Tibetan rituals for averting rain

Fig. 1. The shamanic altar on the wooden chest. The portrait of shamaness Yamaa is hanging on the wooden frame of the yurt over the chest, and the *ongon* with the snakes and the crow can be seen to the left of the portrait. The shaman's mirror (*toli*) is thrust between the pole of the yurt and the roof. Photo: Ágnes Birtalan.

Fig. 2. Shaman Kürlää placing an offering of juniper (*arc*) incense on the altar. The two *seter* figures (a black ram and a red horse) and rosemary (*erk*) have been prepared for the ceremony. Photo: Ágnes Birtalan.

Fig. 3. Shaman Kürlää preparing the Sitātatpatrā (Cagan šüxert) text and praying with his rosary. Photo: Ágnes Birtalan.

Fig. 4. Shaman Kürlää praying to the Goddess Sitātapatrā.
Photo: Ágnes Birtalan.

Fig. 5. Caγaan šüxert (Khalkha), Čaγan sikürtü (Mongolian), Sitātapatrā (Sanskrit), gDugs-dkar čan-ma (Tibetan) "The Goddess with White Parasol", after Schumann 1993: 151.

Fig. 6. Shaman Kürlää making an incense offering on the northwest side of the yurt. Photo: Ágnes Birtalan.

Fig. 7. Shaman Kürlää performing a libation with milk to the four cardinal points of the world. Photo: Ágnes Birtalan.

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Two Recently Recorded Selkup Shamanic Songs

OLGA KAZAKEVITCH MOSCOW

Two shaman songs were collected from a Selkup woman in the village of Ratta in the Krasnoselkup district, Russian Federation, in 1996. The first is a novice shaman's song addressed to his or her shaman ancestor, referred to as "grandfather", and the second song is an excerpt from a shamanic rite during which the shaman ascends to the world of the dead. The Selkup texts are provided, together with translations and commentaries.

As far as we know there are no practising shamans among the Northern Selkup nowadays. In 1996, when I was doing fieldwork in the Krasnoselkup district of the Yamalo-Nenets autonomous area where the majority of Northern Selkups reside, the only shaman people spoke of was a man, half-Nenets, half-Selkup, who lived at Nado-Marra, some 40 km to the north of the village of Sidorovsk down the Taz River. This shaman was not regarded as strong and was spoken of more as a participant in folklore festivals. But shamanic tradition is still alive in these places. Sacred sledges with shaman's attributes (shaman dresses, headdresses, images of shaman spirits, drums, etc.) are still drawn through the taiga and tundra of the Middle and Upper Taz River. In 1996, in villages along the Middle and Upper Taz River, the story was being told of a man who had been responsible for the sacred sledge of his family with the belongings of his shaman ancestor and who died some months after donating objects from the sledge to the local museum. In different villages we were shown people sick with shaman's disease (most of whom now try to calm the tormenting spirits with alcohol). Shaman songs ("voices") are still preserved in those families with shaman ancestors. A new, strong Selkup shaman might still appear some day.

The two shamanic songs presented below were recorded on June 16, 1996, in the village of Ratta in the Krasnoselkup district. They were performed on a sunny day near the house of the village administration by Liudmila Vasil'evna Boiakina, a young woman of 29 who had come to the village from the forest by boat that day to participate in the election of a Russian president. She was accompanied by her husband, Eugenii Ivanovich Irikov, and her elder daughter, a girl of eight.

Liudmila Vasil'evna identifies herself ethnically as a Selkup, and her mother tongue is Selkup. She completed seven grades at the boarding school in the village of Tolka; she learned Russian at school and is now bilingual, with Russian as her second language. In her family she speaks both Selkup and Russian. Her father, who she never knew, was Russian, and her mother died when she was one year old. She was brought up by her grandfather and grandmother, with whom she lived in the Upper Taz taiga before going to the boarding school at the age of eight. Her grandmother, Kiprina Tatiana Vasil'evna, was of Ket origin from the village of Kellog. Her grandfather, Vasilii Vasil'evich Boiakin, was of Evenki origin and came to Ratta from the Yenisei River. There is a group of Evenkis from the Boiakin clan in Ratta who have been living with the Selkups for over one hundred years, taking Selkup girls for wives and marrying their daughters to their Selkup neighbours. As a result they have been almost fully assimilated by the Selkups, have switched to speaking Selkup and now the younger generation of the Ratta Boiakins identify themselves as Selkups. The language shift had already begun in the mid-1920s[1]. Relatives joined this group from time to time, coming from outside, just as Vasilii Boiakin had. Vasilii Boiakin was not an ordinary hunter—he was a shaman well known all over the Taz and Turukhan rivers.

When later we played the recording of the songs performed by Liudmila Boiakina to old Selkups in the villages along the Taz River all the listeners stated that the "voice" of Vasilii Boiakin was recognisable in them. When we were in Turukhansk in 1999 we also played the recording to Aleksander Timofeyevich Kusamin, 80 years old, a son of the great shaman Timofei Kusamin who used to perform the great rites held before the winter hunting in which the majority of Selkups from

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[1] See e.g. Skalon 1930.

the Taz–Turukhan area participated every year.[2] Aleksander Timofeyevitch had known Vasilii Boiakin personally and he too recognized his "voice" in the songs performed by Liudmila Vasil'evna.[3]

We had asked Liudmila Vasil'evna, as we asked all interviewed Selkups and Evenkis in Ratta, whether she knew Selkup fairy tales or songs. She said she knew no tales but she could sing us a song. I think that the people gathered around (her husband and two or three others) knew she was going to perform one of her grandfather's songs although she did not tell us it would be a shaman song. She began to sing in a voice that differed quite markedly from her normal speaking voice, a voice that was much lower and somehow constrained. While singing she swung slowly. After finishing the first song she remained silent for a while. The listeners were pleased and we asked her to sing something else. She hesitated for some time and then, as if challenging the audience, she began her second song. The men were startled. Her singing was quite a performance. Her voice became even more constrained than during the first song. It seemed that she really felt what she was singing about and that it caused her pain, until eventually she could hardly sing any more. Then suddenly her singing changed: now it was the song of a victor. When she finished murmurs of disapproval came from the men. This song seemed to be terrifying. The name of the main Selkup devil *kȳsy* was mentioned in it several times—a serious matter. We asked Liudmila Vasil'evna to sing something else but she refused. When later we played the recording to a group of young Selkup girls one of them said: "You'd better not listen to this song. It is too dangerous!"

Selkup informants to whom we played the two songs were not at all eager to help us decipher the text. So there was nothing left for me but to undertake the task myself. During the fieldwork in the Turukhansk

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[2] This rite is also mentioned by Prokofyeva (1961: 69): "Before the autumn hunting Selkups had large meetings in the past. Not only members of one clan were gathered but all living on the boarding territories of the clans. At those meetings sacrifices to various spirits were made to ask the spirits to give a successful hunting. Sacrifices were made to the sky giving life to the animals and to the lower spirit who could do harm to the people. Selkup themselves told us about those meetings. They are also mentioned in the folklore."

[3] Compare to Prokofyev's (1930: 365) remark: "It often happened that elderly people who knew the grandfather recognized his tunes in the shaman invocations of his grandson."

district in 1999 I showed the results to some of my Selkup informants and asked them about their content; their answers suggested that on the whole the deciphering had been done correctly. Unfortunately, they did not wish to discuss the details, especially of the second song. Some parts of the songs are still not quite clear to me; these places will be mentioned in the commentaries.

The texts are written down in international phonetic transcription. They represent the Upper Taz subdialect of the northern (Taz–Turukhan) dialect of Selkup. The letters B, D, G, N and Z are used to indicate half-voiced consonants pronounced in the intervocal position.

There are quite a few "empty" syllables in both songs (*na naj, ja jin,* etc.), something akin to "la-la-la". Sometimes a syllable or two of a word is repeated (*tupal'ɛnɯŋa-ɒɛŋo*). All such meaningless syllables, as well as the non-regular *j* appearing in the final position of some words after vowels, are given in the text of the songs in parentheses.

Texts

Shaman Song 1

1. *nıl'ɒʒı myta kətsan myta*	Thus, it seems, grandson, it seems
2. *mēl'ɒy kojmytäšik (myn)!*	always sing!
3. *sər il'ɒʒany tɛštnɒyn*	My grey grandfather's, you,
4. *il'ɒʒa mannym ʙəγə(ja)m:*	grandfather, I see[4]:
5. *sel'ɒʒi myta qorqəj my*	seven, it seems, bears
6. *il'ɒʒa mēl'ɒy zaŋa(jə),*	grandfather is always checking,
7. *mēl'ɒy myta kojmyty*	always, it seems, he is singing.
8. *kətsan myta mēl'ɒy (my).*	Grandson, it seems, always,
9. *mēl'ɒy tɛnyrʙašiŋ (myn)*	always think
10. *kutar štnɒy soqyššaŋ.*	how I asked you.
11. *il'ɒʒa, myta, il'ɒʒaly*	Grandfather, it seems, your grandfather,
12. *il'ɒʒaly ny nıl'ɒʒı štn soqyššem:*	your grandfather, there thus I asked you:
13. *kətsan myta mēl'ɒyŋ(aan)*	Grandson, it seems, always,
14. *mēl'ɒy šumpäšyɑ(y) (naj).*	always shamanize.

[4] In other words: "I see you (plural), belonging to my grey grandfather, and grandfather". Here grandfather's spirits, the seven bears mentioned below, are meant.

15. *il'ɒʒan šɪnɒy mēl'ɒy šɪn kojmalʁam.*	Grandfather's you[5] always you I shall sing.
16. *ɪɒynɢaji il'ɒʒaly*	Let your grandfather take
17. *kojmytyla myta (naj)*	while singing, it seems,
18. *sumʁ'ij porqyp tokkalɒɛn.*	he will put on the shaman dress.
19. *kətsan myta n'ɛnna (naj)*	Grandson, it seems, forward
20. *pɪɒʒal'ʁešɪŋ mēl'ɒy (naj).*	begin to slide hopping always.
21. *sɛl'ij qorqyj im'ijan,*	The restless bear grandmothers,[6]
22. *tɛn'i qanɒyza ʁɪɒʒal'ɛnɒyŋ.*	the mind has been frozen, I shall begin to slide hopping.
23. *sɛlɛj myta qorqyj il'ɒʒa*	The restless, it seems, bear grandfather
24. *pical'ʁɛnɒyɢany (naj),*	is sliding hopping (it seems).
25. *mēl'ɒy zaŋa(j) kətsan (myn)*	Always grandson is checking,
26. *pɪɒʒal'azy m'ēl'ɒy (naj),*	he began sliding hopping, always,
27. *mēl'ɒy zaŋa(j). Kukulän,*	always he is checking. Let you rock,
28. *mēl'ɒy kukɛnnanɒy (naj)*	always you will rock,
29. *mēl'ɒy kukys' mat koptany cɔ̄t.*	always rock opposite my place.
30. *mēl'ɒy sözy(j) myta (naj)*	Always spit (man),[7] it seems,
31. *kukɛnnanɒy myta (naj),*	you will rock, it seems,
32. *sɛl'i sərqyj il'ɒʒa (naj),*	the restless grey grandfather,
33. *nyl'ɒak ɔ̄nɛŋ kukɛnnaŋ.*	nearby I shall rock myself.

This song is a typical song sung by a novice, a young shaman, during his apprenticeship[8]. There are two characters in the song: a young shaman called grandson (or granddaughter, as there is no grammatical gender in Selkup and the word *kətsan* means both 'grandson' and 'granddaughter') and his/her shaman-ancestor, his/her late grandfather. The young shaman *sees* his/her grandfather shamanizing, he/she sees his spirit helpers, the seven bears, he/she sees his/her grandfather's activities: here he is singing, checking his spirit helpers, putting on his shaman dress, sliding and hopping and rocking. Sometimes there is a

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[5] In other words: "I shall always sing you (plural), grandfather's songs."

[6] The restless bear grandmothers are grandfather's spirit helpers.

[7] In the shaman language the word *sözy*, 'spit', is used instead of an ordinary *qup*, 'man' (see Pelikh 1972; Kim 1997).

[8] See, e.g., Prokofyeva 1949: 337.

dialog between the novice and his/her grandfather. The shaman-grandfather demands that his grandchild should take up shamanic activities after him: "Grandson, it seems, always, always shamanize". And the grandchild begins to repeat all the actions of his/her grandfather: he/she is singing, checking the spirits, sliding, hopping and rocking. He/she asks grandfather not to leave him/her, to be always by him/her, helping him/her.

The most frequent words in the song are the adverb *mēlɒy*, 'always, all the time, permanently', which is used 15 times in this quite brief text, and the modal word *myta* 'as if, it seems', which appears 12 times. Both seem not to be simply word-jokers helping to maintain the rhythm but appear to be essential for understanding the content of the song. The implication is that the shamanic tradition is permanent, it will never be broken. All that is sung about in the song will *always* exist; generation will follow generation, but grandchild, taking after his shaman-grandfather, will always learn to control his spirits. All that is sung about might be seen only by those who are able to see—by the shamans, not by ordinary people; for the latter all that is sung about appears to be unreal, it merely *seems*.

Shaman Song 2

1. *kȳzy mɔmba (na naj).*	The devil is mad.
2. *kȳzymō jɛnnä(no) ɛn'ɛjaŋ.*	To my devil forward I got frightened.
3. *kȳzy qorqaj myta mēl'ɒy myta kojmɔ̄ŋ.*	The devil, bear, it seems, always, it seems, I am a song.[9]
4. *kȳzy porqaj ima*	The devil, the dress[10], woman
5. *aš'a tokkalɒɛnɒycanɒy.*	you will not put on.
6. *myta mēl'ɒy myta myta (ja jiŋ)*	It seems, always, it seems, it seems,
7. *kojmytɛnɒyŋaŋ(y).*	I shall sing,

[9] In other words: "I am a bear song", which might mean: "I sing invoking the bear, my spirit helper, I sing for it calling it".

[10] Here the shaman dress is meant.

8. *qorqy il'ɒʒa myta mēl'ɒy myta(m).*	bear grandfather, it seems,always, it seems.
9. *s'özym aj myta (naj)*	My spit (my man)[11] again, it seems,
10. *mēl'ɒyɕo (ɕo ɕoj)*	always and for ever
11. *ɒupal'ɛnɒyŋany (na),*	he is trembling (it seems),
12. *il'ɒʒa myta mēl'ɒy ɒaŋal'ɒy mēnɒō.*	grandfather, it seems, is always keeping quiet (soundless) so that he could do.
13. *il'ɒʒa mēl'ɒy myta*	Grandfather, always, it seems,
14. *taŋal'ɒyŋ mētyŋ*	I am keeping quiet (soundless), I am doing.
15. *qorqyj myta (na na)*	The bear, it seems,
16. *qorqyj il'ɒʒa myta (na)*	the bear grandfather, it seems,
17. *mēl'ɒy ɒupalɛnɒyŋa (na).*	always he is trembling.
18. *mēl' nyŋa (ja) ukōn*	Always he is standing ahead,
19. *tupal'ɛnɒɛŋa (ɒɛŋo).*	he is trembling.
20. *il'ɒʒa myta nyŋa mēl'ɒy (ɒom).*	Grandfather, it seems, is standing always.
21. *il'ɒʒa(ɒʒa) qajiqo*	Grandfather, why
22. *tupalonō(m)? Mēl' nyŋaŋ*	should I tremble? All the time I am standing
23. *kȳzynaŋ.*	in the direction of the devil.
24. *mēl'ɒy myta tupal'ɛnɒyŋa nyŋɕaŋ,*	Always, it seems, he is trembling, I am standing,
25. *ɔ̄ŋɕ ɛj myta nyŋɕaŋ.*	a dream again, it seems, I am standing.
26. *qäp irɛj il'ɒʒa mēl'ɒy n'ɪŋ*	Half-moon grandfather, always so much
27. *kə̄ty kyɕytɛŋ.*	wisdom I wish.
28. *il'ɒʒa myta nyŋɕaŋ*	Grandfather, it seems, I am standing,
29. *mēl' nyŋɕaŋ(ɕ) im' ir'ɛj (na ja)*	always I am standing, the woman of the moon[12]
30. *ɒupalɕə ɒən(nn).*	to tremble sinew[13].
31. *mēl'ɒə tupal'ɛnnɛŋ.*	Always I begin trembling.
32. *mēl'ɒy myta nyŋɕa.*	Always, it seems, he is standing.
33. *ɔ̄ŋan il'ɒʒa nyŋɕaja tuʁanɛja.*	My dream's grandfather, let him stand, let him tremble.

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[11] Here again we have the specifically shaman way of designating 'man' with the word 'spit'.

[12] This is an obscure passage, and the suggested interpretation is only one of several possibilities.

[13] So that the sinew trembles.

34. *mēl'ɒy tuʁal'ɒɛnɒyŋa nyŋ.*	He[14] will always make tremble like that.
35. *kȳzy myta nyŋɢa,*	The devil, it seems, is standing,
36. *qorqyj il'ɒʒa myta (ŋa)*	the bear grandfather, it seems,
37. *tuʁalnɛja (yn nyna).*	let him begin to tremble.
38. *ɛj n'yŋɢɔ tuʁalnɛjɛ(nnn).*	Again he is standing, let him begin to tremble.
39. *qorqy myta naj ɛɢa*	The bear, it seems, that is, it so happens,
40. *ɒiŋy jɛnnɛ nɛj ɛɢa*	he is flying forward, that is, it so happens.
41. *ɒəmal' ɒiŋy jɛnnɛ myta*	Let him fly forward, it seems,
42. *ɒəmal' ɒiŋy jɛnn(n).*	let him fly forward.

This song is much more complicated than the first. It is an extract from a shamanic rite during which the shaman goes to the lower world, the world of the dead where the main Selkup devil *kȳzy* reigns. The song begins with the name of the devil, the mention of which is capable of shocking an ordinary Selkup. *Kȳzy* is a word Selkups avoid saying out loud as it is too dangerous. The word is never used in the folklore texts, and no standard euphemism for it is used either. The shaman proclaims that the devil is mad and that he, the shaman, heading for the devil's realms (in the direction of the devil), has become frightened. He begins to tremble and cannot do anything about it, but he goes on singing. Meanwhile his spirit helper, the bear grandfather, is silent. He is standing ahead of the shaman and is also trembling. The shaman tries to keep quiet. He asks his spirit helper why he should tremble all the time. He is standing facing the devil. Just like in a dream. Now he begins to ask for wisdom from the half-moon grandfather—another spirit, a folklore character who was torn into two by the devil and his sky wife, the daughter of the sun. The main spirit helper, the bear spirit, is standing ahead, trembling, as if preparing for a dash. The shaman calls the spirit helper "grandfather of my dream". The devil is also standing, he should begin to tremble. And then there is a dash: the bear spirit flies forward. That's a victory! The bear is quite a traditional spirit helper in the shaman journey to the lower world for Selkups. In a drawing made by Selkup pupils in the 1920s and published by Prokofyeva

[14] The devil.

(1961: Fig. 1.) a shaman is shown flying on a bear—a very appropriate illustration for the Ludmila Boiakina song.

The most frequent words in this song coincide with those of the first: *myta*, 'as if, it seems' (21), indicating the supranormal status of everything depicted in the song, and *mēl'ɒy*, 'always' (16), stressing the permanent character of the shamanic rite. Here, however, the frequencies of the two words are reversed, reflecting the relative importance of the two crucial points of the content: in the second song supranormality is much more to the fore than the permanence of the tradition.

Conclusion

It seems that shamanic tradition is still alive among the Northern Selkup, at least on the Taz River[15], but how long it will last in its present state of just being preserved and hardly practised is another matter. In the quite extensive Selkup text corpora recorded up to now shaman songs are extremely rare. It would be very desirable to make more recordings of these songs as soon as possible and while it is still possible—while there are still people able to perform them.

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[15] In the Turukhan River basin shamanic traditions seem to be gravely damaged.

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A Musical Analysis of Selkup Shamanic Songs

JARKKO NIEMI TAMPERE

This article examines some structural features of Selkup shamanic songs at the level of the relation between the verse-form text of the song and the melody. Although preliminary, the conclusions drawn here may yield new perspectives on the general problem of versification in Samoyed languages and especially in that of the Selkup, whose musical culture is one of the least known among the native music cultures of Western Siberia.

With her performances, Liudmila Vasil'evna Boiakina from the village of Ratta on the upper Taz River offers us a unique opportunity to understand and interpret Selkup *ʒ'umptä*—shamanic songs. The musical culture and singing style of the Selkup Samoyeds has been, until recently, one of the least known among the native peoples of Siberia. This situation is the more exciting in that interpretations of Selkup singing styles will be indispensable in solving the problem of sung communication and versification not just among peoples speaking Samoyed languages but also among the Khanty, the Mańśi and the Ket.

As such, the recent analyses of singing styles and versification in Western Siberia point to certain similarities but, at the same time, to fundamental differences that cannot be explained by linguistic affinity. Thus far, the principles of Nenets (Hajdú 1978; Helimski 1989; Niemi 1998), Nganasan (Helimski 1988) and Khanty (Austerlitz 1956; Lázár 1996) verse and song structures have been analysed quite thoroughly. Specifically, considering versification among Samoyed-speaking peoples, the analysis of the only existing Kamas song (Lotz 1954) seems to point to certain features in common, as for example the preference for hexasyllabic text line structures (at least in non-ritual songs). Analysis of the musical and textual metre in Nenets songs using a broader range of material (Niemi 1998, 1999) reveals a stylistic opposition between

secular and shamanic songs. While the secular (i.e. individual and narrative) songs tend to have a hexasyllabic matrix of text metre, the shamanic songs tend to be octosyllabic. It is a matter not only of the difference between the *quantity* of syllables but also of the way in which the musical and textual expression is structured. These findings and hypotheses make the problem of Selkup songs the more exciting.

As a whole, the overall music culture area of Western Siberia (extending to northern Scandinavia in the singing styles of the different Sami groups) reflects the world of Arctic and Sub-Arctic hunters, fishers and nomadic reindeer-herders. There are some universal features in the music cultures of Western Siberia that are common to Arctic and Sub-Arctic cultures in general: (1) musical expression centres on solo singing, with group performances rare or not intended to be thoroughly coordinated musically; (2) therefore, musical instruments are almost non-existent or of very marginal importance (the Khanty and Mańśi are an exception to this); (3) the tonal range used in the melodic structures of the songs tends to be quite limited, although this does not diminish in any way the enormous expressive power of the tonal communication; (4) the musical pulse, i.e. the organization of the musical beats, can be simple, complex or almost absent; and, (5) when sung, the spoken language turns into a kind of sung language, with specific rules of versification and musical coordination.

It is important to understand the primary principles of the formation of musical structures in northern native musical styles. First, as unaccompanied solo performance, singing rarely has any rhythmic function. For example, among the Northern Samoyed no need is felt to accompany bodily movements musically. Therefore an exact pulse is usually not needed either. In the absence of a musical pulse, the language used in the songs becomes one of the most important factors in structuring the musical expression. It is also important to realize that, due to the absence of musical instruments with physically fixed and stable tonal models, the pitch structures are not intended to be exact in the Western sense. Consequently, traditional musical and scalar analysis—working without reference to the corresponding text metre—may give only modest results in the analysis of northern native song.

Although sensationally rare, the songs of Boiakina present a methodological puzzle to their analysers: with no context of Selkup shamanic

song for reference or comparison, it seems almost impossible to say anything fruitful about these pieces. The reliability of the samples is also questionable: how did Boiakina evaluate her own performances? What precisely did she remember of the original songs—the musical structures or only the words? If sung again, would the songs sound exactly the same as in these 1996 performances? Are they a result of idiosyncratic creation by the original author, or can we suppose them to be stylistically representative of Selkup shamanic songs in general? What is their structural relation to other Selkup songs? Is there a division between shamanic and secular songs similar to that observed among the Nenets (Niemi 1998: 44–45)? And is there an opposition of stable and varying verse forms as between the bear feast ritual songs and the sung fables of the Khanty?

With this limited material and with these kinds of methodological problems it is hard to give a definite answer on the supposed stylistic division between secular and shamanic songs in Selkup culture. However, tentative analyses of Selkup secular songs (both individual and narrative) point in this direction. Due to lack of space it is not possible here to put the pieces sung by Boiakina into their stylistic Selkup context, and it must suffice to mention only that the secular songs recorded so far appear to be more clearly metrically free-flowing and diatonic, with anhemitonic cadential motives and with overall descending melodic shape roughly within the range of an octave. Distinctive features of the present songs are: their metric structure with a distinctly expressed rhythmic pulse, an openly anhemitonic and substantially narrower tonal range (of a fifth or a sixth) and an undulating overall melodic shape—not, as in the secular songs, essentially descending. As to the metrical schemes, the secular Selkup songs analysed so far appear to lack the basic uniform isometric structure that is distinctively present in the songs of the Northern Samoyed. What little isometry there is in the verse lines is blurred by the frequent insertion of additional or extended final half-lines. Analysing the available shamanic songs, this seems to be the case also with them: although it can be argued that there is also an opposition of hexa- and octosyllabic verse types in Selkup songs, the Selkup shaman songs seem to have an abundance of these extended lines as well.

The proposed stylistic opposition may give some interesting insights in further comparisons of Arctic song styles. Here, the most intriguing assumption has to do particularly with the steady and recurring pulse.

Compared to the scarcity of rhythmic coordination in non-ritual performances, the distinct musical feature of shamanic song genres is their emphasized *pulse*. While it is the shamanic ritual itself that may be the most important situation of rhythmically coordinated musical performance in Western Siberia, the relationship between the rhythm of the shaman's dance movements and that of the singing and possible drum accompaniment is not always straightforward or simple. Indeed, although the dance and musical performance can take place at the same time, their individual rhythmic structures may be quite independent of each other. However, in performances *without* the drum, the rhythmic element may be more clearly present in the vocal part itself, that is, in the sung melody. Furthermore, the pulse can be present only in the movement of the shaman or in some repeated action he makes during the performance. Thus, the pulse may be conceived as symbolic *movement,* which has to be present, whether acoustically or kinetically. Among the Eastern Khanty, for example, the expression of the pulse in important ritual songs is held to be critical because it is the movement itself[1] that transports the performer (and listeners as well) to another level of receptivity. Thus, it can be argued that shamanic—and in some cases also other ritually important—songs have to have somewhere an element of recurring pulse structure. On the basis of the present two songs, however, this assumption cannot be confirmed.

Apart from the recordings of Aleksander Aizenshtadt, Igor' Bogdanov, Iurii Sheikin and the ethnomusicologists of the Novosibirsk conservatoire, analytically oriented notions about Selkup songs are virtually non-existent. Aizenshtadt (1982) makes a short but interesting comparison of the singing styles of the Yenisey Selkup and the Kets living in the villages of Farkovo and Vereshchagino. The Finnish musicologist A. O. Väisänen (1965) transcribed Selkup songs recorded by the Finnish linguist Kai Donner during a field trip in 1911–13. Donner's recordings are historic in the sense that he also managed to record songs from the Southern Selkup of the Tym and Ket. I have made an attempt to re-evaluate Väisänen's transcriptions (Niemi 1994), and the most interesting finding was that the descending diatonic melodic shape typical of the songs recently recorded among the Selkup living in the villages of the

[1] Discussion with Agrafena Sopochina at Tampere, 2 February, 1999.

upper Taz River is present in recordings made by Donner among the Selkup living along the Tym and Ket rivers. Unfortunately, a thorough analysis of his recordings is nearly impossible due to the poor condition of the phonograms: although tonal structures are discernible, one cannot hear enough of the sung text to complete the analysis.

Along with the fieldwork activities of musicologists, the collecting done by journalists from local radio stations can sometimes be of the utmost importance. For example, I found unique recordings of the famous Selkup bard Konstantin Silant'evich Chekurmin in the archives of the Yamal Nenets district radio, Salekhard.

Analysis of Boiakina's Songs

Thus, the context that provides the perspective for an understanding of northern native song is the interrelationship of word and melody. In styles like the Finnic laments, for example, the word governs the melody, which means that word stress tends to produce predictable melodic formations. In others, such as the singing styles of the Northern hunters—which usually have little similarity to the laments of the agricultural societies—word and melody are usually in delicate balance, influencing each other equally. Nevertheless, it is the word that forms the metric framework to the musical form, particularly the versified word. Consequently, it is the stress pattern unique to a language which launches the principles of musical forms. This is why this kind of analysis is futile without reliable song texts.

The two songs performed by Boiakina are analysed from this structural perspective, and the transcriptions have therefore been made with the aim of emphasizing the overall features of the motif and verse structure, along with their recurrence and interrelationship. Correspondingly, they do not represent the details of musical expression: the pitch values are approximated only to a minor second. Also, as the overall rise in pitch is less than a semitone, it is ignored here. The slurs refer to a relatively strong merging of tones.

The first song (Exhibit 1) has a simple recurring structure of two melodic lines (A and B, separated by bar lines), which correspond quite well to the accompanying pairs of text lines. This succession is broken in only a few places. In fact these melodic lines differ from each other only by their initial tones, but this is enough to create the

impression of the succession of an initial (A) and a final (B) because of the exclamatory initial tone (e^2) of line A. The recurring elements are shown here by a vertical alignment of the music lines and notes.[2]

The melodic shape of the motifs can be described as descending, but the descent differs from the long-range descending pattern of secular songs. As the melody has its succession of upward and downward leaps, it would be more proper to refer to it as "undulating". As such, it represents an anhemitonic four-tone scalar form ($\underline{g\#}^1$–h^1–$c\#^2$–e^2) with $g\#^1$ as its *final tone*. It has to be stated, however, that the actual pitches vary during the performance. Boiakina sometimes sings the initial tone (e^2) a little higher, as also the medial tones (h^1 and $c\#^2$) tend to be somewhat higher.

The musical metre is based on a four-beat structure. One beat encompasses three eighth notes in the transcription, so that if this transcription had to be labelled by a time signature it would be 12/8. The metric stress pattern of the text of the song is in full accordance with the musical stress pattern. Not having any points of comparison, we can only state that most of the verse lines in this song have seven syllables. However, considering the way the musical stress corresponds fully to the text—so that one musical beat corresponds to two syllables of the text, except in the final beat—the octosyllabic element is very much present in this song. Furthermore, as the lines are not mechanically repeated as such (deviations may also be due to the quality of performance), there are also two eight-syllable lines in this song.

The correspondence of the text and musical metres can also be verified by examination of the word and syllable formations of the text of the song (see Fig. 1). As noted before, each musical line type (A and B) corresponds to one line of poetic text. The organization of the text within a line points clearly to a line structure divided by a caesura. This is emphasized by the types of word boundary in the text and by interval leaps in the melody. First, the initial two stress groups consist of two syllables each, yielding a very stable four-syllable string (e.g. *nıl'-ɒı my-ta* in the first line). Furthermore, this line-beginning four-syllable string corresponds to word boundaries, so the majority of these four-syllable strings consist of either two two-syllable words or one

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[2] Note also that the notes sound an octave lower than their transcriptions.

four-syllable word. The final part of most text lines, as stated before, consists of a three-syllable string of either one three-syllable word or one two-syllable word with a final synsemantic syllable (shown in brackets in the text). The other few exceptions are two extended lines (a seven-syllable line with an additional three-syllable word) and two lines with two or three syllables condensed in the metric position of one syllable. It is difficult to judge whether the singer has sung these phrases intentionally or by mistake.

	Main stresses:								Extended stresses:		
	I		II		III		IV		(V		VI)
1.	*nɪl' –*	*ɒʒɪ*	*my –*	*ta*	*kət –*	*san*	*my –*	*ta*			
2.	*mēl' –*	*ɒy*	*koj –*	*my –*	*tä –*	*šik*	*(mym)*				
3.	*sər*	*il' –*	*ɒʒa –*	*ny*	*tɛ –*	*šɪn –*	*ɒyn*				
4.	*il' –*	*ɒʒa*	*man –*	*nym –*	*ʁə –*	*γə –*	*(ja)m*				
5.	*sel' –*	*ɒʒi*	*my –*	*ta*	*qor –*	*qəj*	*my*				
6.	*il' –*	*ɒʒa*	*mēl' –*	*ɒy*	*za –*	*ŋa –*	*(jə)*				
7.	*mēl' –*	*ɒy*	*my –*	*ta*	*koj –*	*my –*	*ty*				
8.	*kət –*	*san*	*my –*	*ta*	*mēl' –*	*ɒy*	*(my)*				
9.	*mēl' –*	*ɒy*	*tɛ –*	*nyr –*	*ʁa –*	*šiŋ*	*(mym)*				
10.	*ku –*	*tar*	*šɪn –*	*ɒy*	*so –*	*qyš –*	*šaŋ*				
11.	*il' –*	*ɒʒa*	*my –*	*ta,*	*il' –*	*ɒʒa –*	*ly*				
12.	*il' –*	*ɒʒa –*	*ly*	*ny*	*nɪl' –*	*ɒʒɪ*	*šɪn*		*so –*	*qyš –*	*šem*
13.	*kət –*	*san*	*my –*	*ta*	*mēl' –*	*ɒyŋ –*	*(ɔan)*				
14.	*mēl' –*	*ɒy*	*šʼum –*	*pä –*	*šy –*	*ɔ(y)*	*(naj)*				
15.	*il' –*	*ɒʒan*	*šɪn –*	*ɒy*	*mēl' –*	*ɒy*	*šɪn*		*koj –*	*mal –*	*ʁam*
16.	*i –*	*ɒyn –*	*ɔa –*	*ji*	*il' –*	*ɒʒa –*	*ly*				
17.	*koj –*	*my –*	*ty –*	*la*	*my –*	*ta*	*(naj)*				
18.	*sum –*	*ʁʼij*	*por –*	*qyp*	*tok –*	*kal –*	*ɒɛn*				
19.	*kət –*	*san*	*my –*	*ta*	*n'ɛn –*	*na*	*(naj)*				
20.	*pi –*	*ɒʒal' –*	*ʁɛ –*	*šiŋ*	*mēl' –*	*ɒy*	*(naj)*				
21.	*sɛ –*	*l'ij*	*qor –*	*qyj*	*i –*	*m'i –*	*jan*				
22.	*tɛ –*	*n'i*	*qan –*	*ɒy-za*	*ʁi –*	*ɒʒa-l'ɛn-ɒyŋ*					
23.	*sɛ –*	*lɛj*	*my –*	*ta*	*qor –*	*qyj*	*il' –*	*ɒʒa*			
24.	*pi –*	*cal' –*	*ʁɛn –*	*ɒy –*	*ɔa –*	*ny*	*(naj)*				

	Main stresses:						Extended stresses:	
	I		II		III	IV	(V	VI)
25.	*mēl' -*	*ɒy*	*za -*	*ŋa(j)*	*kət - san*	*(myn)*		
26.	*pi -*	*ɒʒa -*	*l'a -*	*zy*	*m'ēl' - ɒy*	*(naj)*		
27.	*mēl' -*	*ɒy*	*za -*	*ŋa(j)*	*ku - ku -*	*län*		
28.	*mēl' -*	*ɒy*	*ku -*	*kɛn - nan - ɒy*		*(naj)*		
29.	*mēl' -*	*ɒy*	*ku -*	*kys'*	*mat*	*kop-ta-ny cɔ̄t*		
30.	*mēl' -*	*ɒy*	*sö -*	*zy(j)*	*my -*	*ta*	*(naj)*	
31.	*ku -*	*kɛn -*	*nan -*	*ɒy*	*my -*	*ta*	*(naj)*	
32.	*sɛ -*	*l'i*	*sər -*	*qyj*	*il' -*	*ɒʒa*	*(naj)*	
33.	*nyl' -*	*ɒak*	*ɔ̄ -*	*nɛŋ*	*ku -*	*kɛn - naŋ*		

Fig. 1.

The second song (Exhibit 2) is more complex, and it is not easy to make a definite interpretation of its meaningful structures of text and melody. It sounds as if the singer had difficulty continuing the song. There are, however, some recurring elements which may give clues to the song's meaningful structure. Because of the complex relationship of the text lines and melodic motifs I have used bar lines here to distinguish the three main melodic elements. First, the initial segment (A) of simple trochaic code repeating the final tone (f^1) marks off very distinctly the beginnings of units of meaning in the text. The second segment (B) is interpreted as a very varying medial section, which either follows the first segment as echoing the first segment in the position of the fifth (c^2), repeats itself or starts a new beginning (as B^1 here) after the final segment (C), which marks the ending of the melodic sentence by an emphasized arrival at the final tone (f^1).

The overall melodic shape is thus ascending (A → B) and descending (B → C). This melodic shape is achieved by an anhemitonic pentatonic scale (es^1–$\underline{f}^1as^1$–b^1–c^2) with f^1 as its final tone. It is to be noted that in this scalar type the melody goes a whole tone below the finalis. In this performance the overall pitch level rises about a semitone, and I have pointed the occurrences of the occasional tonal alterations that originate along with this raise of the pitch level by a natural mark ($as^1 \rightarrow a^1$).

Although having a varying and seemingly unstable segmental struc-

ture, this song has some fundamental features that may give clues to the musical thinking behind its performance. Again, the four-beat structure is evident in the musical phrases. This becomes somewhat clearer by examination of the syllabic scheme of the text (Fig. 2). When organized in columns of syllables placed according to the proportional time values of the musical rhythm, the beat structure behind this seemingly diffuse performance becomes more evident. If it is supposed that the third line (*kūzy qorqaj myta mēlɒy*), although with an extension (*myta kojmɔ̄ŋ*), represents the "full" line, by comparing the musical rhythm it is possible to suggest that the singer has the option to leave this format open or to sing it "full" depending on the number of syllables needed in a line. It seems, however, that in this particular song the caesuraic relationship of the word boundaries is much more complex than in the first example. The word boundary is not distinctly evident after the second stress (i.e. after the fourth syllable of the "full" line), as it was in the first song. However, it is to be noted that two- or four-syllable word roots also prevail in this song, regardless of their position with respect to the musical rhythm.

	Main stresses:								Extended stresses:	
	I		II		III		IV		(V	VI)
1.	*kȳ* –	*zy*	*mɔm* –		*ba*	*(na*	*naj).*			
2.	*kȳ* –	*zy* –	*nō*		*jɛn* –	*nä* –	*(no)*		*ɛ* – *n'ɛ*–	*jaŋ*
3.	*kȳ* –	*zy*	*qor* –	*qaj*	*my* –	*ta*	*mēl'* –	*ɒy*	*my* – *ta*	*koj* –*mɔ̄ŋ*
4.	*kȳ* –	*zy*			*por* –	*qaj*	*i* –	*ma*		
5.	*a* –	*š'a*	*tok* –	*kal* –	*ɒɛn* –	*ɒy* –	*ɑan* –	*ɒy*		
6.	*my* –	*ta*	*mēl'* –	*ɒy*	*my* –	*ta*	*my* –	*ta*	*(ja*	*jiŋ)*
7.	*koj* –	*my* –	*tɛn* –	*ɒy* –	*ŋa* –	*ŋ(y)*				
8.	*qor* –	*qy*	*il'* –	*ɒʒa*	*my* –	*ta*	*mēl'* –	*ɒy*	*my* – *ta(m)*	
9.	*s'ö* –	*zym*	*aj*		*my* –	*ta*	*(naj)*			
10.	*mēl'* –	*ɒy* –	*ɑo*		*(ɑo*		*ɑoj)*			
11.	*ɒu* –	*pa* –	*l'ɛn* –	*ɒy* –	*ŋa* –	*ny*	*(na)*			
12.	*il'* –	*ɒʒa*	*my* –	*ta*	*mēl'* –	*ɒy*	*ɒa* –	*ŋal'* –	*ɒy* *mēn* –	*ɒō*
13.	*il'* –		*ɒʒa*		*mēl'* –	*ɒy*	*my* –	*ta*		
14.	*ta* –	*ŋal'* –	*ɒyŋ*	*mē* –	*tyŋ*					
15.	*qor* –	*qyj*	*my* –		*ta*	*(na*	*na)*			
16.	*qor* –	*qyj*	*il'* –	*ɒʒa*	*my* –	*ta*	*(na)*			
17.	*mēl'* –	*ɒy*	*ɒu* –	*pa* –	*lɛn* –	*ɒy* –	*ŋa*		*(na)*	
18.	*mēl'*	*ny* –	*ŋa*		*(ja)*	*u* –	*kōn*			

	Main stresses:								Extended stresses:	
	I	II		III		IV			(V	VI)
19.	*tu –*	*pa – l'ɛn – ɒɛ –*		*ŋa*	*(ɒɛ*	*ŋo)*				
20.	*il' –*	*ɒʒa my –*		*ta*	*ny –*	*ŋa*			*mēl' –ɒy*	*(ɒom)*
21.	*il' –*	*ɒʒa –(ɒʒa)*		*qa –*	*ji –*	*qo*				
22.	*tu –*	*pa – lo –nō(m)*		*mēl'*	*ny –*	*ŋaŋ*				
23.	*kȳ –*	*zy – naŋ*								
24.	*mēl' –*	*ɒy my –*	*ta*	*tu –*	*pa – l'ɛn – ɒy –*				*ŋa*	*nyŋ* *caŋ*
25.	*ɔ̄ŋc*	*ɛj my –*		*ta*	*nyŋ – caŋ*					
26.	*qäp*	*i-rɛj il' –*	*ɒʒa*	*mēl' –ɒy*	*n'ɪŋ*					
27.	*kə̄ –*	*ty ky –*	*cy –*	*tɛŋ*						
28.	*il' –*	*ɒʒa my –*		*ta*	*nyŋ – caŋ*					
29.	*mēl'*	*nyŋ – caŋ(c)*		*im'*	*i –*	*r'ɛj*			*(na*	*ja)*
30.	*ɒu –*	*pal – cə*		*ɒən(nn)*						
31.	*mēl' –*	*ɒə*		*tu –*	*pa – l'ɛn – nɛŋ*					
32.	*mēl' –*	*ɒy my –*		*ta*	*nyŋ – ca*					
33.	*ɔ̄ –*	*ŋan il' –*	*ɒʒa*	*nyŋ – ca – ja*					*tu – ʁa –*	*nɛ – ja*
34.	*mēl' –*	*ɒy tu –*	*ʁal' –*	*ɒɛn – ɒy –*	*ŋa*	*nyŋ*				
35.	*kȳ –*	*zy my –*		*ta*	*nyŋ – ca*					
36.	*qor –*	*qyj il' –*	*ɒʒa*	*my –*	*ta*	*(ŋa)*				
37.	*tu –*	*ʁal –nɛ –*	*ja*	*(yn*	*ny – na)*					
38.	*ɛj*	*n'yŋ – co*		*tu –*	*ʁal – nɛ –*				*jɛ(nnn)*	
39.	*qor –*	*qy my –*	*ta*	*naj*	*ɛ –*	*ca*				
40.	*ɒi –*	*ŋy jɛn –*	*nɛ*	*nɛj*	*ɛ –*	*ca*				
41.	*ɒə –*	*mal' ɒi –*	*ŋy*	*jɛn –*	*nɛ*	*my –*	*ta*			
42.	*ɒə –*	*mal' ɒi –*	*ŋy*	*jɛnn(n)*						

Fig. 2.

As a brief summary, it may be stated that these Selkup shaman songs lack the kind of isometricity that is so characteristic of songs of the Northern Samoyed. Also, the abundance of synsemantic syllables and the complex patterns of syllabic repetition appear to be absent here. Nevertheless, these examples point quite clearly to the possibility of a division between shamanic and secular musical styles in Selkup songs as well.

The author plans to publish further work on Selkup songs to provide more encompassing points of reference not only for Selkup shamanic but, in particular, for individual songs.

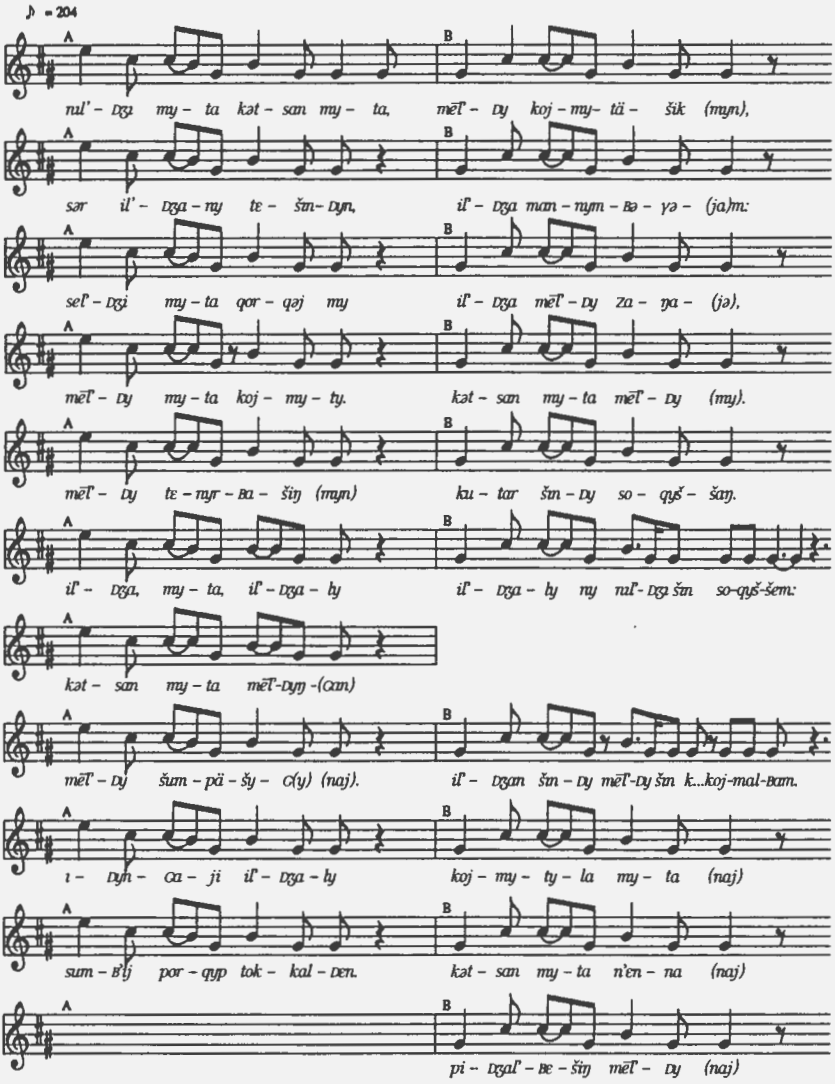
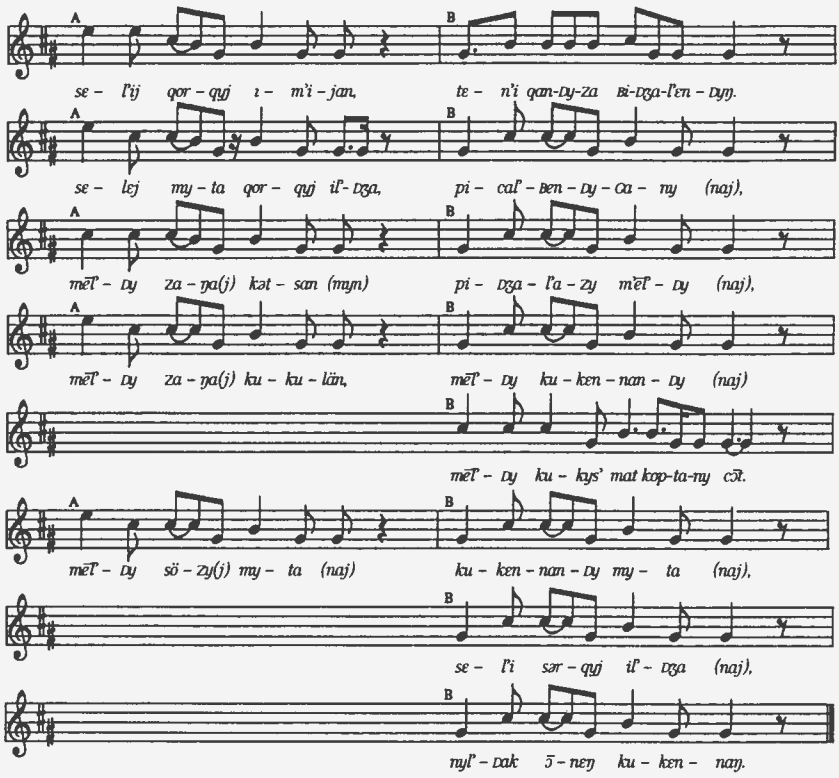


Exhibit 1. Selkup Shaman song. Performed by Liudmila Vasil'evna Boiakina, in the village of Ratta, on 16 June, 1996. Recorded by O. A. Kazakevitch


A
B
se – l'ij qor – qyj ɪ – m'i – jan, te – n'i qan-ɒy-za ʙi-ɒʒa-l'ɛn – ɒyŋ.
se – lɛj my – ta qor – qyj il'- ɒʒa, pi – cal' – ʙen – ɒy – ɔa – ny (naj),
mēl' – ɒy za – ŋa(j) kət – san (myn) pi – ɒʒa – l'a – zy mēl' – ɒy (naj),
mēl' – ɒy za – ŋa(j) ku – ku – län, mēl' – ɒy ku – kɛn – nan – ɒy (naj)
mēl' – ɒy ku – kys' mat kop-ta-ny cɔ̄l.
mēl' – ɒy sö – zy(j) my – ta (naj) ku – kɛn – nan – ɒy my – ta (naj),
se – l'i sər – qyj il' – ɒʒa (naj),
nyl' – ɒak ɔ̄ – nɛŋ ku – kɛn – nan.

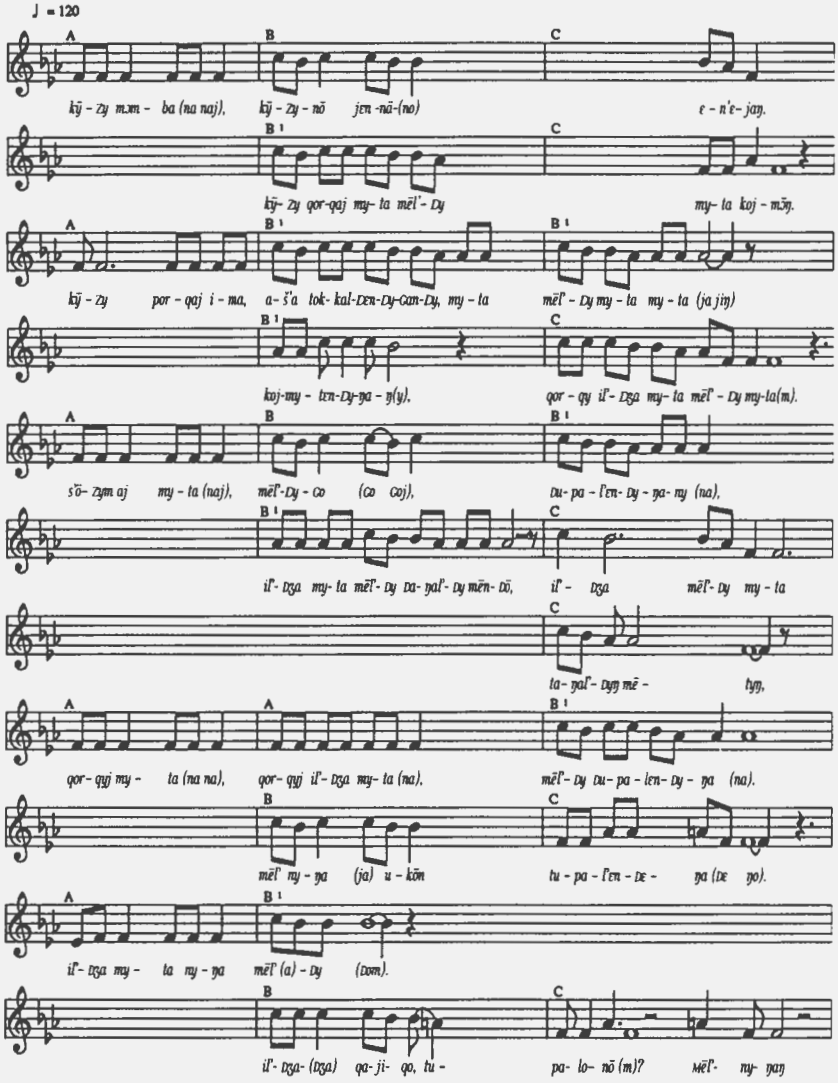
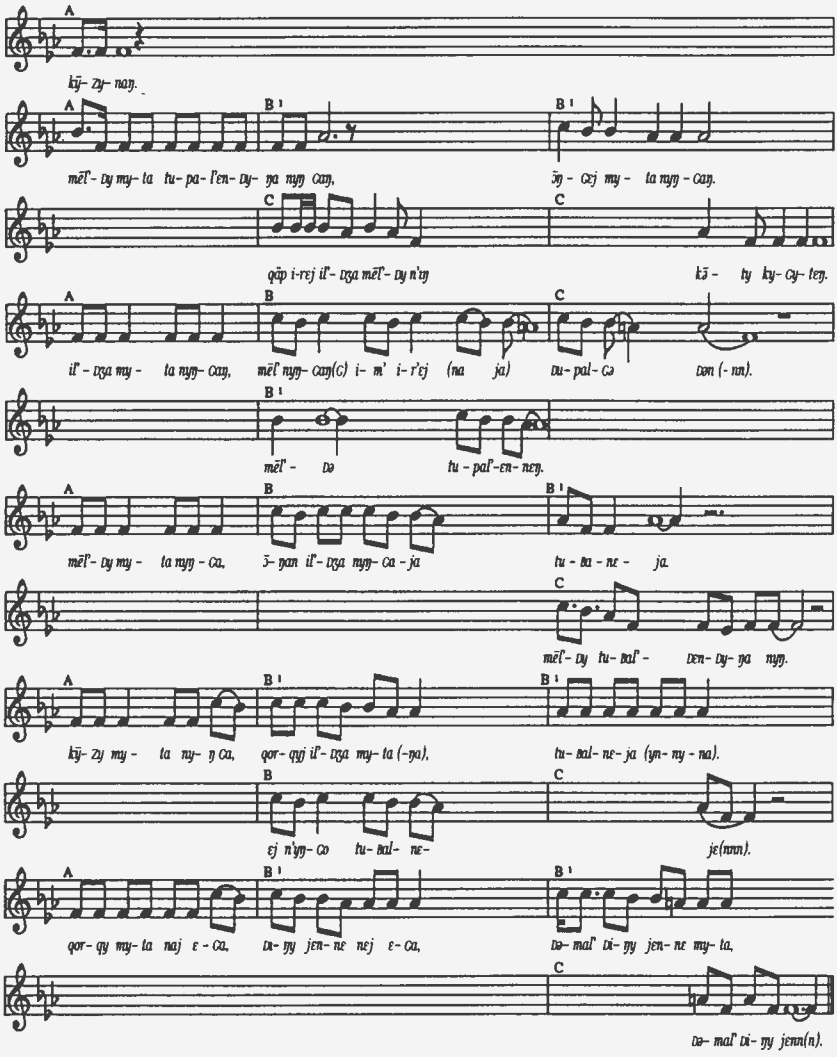


Exhibit 2. Selkup Shaman song. Performed by Liudmila Vasil'evna Boiakina, in the village of Ratta, on 16 June, 1996. Recorded by O. A. Kazakevitch


A
kī̄- ʒy- nay.
A B ' B '
mēl'- ɒy my- ta tu- pa- l'en- ɒy- ɲa nyŋ ɔay, ɔ̄ŋ - ɔəj my - ta nyŋ - ɔay.
C C
qäp i-rej il'- ʒɣa mēl'- ɒy n'ɪŋ kā - ty ky- ɔy- teŋ.
A B C
il' - ʒɣa my - ta nyŋ- ɔay, mēl' nyŋ- ɔay(ɔ) i- m' i- r'ej (na ja) ɒu- pal- ɔə ɒən (- nn).
B '
mēl' - ɒə tu - pal'-en- neŋ.
A B B '
mēl'- ɒy my - ta nyŋ - ɔa, ɔ̄- ɲan il'- ʒɣa nyŋ- ɔa - ja tu - ɒa - nɛ - ja.
C
mēl'- ɒy tu- ɒal' - ɒen- ɒy- ɲa nyŋ.
A B ' B '
kī̄- ʒy my - ta ny- ŋ ɔa, qor- qyj il'- ʒɣa my- ta (-ɲa), tu- ɒal- nɛ- ja (yn- ny - na).
B C
ej n'yŋ- ɔo tu- ɒal- nɛ- je(nnn).
A B ' B '
qor- qy my- ta naj ɛ - ɔa, ɒu- yy jen- nɛ nej ɛ- ɔa, ɒə- mal' ɒi- yy jen- nɛ my- ta,
C
ɒə- mal' ɒi- yy jenn(n).

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"Open Wide, Oh, Heaven's Door!": Shamanism in China Before the Tang Dynasty. Part Two

GÁBOR KÓSA BUDAPEST

After reviewing the major scholarly theories on ancient Chinese shamanism in the first part of this study, here I explore various aspects of the Chinese religious complex to demonstrate that underlying major religious notoins there was a general, pre-existing religious substratum. This substratum contains several elements for which parallels can be found in phenomena known from shamanic cultures. Therefore, the functions and attributes of the wu*—the major representative of this substratum—are investigated to prove that the earliest written records of any kind of shamanic activity were written in Chinese.*

In my previous article I attempted to demonstrate that, while the major religious traditions of China (Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism) have been the overwhelming concern of sinologists in studies of the Chinese religious scene, shamanism has also attracted considerable attention. I applied a historical approach to prove that much has been written on the shamanism of the different dynasties, especially that of the Shang, Warring States and Han periods. A shortcoming of these analyses, however, is that they most often apply one definition—usually that of Mircea Eliade or Åke Hultkrantz—to demonstrate the presence of some kind of shamanism in the given period. As is well-known, the data on which these definitions are based derive from 17th to 20th century Siberia, Inner Asia or Americas, so it would seem anachronistic to apply them in an ancient Chinese context. Thus, it is not too far-fetched to propose that it is necessary first to investigate various aspects of the Chinese religious complex, and only then to compare these with data

for other times and regions, if one is to arrive at an appropriate definition of shamanism.

I have three hypotheses to prove: 1. There was a fluctuating, but coherent, and, most importantly, existing religious substratum in pre-Tang (and pre-Buddhist) China, which, to a certain extent, underlay most Chinese religious traditions. 2. This substratum, though not identical with the shamanism of other regions, shares many features with it so that shamanism seems to be the best (and, as far as I know, the only) analogue with which to compare it.[1] 3. In Chinese records, one encounters the first written descriptions of many religious phenomena that are usually associated with shamanism.

The religious substratum, although present and manifest in many religious activities, has two special affiliations: Taoism (especially religious Taoism) and popular religion. Although in many cases popular religion appears to be at the source of these underlying belief system, religious Taoism in particular seems to be sensitive and ready to absorb elements and techniques from it. It must be stressed, however, that despite its indebtedness to this shamanic heritage, representatives of religious Taoism often criticized shamanic practices in order to distinguish themselves from their predecessors (Kósa 2000: 165–171).

Although the Qin and Han dynasty (the unification of China) always represent a turning-point for the sinologist, if one investigates the question of the first written evidence of shamanism we are not limited in this respect, as evidence from the sixth century AD would be be very early from the point of view of a researcher on shamanism. In this article, therefore, I will treat pre-Tang China as a continuum (a nonsense in traditional Sinology), although I will always indicate the temporal validity of phenomena when necessary. Buddhism was already present in China during the Six Dynasties period (third to fourth century AD), but as none of our sources on shamanism is connected in any way with Buddhism, I used the term "pre-Buddhist China" in the sense that none of the notions I analyze was influenced by Buddhism.

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[1] Cf. "Shamanism can be regarded as the 'substrate' of Chinese religion, as long as the term does not imply lack of change or absence of regional variation, which is noted very early." (Sutton 2000: 4)

The state religion, which assumed a rigid form during the Han period, was especially hostile towards any different kind of religious attitude; for this and many other reasons no detailed descriptions are available of non-Confucian religious activities. Such descriptions as we do have are usually either hostile (Wang Fu: *Qianfulun*) or skeptical (Wang Chong: *Lunheng*). Very rarely do we encounter objective, undistorted descriptions of shamanism. One, therefore, has to look for clues and hints, and not be discouraged by their rarity. Unlike in my previous paper, I will use only the term '*wu*', and, unless in direct citation, I will avoid using the word 'shaman' lest I anticipate what I am attempting to find.

According to the first hypothesis, Chinese religious traditions extracted and systematized certain aspects of the underlying substratum. Confucian tradition and (later the state religion) essentially built on the already existing substratum, emphasizing certain aspects (ancestor worship, hierarchical structure, this-worldliness) at the expense of others (direct communication with spirits, and a poetic, ahistorical attitude). Still, despite the variegated religious manifestations, most Chinese traditions share many features—something that is especially conspicuous if they are compared with non-Chinese religions. What I propose here is that the religious substratum encompasses the roots or germs of many, seemingly later, concepts. As the majority of Chinese sources were lost during the succeeding 2200 years, it is especially advisable not to equate available written material with reality. We must search for the hidden traits of shamanic practices, which seem to be eclipsed by the dominant, elite traditions.

In a Chinese context (as, I consider, in other cultures)[2] one has to emphasize the diversity of the *wu*'s abilities, actual skills and ways of contacting the spirits.[3] Therefore, one should not seek a single all-

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[2] Cf. Hoppál 1992: 119; Siikala 1992: 4.

[3] *Zhouli* 32.25a.: "As to all those who become ennobled as Gentlemen on account of the spirits (...), their number is not fixed: one determines their higher or lower rank according to their art (*yi*)." (Falkenhausen 1995: 286) "As in the case of the *Gumeng* [Blind Musicians, G.K.], such ranking would be based on skill; and the ranks appear to be non-hereditary. Sun Yirang [a later commentator of the *Zhouli*, G.K.] denies that the term *yi* could refer to the Six Arts enumerated by Zheng Xuan [the first commentator of *Zhouli*, G.K.], glossing it as *ji* 'technique,' he understands it as denoting the Spirit

embracing definition or criterion; rather, one should investigate as many aspects as possible to find appropriate analogues for this complex phenomenon. Naturally we will not find a detailed, coherent system, instead we will encounter scattered references to various practices and beliefs which, however, can be, with caution, reconstituted in a more or less integral system. The brevity of the article forced me to pack much of the material into the footnotes, which may make the reading a little difficult; nevertheless, the main theses and key concepts (indicated by italics) are all presented in the main text and footnotes simply provide evidence for them.[4]

I. General Contextual Features

In this section I endeavour to summarize some of the most universal features of the Chinese religious landscape which, at the outset, distinguish it from some other traditions. Despite the great variety of philosophical and religious trends, Chinese religious concepts stem basically from primary notions of *polytheism*[5] and *animism*.[6] Consequently, the *worship of natural phenomena*[7] remained a definitive feature throughout

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Medium's [Falkenhausen's rendition of '*wu*', G.K.] level of accomplishment in dealing with the affairs of the spirits." (Falkenhausen 1995: 287–288)

[4] Except for some minor references, I will not cite any works on "classical shamanism" as they are probably well known for readers of *Shaman*.

[5] Loewe 1982: 17; Schipper 1993: 32.

[6] "Animism necessarily and naturally is thoroughly *polytheistic* and *polydemonistic*. Gods or *shen* are e.g. heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, wind, rain, clouds, thunder, fire, the earth under the influence of heaven; seas, rivers, mountains, rocks, stones, animals, plants, objects; in particular also the souls of men. And devils swarm everywhere, in numbers incalculable." (Groot 1982: 980) Also see Groot 1982: 56; Loewe 1982: 20; Harper 1998: 162.

[7] "Sacrifice from the time of the Shang had been offered to a variety of natural forces, including sacred mountains and the Yellow River." (Kleeman 1994a: 192) For the Zhou period: "Since Heaven, Earth, the four seasons, the sun and moon, the four cardinal directions, flood and drought, as well as powers inhabiting natural places and events are all included in the sacrificial program, one might say that this passage illustrates the 'natural religion' character of Zhou official cults." (Poo 1998: 43) For the Eastern Zhou see *Liji* 12.16a–b.: "The Son of Heaven sacrifices to Heaven and Earth, the feudal lords sacrifice to the gods of soil and grain; the great officers sacrifice to the five tutelary cults. The Son of Heaven sacrifices to the famous mountains and

Chinese history. It appears that, from the fourth century BC until the sixth century AD, *wus* were primarily engaged in ceremonies dedicated to natural deities.[8] Special attention was paid to the spirits of *mountains*[9], *rivers*[10] and *heavenly constellations*. Another specific characteristics that remained unchanged during the centuries was *the close relationship between the human and the spiritual worlds* (Lin 1994: 122), which is overtly manifest, for example, in the importance of *ancestor worship*. Nearly all human activities depended on the spirits' approval; furthermore, *spirits* were considered to be *present in the everyday world* and not relegated to a distant realm. These *spirits* were often depicted as possessing *animal traits*.[11]

This general picture accounts for the the belief that until (and, later, in parallel with) the development of a scientific theory, *illness was attributed to malevolent spirits*.[12] Another feature to be emphasized is

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great rivers throughout the empire (...) the feudal lords sacrifice to the famous mountains and great rivers within their domains." (Kleeman 1994a: 192) For the Qin-Han period: "In addition to the shrines attached to special localities, at many of which blood sacrifices were offered, there were shrines dedicated to the sun, moon and planets, to the lord of the winds and the masters of rain." (Loewe 1982: 21) Also see Bilsky 1975: 163–172.

[8] "The *wu* are virtually limited to rituals directed to non-ancestral deities, which may be very roughly subsumed under the category of nature worship." (Falkenhausen 1995: 297) For the post-Han period: "This decree fully supports our argument that the spirits of mountains, rivers, and seas still constituted a major group of deities in the shamanistic supernatural world of the sixth century." (Lin 1994: 145)

[9] Mountains were associated with the following activities and roles: 1. act of enfeoffment; 2. royal or imperial procession (*Mengzi* 2.90; *Shiji* 241–52; 260–63; 1366–68; 1397–98;1400–01; 1403–04); 3. rituals of drought preventions (*Gongyangzhuan* 13.20b. (Lord *Xi* year 31); *Liji* 12.33); 4. to cure disease and prolong life (*Shiji* 2567); 5. elements of military expeditions (*Zhouli* 12.22b; 19.7b; 17a; *Mozi* 6:379; *Yanzi chunqiu* 79–80); 6. links between the divine and human (*Shanhaijing*); 7. cult of immortals (*Huainanzi* ch. 3) (Lewis 1999: 56–57).

[10] "From the most remote antiquity, we are told, Mountains and Rivers have been objects of worship in China. (...) It is the sacred powers of mountains and rivers who are entreated by means of sacrifices when floods, droughts, or epidemic befall." (*Zuozhuan, Zhaogong* 1st year; Granet 1932: 180–181)

[11] Spirits are most often conceived of as zoomorphic or semi-zoomorphic (Kleeman 1994: 232).

[12] "The idea that demons and the spirits of the dead sicken the living is in evidence in the earliest Chinese written records, the Shang inscriptions on bone and turtle shell."

the universal importance of divination in society; thus, most activities were preceded by some kind of divination process. From the received sources we can infer that a *strong oral tradition* (which later become weaker) was a major feature of ancient Chinese society. Oral traditions were especially dominant in the religious and mythological realm.[13]

II. Specific Contextual Features

A next step toward defining the hypothesized shamanic substratum is to find specific Chinese concept that might have shamanic counterparts. As is well-known, one of the most widespread ideas in Chinese culture is the notion of a *tripartite universe (heaven, the human sphere and earth-underworld)*. The idea of an upper world and a human world is clearly reflected in the sources, but for a long time the concept of an underworld was regarded as a Buddhist contribution. Recently, however, on the basis of new evidence we can firmly conclude that at least from the third century BC there was a widespread notion of the underworld.[14]

(Harper 1998: 67)

[13] On the divergent development of oral mythological narratives in the intensely shamanic Chu culture and in Confucian orthodoxy, see Kósa 2001.

[14] "Both the Fangmatan and the Mawangdui finds reveal the existence [of the underworld, G.K.]. This shows that people in the late Warring States already believed in an underworld bureaucracy that kept registers, and that communication with the spirit world took the form of written documents patterned on those of terrestrial governments." (Lewis 1999: 27) "The top and bottom sections of the painting [on the Mawangdui silk banner, G.K.] form a cosmic enclosure for the 'portrait' and the sacrificial scene: most scholars agree that these sections represent Heaven and the underworld. A gate, which defines the Heavenly realm, is guarded by two doormen and a pair of leopards; Qu Yuan describes both as guardians of the Changhe or the Gate of Heaven. In the center of this section is a principal deity of uncertain identity, flanked by the sun and moon, the juxtaposition of which suggests the opposition and balance of the *yin-yang* cosmic forces. The identification of the bottom section is also unmistakable: all images in this part, including two giant fish (symbols of water), a central figure standing on the intertwined backs of the fish (the Lord of Earth?), a snake (an underground creature), and a pair of 'earth-goats' (*tuyang*) at the painting's lower corners, signify it as the underground world." (Wu 1992: 124–125) "For the Warring States period, we have much more substantial knowledge of the postmortem underground. The passage of *Chuci* quoted above mentioned a 'dark city,' with a 'governor of the earth (Tubo)' whose ferocious appearance was recited to dissuade the dead from entering." (Poo

The concept of a *cosmic tree* (or, more precisely, trees, Mathieu 1987: 22),[15] or a *cosmic mountain,*[16] connecting the three realms was also not alien to the Chinese mythological mind. "There is the *Jian* Tree, at Duguang, where the many *Di*-spirits ascend and descend."[17] Another recurrent motif is the *metamorphosis of human beings into animals,* and vice versa.[18]

The prominent *cult of Heaven* is one of the best known aspects of Chinese religion. Less well-known is, however, the fact that some evidence attests to the existence of *nine layers* of Heaven,[19] which

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1998: 66) Also see Yü 1987: 382.

[15] "The concept of the cosmic tree which forms the centre of the world may be traced in Chinese literature from the Zhanguo period, in various guises. Sometimes it appears as a single tree, such as the Fusang or the Ruomu; later it is known as the beautiful tree whose growth stems from a pair of trunks, the Mulianli. At times the tree is conceived as connecting the three worlds of heaven, earth and the Yellow Springs [a metaphor of the underworld, G.K.]; and as such it may be compared to the ladder by means of which Fuxi and his sister ascended to heaven. As the Fusang, the concept embraces the tree up which the sun climbs and descends, once daily. In one instance it is described as a giant peach-tree growing on the top of Taodu Mountain. It is possible that a late western Han pottery model from Henan may be identified as this tree; the nine branches of the model recall the concept of the nine heavens and the use of the nine-branched lamp." (Loewe 1994a: 111)

[16] "Access to the spirit realms was from the peaks of great mountains, such as Taishan in the former state of Qi. Near Taishan also was the region called Haoli, where entrance was gained to the underworld." (Rawson 1999: 15)

[17] *Huainanzi* 4.4a.9. A further example from the *Shanhaijing:* "Above the Tang Valley is the Fu Sang. [The Valley] is wherein the ten suns bathe. It is north of the Black Tooth Tribe. In the swirling water is a great tree, Nine suns dwell on its lower branches; one sun on its uppermost branch." (*Shanhaijing* 9:3a–b; Allan 1991: 28)

[18] "The conviction that the ethereal human double is able to pass into human bodies (...) co-exists in China with a belief, occupying a much more prominent place in her animistic lore, namely that it may settle just as well in animals. Men may thus be transformed into quadrupeds, birds, fishes and insects, or animals into men, both before and after their death." (Groot 1982a: 156)

[19] "Brightest bright and darkest dark, / What was made from only these? / Yin and yang, blend and mix, / What was the root, what transformed? / The circular and nine-tiered Heaven, / Who enclosed and surveyed it? / Just how was this achieved? / Who originally made it?" (*Chuci, Tianwen* 5–8; Field 1984: 5) "With peacock canopy and kingfisher streamers / Your chariot mounts to the ninth Heaven, where you subdue the Broom-star. / Brandishing the long sword to protect the young, / You alone, dear

seem to be related to the nine layers of the cosmic *Kunlun* mountain.[20] In ancient China specific attention was paid to the *Pole Star* and the *Big Dipper*.[21]

Another important feature is the Chinese concept of soul. Among the elite the concept is evidently that of a *dual soul* (*hun-po*),[22] while the Qin-Han folk concept was not that clear-cut (Seidel 1987: 227), especially when it comes to defining the exact difference between the two parts (Brashier 1996: 127). However, it is evident from the sources that one part of the soul can leave the body—during dreams for example—and wander in the spiritual realm.[23] As in other cultures, the

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iris, are fit to be the judge of man!" (*Chuci, Jiuge, Shao Sinming;* Chen 1986: 151) "Oh, Protector Star of the Center! / Mysterious Perfected and Powerful Ruler / Of the Unified Energy of the Yellow Middle! / You spread brilliance and flowing brightness / Through all the Nine Heavens." ('Divine Incantations to the Protective Gods of the Five Directions'; Kohn 1993: 115)

[20] "In the center (of the world) is a manifold wall of nine layers, with a height of 11,000 li, 114 double-paces, two feet, and six inches. Atop the heights of Kunlun are tree-like cereal plants thirty-five feet tall" (*Huainanzi* 4:2b; Major 1993: 150) "It is not clear how one was intended to visualize the ninefold walls of Kunlun, but the most obvious image is of Kunlun as a peak of tremendous height, rising in nine steps like the ziggurat." (Major 1993: 154) "Mt. Kunlun is, in effect, a stairway to heaven. Mounting the sacred pillar, one passes through the *Changhe* Gate, a circular door in the vault of the sky leading into the heavens beyond; there one encounters still higher peaks, with more and more marvelous powers, until one ascends to the abode of the celestial emperor himself." (Major 1993: 47)

[21] "The astrological and magical significance of the Northern Dipper (the Big Dipper) in Warring States, Qin, and Han times is well documented (Harper 1978–79; Kalinowski 1983)." (Harper 1998: 158) "For the Taoists the Dipper means first of all the center of the universe. (...) It is the 'pivot of all creative transformations,' 'the mysterious root of the Nine Heavens, the bridge between the sun and the moon, the source of the ten thousand beings'." (Robinet 1993: 178) "Positioned in the very center of the universe, the Dipper is also a symbol of the Great Unity, Taiyi. (...) the god Taiyi, the Lord of the Northern Pole, resides in the Dipper. Already Sima Qian notes that the banner of the god Taiyi contains the representation of the sun, the moon, and the Dipper." (Robinet 1989: 179)

[22] "The existence of the two-part soul was more or less certain in the mind of the people in the Eastern Zhou and the Warring States period." (Poo 1998: 65) In a Taoist setting, see Schipper 1993: 36. For a brief reference to its shamanic relevance, see Hultkrantz 1973: 30.

[23] "The explanations given of dreaming are uncertain and confounding. It is said

duality of the soul is a minimum in China, and there is sometimes further division into smaller entities.[24]

A further characteristic of the substratum was its readiness to *assimilate and integrate* other religious or conceptual elements, a tendency strongly connected with the fact that, like shamanism, it is not a religion in the strict sense but a system of beliefs[25]; thus, it could easily adjust itself to Taoist[26] or Buddhist[27] notions. Though not identical with it,[28] it was strongly embedded in the *popular religious* context,[29] Despite the most violent attempts to eradicate it,[30] this substratum was able to *survive* among the elite and the common people, especially as a *poetic* or *theatrical* undercurrent (Loon 1977).

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that, in dreaming, the actively operating soul (*jingshen*) remains in the body, and is then an object for divination about good and evil; while others assert that the soul then wanders about, and has intercourse with men and beasts." (*Lunheng* ch. 20; Groot 1982b: 111) "When one has a dream diviners say this is a peregrination of his *hun* [soul, G.K.], and so, if he dreams that he appears before the Emperor (of Heaven), it must be his *hun* that ascends to Heaven." (*Lunheng* ch. 22; Groot 1982b: 111) For a double dream-excursion story also see Groot 1982b: 113–114.

[24] "If a man divides his body, he himself may see the tripartite *hun* and the septempartite *po* that dwell therein." (*Baopuzi* ch. 4; Groot 1982b: 70)

[25] Hoppál 1992; Johansen 1999: 41.

[26] "Basic religious ideas in the early Daoist communities were clearly derived from popular religion. Similar evidence of Warring States popular religions now emerging in the archaeological record. Shaman were an important part of the religious scene (the core of Seidel's 'mediumistic folk religion'), but the elite themselves were already engaged in transactions with a highly organized spirit world." (Harper 1998: 153)

[27] "The interaction between shamanism and Buddhism also has attracted scholarly attention. Tang Yongtong, Murakami Yoshimi, and Stephen F. Teiser all have indicated the influence of shamanism on the development of Chinese Buddhism." (Lin 1994: 9)

[28] "It is noteworthy that one of the common features shared by shamanism and popular religion in medieval China was the cult of the dead. Yet the cult of the Worthies (or moral models, especially officials with great merit), which was so crucial to the popular religion, was almost completely excluded from the shamanistic belief system." (Lin 1994: 131)

[29] "The Chinese religious world has often been portrayed as the three elite traditions of Buddhism, Taoism, and the state cult, all of which developed from a common popular substrate." (Kleeman 1994: 186)

[30] "Confucians, Taoists, and Buddhists could agree in condemning popular cults founded on blood sacrifice." (Kleeman 1994a: 204)

III. Characteristics of the *Wus*

III.1. *Functional Characteristics*

The most important function of the *wus*, the pre-eminent representatives of the shamanic substratum,[31] is their ability to *directly communicate with the spiritual world.* It is to be stressed that in China (as, I think, in other shamanic cultures, cf. Hamayon 1993: 7) the emphasis is to be put on the feature of directness. Thus, there are various types of *wu,* and one cannot subsume all under one rubric. The most fundamental feature that distinguishes them from ordinary people is their ability to *see and hear the spirits.* Wei Zhao, in his commentary to the *Guoyu* (Chuyu 18.1a–1b) states: "The *wu* and the *xi* [male *wu*, G.K.] are they who see the spirits."[32] Besides seeing and hearing, they can also *invoke, summon* or even *command the spirits.*[33] Aside from the scholarly debate on the relevance of mediumism in shamanism (Mircea Eliade vs. Hans Findeisen, M.I. Lewis),[34] "ancient Chinese people conceived of the talent to be *possessed by a spirit* as one of the essential features of the shaman. (...) It was believed that the shamans could be possessed not

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[31] Cf. Yang 1961: 24–25, 303–306; Lin 1994: 134. n. 366; Groot 1982: 1205.

[32] Schafer 1951: 13. n. 64. "In the book about divine Immortals mention is made of magic power to call down gods and arraign and punish spectres, as also magic enabling men to see spectres. (...) seers of spectres are *xi* of the male sex or *wu* of the female, and that their second sight is a natural gift, which cannot be acquired by study or practice." (*Baopuzi* ch. 11; Groot 1982: 1215) The Confucian tradition differs in its attributing invisibility to the spiritual world: "The Master said: 'How abundant and rich are the powers possessed and exercised by ghosts and spirits (*guishen*)! We look for them, but do not see them; we listen for, but do not hear them; they enter into all things, and nothing is without them'." (*Liji* 52; Poo 1997: 71) Cf. the famous dictum of Confucius: "To give one's self earnestly to the duties due to man, and while respecting ghosts and spirits (*guishen*), to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom." (Poo 1997: 73) "Under the emperor Xiao Wu (A.D. 454–465) of the first Song dynasty 'there was a *wu,* who could see spirits and assured the emperor that it would be possible to make his secondary consort appear'." (Groot 1982: 1216)

[33] "They [the Managers of the *wu*] are in charge of the rituals by which the *wu* make [the spirits] descend." (*Zhouli* 50.15a–19b; Falkenhausen 1995: 285)

[34] On the simultaneous existence of possession and trance from a general perspective, see Kressing 1997: 118, 132.

only by the spirits of the dead but, also, by the deities of nature."[35] Shamans were also associated with *ascension*,[36] especially in connection with *mountains*.[37] Sources reveal the practice that the *wu*s, and later Taoists (especially those of the *Shangqing* sect) could set out on an

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[35] Lin 1994: 175–176. See e.g. *Guoyu, Chuyu* 18.1a–1b.: "Those among the people whose souls were not flighty and were able to be reverential and inwardly upright, their wisdom could interpret the upper (Heaven) and lower (Earth) realms; their sanctity was able to enlighten the distant, proclaiming it with clarity; their intelligence was able to illuminate it (good spirits); their cleverness was able to understand and eliminate it (evil spirits). For this reason, the bright spirits descended into them; if (they descended) into a male, (he) was called *xi;* if into a female, (she) was called *wu*." (Paper 1995: 117) "When Liu Xu did not succeed his father, he employed the shamanka Li Ruxu to curse Thearch Zhao (r. 87–74 B.C). Ruxu first entered a shamanic trance. When she announced that Thearch Wu occupied her body, everyone present bowed while the deceased ruler declared, 'I command that Xu become Son of Heaven'." (*Hanshu* 63.15a–b; Harper 1998: 158) "In the ritual, these two shamans were said to have been possessed by the spirits, who apparently were Xia Jingning's ancestors." (*Jinshu* 94. 2428–2429; Lin 1994: 124) "In the night of the same day. the deity possessed a shaman (*wu*), saying, 'Chen Min once promised to offer me a silver-stick...'." (Wanfu (fl. 290–306): *Shenyiji*, quoted in the *Taipingyulan* 710.11a12b; Lin 1994: 187). Also see Nickerson 1994: 45; Falkenhausen 1995: 280. n. 6.

[36] "The country of Shaman Xian is north of Nü Chou (...) There is Deng Bao Mountain, which the shamans use to ascend and descend." "There is Ling Mountain (...) The Ten shamans ascend and descend here, and the Hundred Herbs are all here." "Zhao Mountain, a man there is called Bo Gao. Bo Gao ascends and descends here to the heaven." (*Shanhaijing* 7.3b; 16.3b; Chang 1994: 22–23)

[37] "If one climbs to a height double that of the Kunlun Mountains, (that peak) is called Cool Wind Mountain. If one climbs it, one will not die. If one climbs to a height that is doubled again, (that peak) is called Hanging Garden. If one ascends it, one will gain supernatural power and be able to control the wind and the rain. If one climbs to a height is that is doubled yet again, it reaches up to Heaven itself. If one mounts to there, one will become a god. It is called the abode of the Supreme Thearch. The Fu [= Fusang] Tree in Yang Province is baked by the sun's heat. The Jian Tree on Mt. Duguang, by which the gods ascend and descend (to and from Heaven), casts no shadow at midday. If one calls (from the place), there is no echo. It forms a canopy over the center of the world. The Ruo Tree is to the west of the Jian Tree. On its branches are ten suns; its blossoms cast light upon the earth." (*Huainanzi* 4:4a–b; Major 1993: 158) Taoist tradition preserved its shamanic legacy in this respect as well: "All major Daoist schools are in one way or another linked to a sacred mountain." (Hahn 2000: 1)

ecstatic journey.[38] Both the third century BC *Chuci* (*Lisao, Yuanyou*) and the fifth century AD *Shangqing* tradition emphasize *ecstatic journeys to the heavenly regions undertaken to meet deities.*[39]

The *wu*'s aim in making direct contact with spirits, defined as broadly as possible, is twofold: to *eliminate negative factors*[40] and/or to *enhance positive ones in a certain community.*[41] In the first case, his general apotropaic function (foremost in *times of crisis*)[42] manifests itself in

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[38] A good example is the *Dasiming* poem of the *Jiuge* part of the *Chuci* (Kósa 2000: 154–155. n. 76–77). "Ecstatic journeys have a long history in China: already the *Zhuangzi* evokes such images in the first chapter on 'Free and Easy Wanderings', according to which several personages 'bestride the sun and the moon,' 'mount on the truth of heaven and earth, ride the changes of the six breaths (of the six directions) and frolic through the boundless' or 'wander around the four poles'. (...). *Liezi* shows how King Mu of Zhou is carried off by magician as far as the realm of the Queen Mother of the West (...). The *Chuci* (Songs of the South) describe the ecstatic trip of the poet to the four ends of the world and to the Gate of Heaven (...). The tradition is further continued in the twelfth chapter of the *Huainanzi*, according to which Lu Ao 'wanders around the Northern Sea, jumps over the Great *Yin*, enters the Dark Gate, and reaches the hill of Menghu'." (Robinet 1989: 160) The same idea is attested on the mirrors of the Han, which represent immortals "who amuse themselves in the regions of the four seas." (Robinet 1989: 163)

[39] "Three kinds of practices center around the Dipper: invoking it for protective purposes; making its stars descend into one's body; ascending and pacing on it. The Northern Dipper is first of all a divinity of the North and of the Underworld, and as such it has an important protective function, guarding the faithful adept against all kinds of malevolent forces. (...) Most commonly the exercises refer to the role of the Dipper as an exorcistic agency and end by an ecstatic flight to this constellation." (Robinet 1989: 175) Also see Robinet 1976.

[40] The *wu*'s "principal functions are tied up with averting evil and pollution. They are especially active under circumstances of inauspiciousness and distress." (Falkenhausen 1995: 293) E.g. *Xunzi* 9.29; *Lunheng* 22.346; *Zhouli* 6.39b. Emperors and kings were especially fond of exorcists (*fangxiangshi*) who accompanied them wherever malevolent forces were supposed to be present, e.g. on distant journeys or at funeral rites (Maspero 1978: 169–170).

[41] *Lunheng* 25.386; *Qianfulun* 6.355; *Han Feizi* 8.23.467; *Fengsu tongyi* 9.69; *Hanshu* 45.2187; 66.2878, 2883; *Hou Hanshu* 41.1397; *Sanguozhi* 2.84, 48.1178.

[42] "If a great calamity befalls the land, then send for *wu* (shamans) and perform the *wuheng* (shamanistic *heng* ceremony)." (*Zhouli* ch. 50; Carr 1992: 111) This function of the *wu* is a constant element of their description: "During the Six Dynasties period, shamans frequently performed rituals in times of crisis (such as illness, difficult labor, death, and war)." (Lin 1994: 71)

two more specific techniques: exorcism and its specific application, healing. Throughout Chinese history *exorcists* (*fangxiangshi*), representing one aspect of the general *wu* tradition,[43] were called upon to eliminate certain malevolent forces, thus they regularly participated in the Great Exorcism festival.[44] An exorcism (*nuo*) was performed in the third and eighth months of the year, and the Great Exorcism (*Danuo*) in the twelfth month. Several references in the received literature mention or describe the ritual of Great Exorcism.[45] After the Tang dynasty, however, it is no longer referred to in the sources; nevertheless, several elements survived (Bodde 1975: 83), especially in the theatrical tradition (Riley 1997). Originally aiming at expelling the demons of drought and pestilence, by the Han period the *nuo* ritual entailed everything that was loosely associated with the struggle with the stale and the bad (Bodde 1975: 113). Like other functions of the *wu*,[46] all kinds of exorcism

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[43] Chow 1978: 76. "The practice that certain types of *wu*s are designated with a different title in the official nomenclature is well reflected in the following paragraph of the *Zhouli* (*Chunguan, Shenshi*): '*Shenshi* (spirit scholar): the spirit scholar takes charge of the rites for the three celestial bodies, i.e. the sun, the moon, and the stars. He distinguishes their names and their totems. On the day of the winter solstice, he brings down the heavenly gods and human spirits. On the day of the summer solstice, he brings down the earthly spirits and minor deities so as to remove disasters from the state and violent death form the people.' The commentators maintain that *shenshi* are those shamans that are particularly learned and handsome." (Chen 1986: 39)

[44] "In his official function, he wears [over his head] a bearskin having four eyes of gold, and is clad in a black upper garment and a red lower garment. Grasping his lance and brandishing his shield, he leads the many officials to perform the seasonal Exorcism (*Nuo*), searching through houses and driving out pestilences." (*Zhouli* 59.20–21a; Bodde 1975: 78) "When there is a great funeral, he [the *Fangxiangshi*] goes in advance of the coffin, and upon its arrival at the tomb, when it is being inserted into the [burial] chamber, he strikes the four corner [of the chamber] with his lance and expels the Fangliang. (...) In the last [month] of winter ... [newly] germinated [vegetables] are distributed in all directions as offerings to the [demons of] evil dreams. Thereupon the command is given [to the *Fangxiangshi*] to begin the Exorcism (*Nuo*) for the expulsion of pestilential things." (Bodde 1975: 78–79)

[45] "When his fellow villagers conducted on Exorcism (*Nuo*), he [Confucius] put on his court dress and stood on the eastern steps [to watch]." (*Lunyu* 10.10; Bodde 1975: 76) Another reference occurs in the *Lüshi chunqiu* (12.1b); detailed descriptions are given in the *Hou Hanshu* (15.3a–b, 3535–38), Zhang Heng's *Dongjingfu, Duduan, Hanjiuyi* ('Han Old Observances'), and the *Lunheng* (Bodde 1975: 75).

[46] One of the archaic forms of the character '*wu*' is rather similar to the character

implied *fighting with the malevolent spirits*.[47] From the Shang period to the Han, *hunts*, fights and combats were important activities at the royal court.[48]

Chinese tradition traced the practice of *healing* (a concrete aspect of exorcism) to the famous *wu* Peng (shaman Peng).[49] The word 'healing' (*yi*) itself originally contained the element of '*wu*'.[50] The expression *wuyi* (shaman-doctor) is well attested in classical documents.[51] From the fourth to the third century BC, however, a new, more scientific model of healing developed,[52] and thus the two words (*wu* and *yi*) were

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denoting anything connected with the concept 'martial' (*wu*; Schafer 1951: 154).

[47] "It is noteworthy that from Han times onwards the various forms of weapons (bows, arrows, sword, spears, large axes, shields, and ropes) were indispensable equipment for those who, including shamans and other attendants, carried out the 'Great Exorcism' (*danuo*)." (Lin 1994: 104–105)

[48] "While Shang (...) had an agricultural ecology, its elite were nor farmers but warriors, an occupation derived from hunting. Hunting itself was their alternative activity." (Paper 1995: 79) The Shang king was apparently not only envisioned as the leader par excellence in the battle but as a master of the hunt, and thus as master over the human and animal realms. (...) The activity of hunting appears to have symbolized not only the king's power over wild spirits but the king's ability to reach and maintain the spirits of his royal and all-powerful predecessors. Royal hunts and the hunted sacrifice was the king's prerogative. Although accompanied by others, the king was the primary person to lead royal hunts, as he was the primary person to engage in ancestor spirit communication." (Childs-Johnson 1998: 32)

[49] *Mozi* 68.105; *Guanzi* 1.3.10b; *Shiji* 28.1388; *Hou Hanshu* 82a.2710; *Lüshi chunqiu* 17.9a.

[50] "Paleography reveals that the 'doctor' logograph with 'wine' was originally written with 'shaman'. This ancient *yi* (...) 'doctor' ideographically depicted a shaman-doctor in the act of exorcistical healing with ('arrow' in) a 'quiver', a 'hand holding a lance', and a *wu* (...) 'shaman'." (Carr 1992: 117) Also see Chow 1978: 71.

[51] "Unambiguous *wuyi* 'shaman-doctor' examples are found in the *Mozi* (15.1b.), *Shuoyuan* (19.22b), *Guanzi* (1.6b.), and *Lüshi chunqiu* (3.5a). (...) Further evidence that 'shaman-doctor' meant 'medicine-man' are the official titles *Yi-Wu* 'Doctor Shaman' (e.g. *Hanshu* 49.2288) and *Wu-Ma* 'Shaman (of the) Horses' (e.g. *Zhouli* 28.12b–13a) as well as the proper names *Wu-Yi* 'Shaman Doctor' (e.g. *Hou Hanshu* 82A.27.10) and *Wu-Ma* (e.g. *Lunyu* 7.10a)." (Carr 1992: 118. n. 30) Also see *Yizhoushu* ch. 39 (Chow 1978: 70).

[52] "The Confucian cover-up involved not only scholars and officials, but especially doctors. The early practitioners of Chinese medicine historically changed from *wu* 'medicine-men' to *yi* 'men of medicine'. With advances in herbal medicine and acu-

contrasted[53]—with *wu*s applying ritual incantations, while *yi*s (doctors) used drugs with therapies based on the correspondences of the *yin-yang* and the Five Elements.[54] The *wu*'s healing practice, attributing a demonic cause to the ailments (Unschuld 1980), encompassed invoking the appropriate benevolent deity, and making the proper prayers and sacrifices to him/her,[55] or exorcising the malevolent demons.[56] A further method, used if the person was already dying, was that of *calling back the soul*.[57] As a positive counterpart of exorcism, one of the *wu*'s tasks,

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puncture, shaman doctors were practically disremembered after the Han era. Unschuld (1980: 125–8) refers to a 'Confucian medicine' based upon systematic correspondences and the idea that illnesses are caused by excesses (rather than demons)." (Carr 1992: 145)

[53] "The closest commentators come to demonstrating two professions are texts contrasting the two words *wū* 'shaman' and *yī* 'doctor', e.g. the *Zuozhuan* (Chenggong 10, 26.29a–30b, [...]), *Huainanzi* (16.14b), *Shiji* (105.2794) and *Baopuzi* (5.4b [...])." (Carr 1992: 118. n. 30.)

[54] Harper 1998: 43; Unschuld 1985: 51–100.

[55] "Persons who serve the spirits, cure disease, and evoke blessings by means of prayer and exorcism are called *xi* for the male sex and *wu* for the female." (He Xiu's commentary on the *Gongyangzhuan*; Lin 1994: 23) Also see *Lüshi chunqiu* 3.5a; *Huainanzi* 16.14b, *Mengzi* 2a.7; *Han Feizi* 19.50, *Sanguozhi* 48.1158. *Mozi* 68.105, 70.111; *Huainanzi* 9.21a; *Shiji* 28.1368; *Hanshu* 25a.1203. The practice survived in later times as well (Lin 1994: 206): "The shaman said that she was possessed by (or afflicted with) devils (*xiemei*). Hence the shaman took the girl to the banks of a river, beat a drum(s), and used the technique of invocation to heal her." (Liu Yiqing (403–444): *Youminglu*, quoted in *Taipingyulan* ch. 932; Lin 1994: 209).

[56] "The majority of the incantations occur in MSI.E and are exorcistic curses. The curses typically threaten the demonic agent blamed for causing the ailment with mutilation and death if it does not leave the patient's body. (...) 'With a *zuo* (oak) rod I stab you; with tiger claws I gouge and grab you; with a knife I butcher you; with *wei* (reeds) I sever you. (...) If you do not depart, it will be bitter.' (...) This scenario for exorcism mirrors the one complete account of a Han state-sponsored exorcism in received literature, the Great Exorcism (*danuo*) performed at New Year's and recorded in the *Hou Hanshu* treatise on ritual." (Harper 1998: 161) Also see DeWoskin 1983: 14–15.

[57] The best example is the *Zhaohun* poem of the *Chuci* (Kósa 2000: 155–156. n. 78). "When ceremonial usages were coming into existence, people, in case of death, went up to the housetop and exclaimed: 'Ho, o, o. So-and-so, come back!'" (*Liji* ch. 20; Groot 1982a: 245) "According to the *Ceremonies and Rites* (*Yili*) and the *Record of Rites* (*Liji*), a death ritual in Han-times followed a ceremony summoning the departed soul back to its body (*fu* or *zhaohun*). The dying person was placed on the ground and covered with a large sheet. Then a shaman, called a Summoner (*fuzhe*), climbed onto

well reflected in the etymology of the word,[58] was to bring happiness, wealth and *fertility*.[59]

Divination, another main activity of shamans of all times, permeated Chinese culture as a whole from the outset; similarly, the accounts of the *wu*s abound with events involving divination. Yarrow-stalk divination (*shi*)[60] itself was supposed to have originated with *wu* Xian (usually translated as Shaman Xian).[61] Succinct summaries of the *wu*'s activity often imply that divination was a main concern.[62] The shamanic character

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the dying person's house holding one of the dying person's garments." (Wu 1992: 112) "Its origin can be found in a kind of 'healing' method essential to many shamanistic practices around the world. Evidence of such practices reveal a wide-spread belief that disease (and 'dying' as its extreme form) is caused by the soul's straying away, and that the proper treatment is to locate and capture the wandering soul, obliging it to return to the patient's body. The ancient Chinese ritual of soul-recalling was based on the same belief, as we see not only in the *Record of Rites* but also in the 'Summons of Soul'. The beginning section of this prayer contains a conversation between the Lord on High and a certain Shaman Yang. Willing to help a mortal man whose soul has flown away, the Lord demands that the shaman first make a divination to determine the soul's whereabouts. He also warns the shaman: 'I fear that if you delay any longer, it will be too late.' This suggests that though the man in question is on the verge of death, his life could still be saved if his soul were guided back." (Wu 1992: 114)

[58] Phonetic relatives of '*wu*' include the following: 'fruitful, fertile; cherish, pacify; woman; mound; net, membrane; egg, ovary, embryo; boat; pot, receptacle'. "These large word-families show a close attachment of the root-ideas 'maternity/fecundity/fertility' to the ancient concept of the shaman." Cf. "*Dui* is marshy fertile, a youngest daughter, a shaman." (*Yijing*; Schafer 1951: 155.)

[59] "Many ancient records show that one of the shamans' functions in pre-Han and Han times was to pray for reproduction and fertility." (Lin 1994: 216–217) "Since *wu* played an important role in securing childbirth, their link with snakes may well be connected to the latter's role as guarantors of fertility. The links of *wu*, dragons, and fertility are also revealed in a set of definitions in the *Shuowen*. The character *ren* is glossed, '*Ren* is the position of the northern quadrant. It is the ultimate of *yin* and facilitates birth. (...) It imitates the form of a pregnant person. Following the *hai*, the character *ren* thereby causes the child to be born. *Ren* has the same meaning as *wu* 'spirit intermediary'." (Lewis 1999: 204)

[60] The Chinese character, again, preserved its *wu*ist origin in that it contains the character '*wu*'.

[61] *Lüshi chunqiu* 17.9a; *Guanzi* 1.3.10b.

[62] *Xunzi* 9.29. *Guoyu Chuyu* 1.2.559. "To observe the *yin* and *yang*, judge the meaning of portents, divine by the tortoise and milfoil, conduct exorcism, fortune-telling,

of Shang divinatory practice was especially emphasized by K.C. Chang (1983: 54–55). Similarly, in later times we find various descriptions of *wus* who are able to predict a certain event, especially someone's death.[63] One of the most recurrent motifs connected to *wus* is foretelling the future with the help of *dream interpretation*, i.e. oneiromancy.[64] Taoists, the main heirs of shamanic practices, made wide use of every form of divination (Sakade 2000: 16), and divination aided by spirits appears to have remained a general *wu* practice as late as the fifth century AD.[65]

Many of the activities mentioned above involved sacrifice. *Wus* of the Shang and Zhou dynasty were often engaged in sacrificial ceremonies,[66] and after the unification of the Empire *wus* from various regions were summoned to the imperial court to perform specific *sacrifices*.[67] Strangely enough, *wus* were not only active performers of sacri-

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and divination by the five types of signs, and understand all that pertains to good and bad fortune—these are the duties of hunchback shamanesses and crippled shamans." (*Xunzi* ch. 1; Poo 1998: 51) "The legalist philosopher Han Feizi also attacked those who believed in the efficacy of divinations: 'Those who employ the date-formula, serve the ghosts and spirits, believe in divinations and enjoy making sacrifices, are ill-fated'." (Poo 1998: 50) The technique they employed is usually considered to be similar to that of the official *shi*-diviners (*Yijing* 57.35; *Mozi* 68.105; *Hanshu* 59.1911). Also see Nickerson 1994: 45.

[63] *Zuozhuan* Wengong 10; *Zhuangzi* 7.5.

[64] *Zuozhuan* Chenggong 10; *Shanhaijing* 16.3a; *Chuci Zhaohun* 9.1b; "Les oneiromanciens proprements dits ne furent sans doute que des historiens ou des chamanes 'spécialisés'." (Mathieu 1987: 14) For a detailed discussion on a dream revealing the future, see Mathieu 1983: 132–136.

[65] Thus in A.D. 485 Gaozu of the Wei dynasty issued a decree: "In the ninth year of the Taihuo period he decreed, that the *wu* and the *xi* were strictly forbidden to foretell good or bad fortune under pretext of doing so by means of *shen* or *gui*." (*Weishu* 7.1. 21; Groot 1982: 1217)

[66] "Many scholars have illustrated that shamans were the major sacrificers or sacrificial priests in the Shang and probably in pre-Shang times. Shamans continued to play a leading role on various sacrificial occasions in Chinese society, even up to the middle of the Western Han Dynasty (ca. 100 B.C.)." (Lin 1994: 198)

[67] "The *wu* of Liang sacrificed to the Heaven and Earth, (...) the *wu* of Jin sacrificed to the Five Emperors, the Lord of the East, and the Lord of the Clouds, (...) the *wu* of Qin sacrificed to the Earth Shrine, (...) the *wu* of Jing sacrificed to the Tangxia, (...) the *wu* of Nine Heavens sacrificed to the Nine Heavens (...) The *wu* of the River sacrificed to the River at Linjin, and the *wu* of the South Mountain sacrificed to the South Mountain at Qinzhong." (*Shiji* 28.2.16; *Hanshu* 25. I.1.15; Poo 1998: 119) Among the

fices but might also be the object used. They were pre-eminently involved in rituals whose purpose was to induce rain.[68] This ceremony could take different forms: simple *rain-prayers* (*qiyu, qingyu, qiuyu*), or *rain-dances* (*yu*),[69] and even the *burning of* wus[70] was used to bring on the long-awaited rainfall. The supposed *affiliation of kings* and *wus*[71] is,

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common people such practices were widespread: "When among the people a house or dwelling is repaired, or the earth is dug up, then, on the works being finished, they reconcile the spirits of the soil and sue for pardon, calling this 'reconciliation of the earth'. They make dolls of clay representing spectres, and order a *wuzhu* to entertain the same and conciliate in this way the spirits of the soil." (*Lunheng* ch. 25; Groot 1982: 1111) Also see Lin 1994: 200.

[68] "Apparently all rainmaking methods in China were magical or religious until the eighteenth century, when we first hear of a 'scientific' method. Even then the latter was carried out after obtaining the permission of the mountain and river deities." (Cohen 1978: 244; Needham 2: 473)

[69] "The Female Shamans are in charge of anointing and ablutions at the exorcisms that are held at regular times throughout the year. When there is a drought or scorching heat, they dance in the rain-making ritual." (*Zhouli* 50.20a–23b; Falkenhausen 1995: 290) Also see *Taiping yulan* 35.7a–b, *Chunqiu fanlu* 3.6b. "The role *par excellence* of the ancient shamaness was that of a dancer for rain." (Schafer 1951: 156)

[70] "The rite *chi* is equated with procedures mentioned in Zhou texts as *puwu* 'exposing the shaman,' and *fenwu* 'burning the shaman.' Professor Chen cites numerous texts from the bones in which *chi* appears as a verb, frequently with a personal name as its direct object, this name being taken to be name of a shaman or shamaness." (Schafer 1951: 130) "If this does not make it rain, order the shamans to recite their spells, and expose them. If exposing them does not make rain, pile up firewood on the sacred mountain, beat drums and burn them." (*Chunqiu fanlu*; Schafer 1951: 141) "Seeking rain in the spring when there is drought (...) Expose female shamans and gather emaciated persons for eight days." (*Chunqiu fanlu* 16/3a.6.1–3b.3.15; Queen 1996: 107) Also see *Zuozhuan* Xigong 21 (Schafer 1951: 132). Even as late as the Tang dynasty, Du Fu writes ("Thunder"): "Due to the great drought, mountains and hills are perched. / The South is a land of swamp fevers. / The disaster has made the work in the fields harder than ever. / In these parts sorcerers must dance and sacrifice for rain. / The gorges echo with the beatings of drums." (Glum 1982: 245)

[71] "The Shang king was a supernatural interlocutor and priest; he presided over ancestor cult rites and he communicated with ancestor spirits. The most illustrative example of his communicatory power are what he solely presides over, e.g. the *bin* rite, 'to communicate with ancestor spirits in the ancestor temple,' and *zhu* rites, 'to invoke ancestor spirits,' and *wu* rite, 'to petition spirits through the *feng* feather dance'. (...) The Shang king was a magician in the sense his power stemmed from his role as an intermediary, as communicator with Di and ancestor spirits. We know that the way of

among others, conspicuous when their roles in rain rituals are compared.[72] The *wu*'s practice differed from other religious practitioners in many ways, a definitive difference being the *magical* character of the former's rituals.[73] One of the words used in this context is *ling* which was originally evidently related to rain-seeking sacrifices, although later it came to denote a more general magical power generated through the direct link with the spirits (Thiel 1968: 174); furthermore, it can also denote a "*wu*" (Chow 1978: 69). Especially during the Han, this skill of magic was mentioned in connection with the power to curse and with black magic (*gu, wugu*).[74]

Dance and song are a major trait of Chinese *wus*: "If you dare to have constant dancing in your mansions, and drunken singing in your houses, I call it *wu* fashion."[75] Generally, in China *music* was endowed with magical powers, foremost in connection with summoning the spirits.[76] In ancient China, music was inextricably entwined with *dance*. There is a well-known etymological link between *wu*, 'shaman' and

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referring to the divinity of Shang kings in bone inscriptions is as Di, the name referring to the primordial God on High in Shang religious belief." (Childs-Johnson 1998: 10. n. 10) "Some oracle inscriptions graphically interchanged 'king' with 'shaman' (e.g. Shaman Xian was called King Xian)." (Carr 1992: 96. n. 2)

[72] On the most famous legend of Tang, the first Shang emperor, who was willing to burn himself on a pyre to obtain rainfall for his people, see *Mozi* 4.10a.; *Xunzi* 19.9b, *Lüshi chunqiu* 9.3b–4a; *Huainanzi* 19.b; *Guoyu-Zhouyu* 1.13a, *Lunheng* 5.11b–12b. Also see Allan 1984.

[73] "The *Zhouli* text and its commentaries imply that the *wu* possess specific magical capabilities and skills (or 'arts') that enable them to act in such a way; this seems to distinguish them from other ritual officials, particularly from the invocators-priests." (Falkenhausen 1995: 293)

[74] Harper 1998: 74–75. Cf. "wherever shamanism occurs its functionaries may turn into witches or wizards." (Hultkrantz 1973: 33)

[75] *Shujing* ch. *Yixun* (Groot 1982: 1187). "To perform the *heng* dance in the palace is called yielding to the influence of shamans." (*Mozi* ch. 32; Carr 1992: 111)

[76] "The musical instrument was regarded as a magical tool by which to communicate with the spirit world or manipulate the spirits. The *Zhouli* states that one of the duties of the *Dasiyue* (Musician-in-chief) in ancient times was to use various forms of music to summon the spirits, while the Han scholar Wang Chong tells us that the shaman could bring down the souls of the dead by 'striking the one-stringed instrument'." (Lin 1994: 103)

wu, 'dancing'.[77] Dances were often associated with flying birds.[78] Besides other, perhaps ecstatic, dances (long-sleeved dance, *posha*-dance),[79] there is one which is ascribed to Yu (the founder of the Xia dynasty and tamer of the world flood). It possesses several features that link it to the *wu*'s practices. His steps (*Yubu*)[80] are intimately linked with his function as a hero who controlled the flood and, thus, annihilated the malevolent creatures that populated the world (Birrell 1993: 148–151). Afterwards he molded nine cauldrons which were destined to reveal the nature of spirits and demons to the people (Birrell 1993: 155). The exorcistic nature of Yu's steps is evident in the light of newly excavated texts and later Taoist tradition—especially *Shangqing*, the most important recipient of *wu*ist (J.J.M. de Groot's expression) tradition.[81]

III.2. *Attributes of the Wu*

Although *shamanic illnesses* are obviously not well documented in the official histories, we still find some hints as to their existence: "To cure women who, having intercourse with spectral beings, speak and laugh when alone, or are seized with melancholy or stupor, one ounce of powdered realgar should be stirred with two ounces of pine-gum and a tiger's claw."[82] Foremost, *wu*s seem to be *taught by spirits*, though in

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[77] Hopkins 1945: 3–16. Chen 1936: 38; Moreover, Karlgren (1923. No. 1282) and Granet (1926) thought that the Chinese character '*wu*' depicts two persons performing a ritual dance.

[78] *Chuc-Jiuge*; *Huainanzi* 8.4a; *Shujing* ch. 3.

[79] *Hou Hanshu* 79.2b; Eberhard 1942: 54.

[80] *Baopuzi* 17. 5a; *Shiji* 2.51; *Liezi* 7.174; *Lüshi chunqiu* ch. 20; *Taiping yulan* 82.511; *Shizi* ch. 2; Granet 1926: 549–579.

[81] "Granet proceeds to hypothesize that the Pace of Yu, which was a trademark of religious Daoism during the centuries after the Han, originated in shamanistic traditions of early popular religion; and that key elements of religious Daoism were derived from this earlier popular religion. There is, of course, other evidence in the excavated manuscripts of the relation between ancient popular religion and religious Daoism. But the eight occurrences of the Pace of Yu in the Mawangdui magical recipes (...) are the most striking proof, and confirm Granet's inspired hypothesis." (Harper 1998: 168)

[82] *Baopuzi* 3.17; Groot 1982: 950. "She carried soil to build her parents' tomb(s). Unexpectedly, a voice in the air announced, 'Your extreme virtue is admirable. [I,] the deity of the mountain, intend to select you to serve me. [If you assent,] you will be able

the official setting there were also *Shaman Instructors* (Falkenhausen 1995: 294). There is also some evidence that *wu* functions were *hereditary*.[83] Curiously, religious Taoism, the main inheritor of *wu*ist legacy, appears to preserve some references to the unique *bone structure* of the immortals.[84]

Not surprisingly, *wu*s, whose functions and activities were specific, also possessed specific attributes. As for the *attire* worn by the shamanic exorcist, the *Zhouli* description runs as follows: "In his official function, he wears [over his head] a bearskin having four eyes of gold, and is clad in a black upper garment and a red lower garment. Grasping his lance and brandishing his shield, he leads the many officials to perform the seasonal Exorcism (*Nuo*), searching through houses and driving out pestilences.'[85] During Han times, dancers with *long sleeves* were in vogue; this special attire, which transforms its wearer into a bird, seems

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to cure illness for the people and, as a result, you will acquire a great amount of wealth.' She considered the deity a monstrous goblin (*yaomei*) and did not obey. As a result she became ill. Over a certain period she cured a next-door neighbor who suffered from the poison of the *xiyu* (...). After this she too recovered from her illness. Henceforth she utilized shamanistic techniques (*wudao*) to heal peoples' disease, and all of them recovered." (*Nan Qishu* 55; Lin 1994: 45–46) "Evidence in Shang bone and shell inscriptions suggests that the Shang king was the chief shaman and experienced shamanic sickness as part of his kingship." (Harper 1998: 168. n. 2.)

[83] "Seers of spectres are *xi* of the male sex or *wu* of the female, and that their second sight is a natural gift, which cannot be acquired by study or practice." (*Baopuzi* ch. 11; Groot 1982: 1215) "On a somewhat different note we hear of a dedicated man of letters named Gao Feng, in eastern Han. He feared that he could not evade a call to serve in an official capacity, but managed to avoid the duty by claiming that he came from a shaman's family and was therefore not qualified to hold office." (Loewe 1982: 107)

[84] "For them [*Daoshi*] it is not solely a matter of an aptitude passed on within a family, and the quality of mastership concerns not just the social body, but also the physical body. One must have 'the bones,' the skeleton of the Immortal, to qualify for the dignity of being the representative of heaven and the master of the gods. This genetic quality is not exactly a question of physiology or of physiognomy (...); 'the skeleton' is a hidden quality..." (Schipper 1993: 58) Also see Kohn 1993: 96.

[85] *Zhouli* 59.20a–21a; 54.13b; Bodde 1975: 78. Later *nuo* performers also use special clothes: "The *nuo* performer wears a bound crown (*touza*) made of hide with five sections (...). Each of the sections are decorated and, in the case of the Dejiang Tulaoshi, bear the characters for earth, sun, heaven, and water." (Riley 1997: 61)

to have originated in ecstatic dances.[86] *Disheveled hair,*[87] *masks,*[88] and *bare feet* also seem to have been associated with *wu*'s exorcistic practices.

Drums were generally used in Chinese rituals. *Xunzi* (ch. 14) calls it the lord of music and stresses the instrument's similarity to Heaven. Drums in particular were often used in the *wu*'s rituals.[89] *Mirrors* were credited with a protective power and the ability to reveal the true nature of spiritual beings.[90] *Arrows* used by exorcists were proved to

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[86] "The dancing figure of the jade figures relates them to the shamaness whose movements were endowed with power, and literary description of the environment which the dancer functioned reveal her as an invoker of spirits. A significant attribute of both artistic and literary images of the dancer is the long sleeves that floated as she moved. It was possible to bridge the terrestrial and the celestial as long as the music could be heard, and the dancer responded to the rhythm." (Erikson 1998: 56) Its shamanic indebtedness is well illustrated by the fact that Xu Shen's definition of the *wu* also seems to contain some reference to it: "*Wu* are *Zhu,* female, capable of serving the formless [spirits] and dancing to bring down the spirits. [The character] is composed of a person extending the two sleeves in the act of dancing." (Chang 1994: 11) "An *yi* pouring vessel of Chu provenance (...) depicts a scene of dancers, some of whom wear antlers and some of whom are shown with hair unbound and standing on end. Hayashi notes that such unbound, erect hair is a distinguishing feature of Chu deities." (Major 1978: 236–237)

[87] Lin 1994: 97. "An ancient Day Book (*rishu*) excavated from a third century B.C. tomb at Shuihudi, for instance, instructs people to 'untie the hair' (...) to evercome nightmares caused by demons and remove ghosts standing in the road." (Lin 1994: 98)

[88] "In the previously mentioned *Nuo* ritual, the *fangxiangshi* ('exorcist') wears what seems to be a bear-mask helmet (Bodde 1975: 78). In the Shang period there is clear evidence that horned and/or plumed mask helmets were worn" (Paper 1995: 70). On Shang masks also see Childs-Johnson 1998: 43.

[89] "Most cases show (...) that the most common instrument used in the shamanic rituals was the drum. For instance, by beating a drum(s) in the rite of exorcism an unnamed shaman cured a girl who was possessed by demons (*Taipingyulan* 932.7a). Similarly, a shaman named An Kai always beat a drum(s) whenever he made sacrifice to the gods. In addition, there are several tales indicating that the shamans, as well as the devotees of shamanism, usually practiced 'drumming and dancing' (*guwu*) when they held ceremonies." See e.g. *Fayuan zhulin* 62.756b–756c–757c; *Soushenji* 5.60; *Chenshu* 7.131 (Lin 1994: 101).

[90] "Chinese mirrors are worthy mates to the sword they partner. Reflecting only what is true, they show disguised demons to their real form, trim their own light in concert with sun and moon (whose luminous nature they share), and send forth radiance at will, independent of any external source. Certain mirrors can 'see' through walls, discern malignant activities within a patient's body, and effect major changes in external

be efficacious in combating demons.[91] As already mentioned, spirits and animals were often connected in the Chinese mind, and the boundary between the human and the animal realms was viewed as being a very permeable one. It seems probable that certain movements imitating animals can be traced back to shamanic practices.[92] The exorcistic masks worn at the *Danuo* festival also represented animals (Childs-Johnson 1998: 50). K.C. Chang's theory that the animal motifs on the Shang ritual bronzes are in fact *helping spirits*[93] or *animals* of the

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phenomena, working on weather, on mountains, on the sea. Moreover, the mantic aspect of mirrors is reflected in the evolution of both bronze technology and optics." (Strickmann 1993: 6). Also see *Baopuzi* ch. 4 (Groot 1982: 1004).

[91] "Pre-Han and Han ritual literature records numerous instances of exorcistic observances involving archery. The recommended method of removal in the two entries above is the classic form of exorcistic archery with peach and jujube. The particular significance of archery in the Shuihudi demonography lies in the fact that it shows the demonifugal bow and arrow already in use as popular devices for countering spectral attacks." (Harper 1985: 493; 1998: 169)

[92] "Another theme that shamanistic dances and gymnastic practices have in common is their animal morphology, specifically the bird." (Despeux 1989: 240) "The earliest attested physical cultivation exercises are those which imitate the movements of animals. The *Zhuangzi* identifies the 'bear ramble' (*xiongjing*) and the 'bird stretch' (*niaoshen*) as exercises performed by physical cultivation adepts. In Later Han times Hua Tuo taught a technique which he called the 'disportment of the five creatures' – five forms of exercises modeled after the tiger, deer, bear, gibbon, and bird. Performance of these exercises removed sickness from the body. (...) A great many of these animal movements imitated as exercises should rather be traced to animal mimiery in the form of masked dances in ancient religious practice; feathered dances performed the crane dance and other avian movements. The specifically exorcistic aspect of animal dances was most prominent in the *Nuo* expulsion performed at New Year. As recounted in the *Hou Hanshu* treatise on ritual observances, twelve costumed dancers acted the roles of the spirit beasts whom the exorcist conjured to devour the spectral monsters of the dying year. The magical efficacy of these animal pantomimes would inevitably have influenced the conception of therapeutic exercises as a technique for driving away sickness. (...) The very fact that the four postures are singled out in the demonography as effective against demons suggests that their magico-religious value was primary and their employment in physical cultivation secondary." (Harper 1985: 487–488) See *Zhuangzi* 15.1; *Hou Hanshu* ch.112.

[93] E.g. *Zhuangzi* 7.1: "In Jing there was a *wu*, animated by a *shen* [a spirit, G.K.]; his (or her) name was Jixian. He knew everything about the death and birth of men, the continuation and cessation of their lives, their misfortunes and happiness, and whether they would die at a great age or prematurely. He assigned (propitious or unpropitious)

shaman-priests, though modified and softened by some scholars, has not yet been rejected altogether.[94] Rémi Mathieu (1984) summarized the linguistic and ethnological evidence for the intimate relationship between the shaman and the *raven*, and refers, moreover, to the role of *bear* and fox as shamanic animals (Mathieu 1987: 22). *Birds* in particular seem to permeate Chinese *wu*ist imagery.[95] Interestingly enough, *antlered birds* (sic!), usually credited with apotropaic functions by scholars, are common phenomena in the tombs of the predominantly shamanic Chu culture (Dematté 1994). Immortals, whose image appears to owe much to shamanic cults,[96] are also described and depicted with *avian imagery*, most notably wings (Poo 1998: 160–161). There is also evidence of a *shaman fighting* with a River God in the shape of a bull.[97]

Specific *breathing techniques*[98] were probably also part of the technical spectrum. The *wu*'s ecstatic rites, as seen for example in the Nine

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years, months, decades, and days, as if he were himself the *shen*." (Groot 1982. 1196)

[94] "From the point of view of archaeology and art history, the interrelationship of man and animal is the aspect of Shang shamanism most worthy of attention. This interrelationship is manifested by two main concepts: first, man and animal could transform into each other, and second, the animal familiar with the shaman was in fact the shamans' helper in their ritual performances." (Chang 1994: 36)

[95] In Eastern Zhou and Han art birds often perch on cosmic tress (Chang 1994: 26), while in the distinctively shamanic Chu culture "in decorative art there is no other single element more prevailing than the bird." (Chang 1972: 35)

[96] "Many of their powers are similar to the abilities of shamans. Taoist immortals heal the sick, exorcise demons or beasts, make rain or stop it, foretell the future, prevent disasters, call upon wild animals as helpers, and remain unharmed by water and fire, heat and cold. Control over the body, a subtle harmony with the forces of nature, as well as an easy relationship with gods and spirits, ghosts and demons are equally characteristic of successful shamans as of the immortals of the Tao." (Kohn 1993: 280)

[97] Li Ping's story, a lost part of the second-century AD *Fengsu tongyi*, has been preserved in chapter 882 of *Taipingyulan* (Demény 1999: 22).

[98] "A vocabulary of utterances used by shamans and religious officiants can be traced to the Shang bone and shell inscriptions. Shirakawa demonstrates that *yi* – both a phonetic and signific in 'physician' – belongs to a family of Shang words for exorcistic weapons, the sounds of exorcistic beating, and exorcistic utterances (...). The etymology of the word 'physician' as the 'shaman who heals with exorcistic techniques' proposed by Shirakawa is convincing. Warring States ideas about vapor, breath, and saliva added to the magico-religious conception of magical utterances." (Harper 1998: 163)

Songs of *Chuci*, obviously implied a kind of *erotic metaphor*,[99] well reflected in its usual designation (*yinsi* – lascivious ceremony). Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that *alcoholic beverages*[100] and *drugs*[101] were used to enhance the efficacy of spirit communication.

IV. Conclusion

Though limited by space, I have listed some suggestions that make a *wu*-shaman analogue plausible. Many traits of Chinese religions point to the presence of a substratum that provided a general source of later, more precisely defined, religious features. This substratum has many general characteristics for which parallels can be found with some general settings that are acknowledged to be shamanic. More specifically, there are some Chinese religious features that offer more concrete evidence for such a comparison. The very fact that these two sets of features do not contradict any basic notion usually found in shamanic societies indicates that such an analogue, if more closely scrutinized, could not be completely ruled out. As the best representative of this religious substratum is the *wu*, it is not unrealistic to assume that investigation of his/her functions and attributes will provide clues for a comparison of the *wu* and the shaman. If such an analogue is justified

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[99] "In a further series of poems, the *Nine Songs* (...) shamanism has acquired a particular form, in which the shaman's relationship with the spirit is represented as a kind of love-affair." (Loewe 1982: 105)

[100] "Throughout all the states (...) [The young nobles] should be drunk only on occasion of sacrifices" (*Shujing;* Chang 1994: 33). *Juzang*, a special wine, according to the *Shuowen*, 'made from black millet fermented with *yu* herb, being fragrant and soothing, is used to bring down the spirits'." (Chen 1986: 74)

[101] "The hemp fruit has a bitter but mild taste and is toxic (...) Consumed to excess it would make [the taker] see ghosts walking madly, and if used for a long time [it would enable the taker] to communicate with the spirits and to lighten his body." (*Shennong Baicaojing;* Chang 1994: 34) "If *mafen* or *mapo* were taken in excess, it would make the user see hallucinations [literally 'see ghosts'] and run wildly. If taken over a long period, it makes the user communicate with the spirits and lightens his body." (*Bencaojing*, a second century AD work, Chen 1986: 81.) "*Mafen* is not much used in prescriptions nowadays. Shamans use it in combination with ginseng to set forward time in order to reveal future events." (Tao Hongjing: *Mingyi bielu*, fifth century AD; Chen 1986: 81.)

by future research, Chinese culture—well known for its emphasis on written records—will provide the earliest extant written evidence on a once flourishing shamanic culture.

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Book Reviews

MARIE-LISE BEFFA and LAURENCE DELABY. *Festins d'âmes et robes d'esprits. Les objets chamaniques sibériens du Musée de l'Homme.* 1999. Mémoires du Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle 181. Paris. ISBN: 2-85653-513-5. ISSN: 1243-4442. 241 p.

The Asian department of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris owns a valuable collection of objects which are related to the spiritual and ritual practice of Siberian shamanism. This catalogue presents 177 of these objects. The objects have been described in detail and given ample commentary by the authors so that it becomes possible to place them in the context of the given culture. The two authors have been involved in researching the culture of the small nations of Siberia, in other words they are excellent experts who classified the material presented with new points of view. They organised the objects not according to peoples (their origin) but according to function.

In this way the first group, or chapter, includes objects which were used by shamans (drums, shaman sticks, costumes, head-dresses crowns, masks). In the second chapter we find ritual devices used by common people (such as dishes used during sacrificial rites). The third group is made up of ongons, in other words objects which Siberian peoples respect because of their power to harm or to protect.

These small statue-like objects sometimes also functioned as toys but today we can no longer find out whether they were genuine ongons or tools for teaching children respect for things spiritual. In this section zoomorphic and anthropomorphic ongons form a separate chapter and the former are related to hunting while the latter have to do with the cult of the ancestors.

Chapter 4 of the book presents objects used for fortune telling. As is well known, in hunting societies (which are predominant in Siberia) fortune telling rites had great significance before hunts or other social events. One form of this was telling the future by throwing the shoulder blade of animals into the fire and reading the future from the shape of

the soot that settled on it. One of the points of interest in this research, indeed one of its methodological innovations, is that the description of each group of objects starts with a review of the myths related to that object. It is also rare for French publications to contain such a lengthy and detailed English abstract from which we can quote some important new results.

"Myths and beliefs related to the artifacts kept in the Musée de l'Home or the spirits inhabiting them show that hunting peoples think there is a food exchange between the worlds of men and spirits. Men eat forest animals, forest spirits eat human souls.

By marrying the forest (or the sea) master's daughter, the shaman regulates the exchange. For he is the one who negotiates with this spirit a more generous grant of game for his community. He tries to make the spirits release souls of ill people, in compensation for the food smeared on the mouths of the statuettes supposed to be their abodes.

However the shaman is not the only person who can negotiate with spirits. Everybody may try to soften them by offering them food. Old Nanai women cure their rheumatism by themselves, by beating a drum and singing for their spirits. Moreover, the shaman is not the only person who can marry a she-spirit. Bogoras relates that he met Chukchis stating they had been chosen by a she-spirit who granted them all sorts of favours. So there exists a scale, going from the lowly housewife smearing the family ongon with fat to the great clanic shaman, master of a whole band of spirits, but there is no difference in nature between them. What differentiates the shaman from the layman is, first, that the shaman is more powerful because of his paraphernalia, where a teeming crowd of spirit helpers dwell, and, above all, that he is acting not for his own benefit but for the benefit of the whole community, especially during the great life-giving rituals." (26)

The main function of a drum is not to be a means of transport, as has been thought up to now. It does help the shaman in his journeys, but is above all the sign of the union concluded between the shaman and the female spirit (forest or water daughter) who by marrying him makes him a shaman. Thanks to the protection of this female spirit, a daughter of the game giver spirit, the shaman can provide sustenance to his group. A Chukchi myth and a Shor ritual support this thesis developed by Hamayon (1990).

"Head-gears are composed of fringed cloth skullcaps and antlered metal crowns. Metal crowns are reserved for shamans recognized by their group as particularly powerful. They are generally reserved for clanic shamans, i.e., those who are capable of going to the village in the other world where the dead of the clan are gathered.

The favourite animal shape the shaman chooses to assume when in the world-beyond is that of a deer. The symbol of virility and aggressiveness is a buck reindeer in rut. Recounting his battles against the other shamans who are his rivals, various Yakut tales underline the aggressiveness of the shaman's animal double. But why have artificial metal antlers instead of the genuine animal ones? After all, some Altaian shamans do indeed put genuine bird feathers on their head-gear. Is it because authentic deer antlers happen to be heavy and cumbersome? Or, more simply, because iron—used to make weapons with and only recently introduced into Siberia—symbolizes everything mighty, terrifying and dangerous?" (23).

It must be noted that besides its editorial virtues the book is rendered more useful by several colour photos and a few dozen informative drawings. (I personally liked the drawings best because they offer a better tool for emphasising what is essential than photographs do.)

The book is concluded by a very interesting chapter (201–215) in which we find a brief description of the Siberian peoples, from which the objects in the collection come. The map is clear and the figure presenting the relations of the various languages to each other is clear and accessible. These are followed by sections quoted from otherwise inaccessible sources (such as descriptions by N. Gondatti from 1888). Finally the cultural background to the objects presented is made more complete by a bibliography of over 150 items. The volume was dedicated by the authors to Roberte Hamayon. The present reviewer commends this beautiful volume to researchers as a model example for publications of this kind. This book is certainly going to be a great asset to research into Siberian shamanism.

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