

SHAMAN

Articles in this volume are dedicated to

PROFESSOR ÅKE HULTKRANTZ,

Honorary Editor-in-Chief of

*Shaman. Journal of the International Society
for Shamanistic Research*

on the occasion of his eighty-fifth birthday

Part One

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The Last Kazakh Baksı to Play the Kobız

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from A. P. Okladnikov, *Istoriia Iakutii*

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Åke Hultkrantz Is Eighty-Five

MIHÁLY HOPPÁL

BUDAPEST

Years lived in wisdom are the great gift of a scholar's life. Destiny granted Åke Hultkrantz this gift—years of quiet, peaceful creativity after the decades of university lectureship. But from the viewpoint of comparative religion and shamanistic research it has also been a gift to receive the many articles, essays and books that he has contributed to the field over the years.

Let me take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the 85-year-old scholar, who continues to work with undiminished enthusiasm today.

Professor Hultkrantz's birthday is commemorated by a two-volume Festschrift. The first article in that collection releases the author of the present laudation from having to review in detail the academic work of this Swedish scholar. However, it can be stated that he is the greatest living figure in shamanistic research today. In contrast to Mircea Eliade, who started out as a writer and whose great summary work is seen by latter-day critics more as a novel about shamanism, Hultkrantz's entire *oeuvre* was written to the highest possible academic standard. As a younger researcher, I always read his essays with admiration for the enormous erudition and scholarly precision that characterized them. At any conference on the subject you could rely on his excellent papers and intelligent questions, but also, when the occasion required, on his skill for uncompromising debate.

The author of these lines has been lucky—I have been able to enjoy regular academic and personal contact with the man we are celebrating today. I met him regularly at international conferences on shamanism, or whenever I went to Sweden to give a lecture. It would be true to say that I not only look on him as a scholarly model—I have always felt that he extended to me a degree of paternal affection—but I would also

say, if it is at all possible in an academic context, that I have always thought of him as a kind of spiritual father who showed interest in the intellectual development of a younger colleague. After the early death of my first mentor, Vilmos Diószegi, I came to regard Professor Hultkrantz as my true academic master.

I saw it as a special gift from life when a few years ago I was able to co-operate with him on the two-volume series which was published as *Das Buch der Schamanen* in 2002. He wrote the volume on American shamans (together with the late Michael Ripinsky-Naxon) and I wrote in the volume on Eurasian shamanism. As one of the most noted researchers of North American shamanism, he effectively crowned his efforts with this work, and I am sure that many will continue to refer to this beautifully produced volume for a long time to come.

Professor Hultkrantz is today the *doyen* of shamanology, if there be such a discipline, and his theoretical papers contributed greatly to laying the foundations of this field within religious studies. Without him our knowledge of the historical development of North-American Indian and Saami (Lapp) shamanhood would be far poorer and many important details would be unknown to us, concerning, for example, questions relating to ecstasy or the shamanic drum. On the latter question, Professor Hultkrantz engaged in a lengthy and vehement debate with the French Professor Roberte N. Hamayon, lecturer at the Sorbonne. Today it is clearly evident that Åke Hultkrantz was right in this debate, and the trance which stamps the shamanic rite as more authentic in classic shamanism is not a symbolic but a genuine state of trance.

When Professor Hultkrantz visited Budapest on the occasion of the second conference of the International Society for Shamanistic Research in 1993, I recorded a brief interview with him, which included an explanation of ecstasy. Whenever I met him in person I felt he was characterized, like all true scholars, by the ecstasy of work.

May the helping spirits accompany him further on his scholarly journey, for which I wish him strength, good health and unflagging enthusiasm!

January 2005

Åke Hultkrantz and the Study of Shamanism*

HANS MEBIUS

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This article is a brief survey—mainly of a descriptive character—of the extensive research during five decades of Åke Hultkrantz in the field of shamanism. The following pages can hopefully serve as an introductory guide to this research. The attention is concentrated to four principally important questions, first of all the geographical and definitional aspects of the concepts shamanism and trance. The religio-ecological approach to religion and shamanism is presented and further the interpretation of the indigenous Saami shamanism. Finally attention is paid to Åke Hultkrantz's view of contemporary urban shamanism.

When Dominik Schröder, the author of one of the more notable works on the subject of shamanism, reviewed Mircea Eliade's classic account, *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase* (1951) he pointed out that so much had already been written on this subject that one could simply speak of one's own shamanology (1953: 671). A researcher from more recent days, Ulla Johansen (1987: 8), makes the comment that the considerable popularity of shamanism, riding on a wave of trendy irrationality, has led to a veritable inflation of the shamanism concept. A similar opinion is expressed in Åke Hultkrantz's review of John A. Grim's *The Shaman: Patterns of Siberian and Ojibway Healing* (1983): "the proliferation of self made shamans, introducing people into new mental discoveries, 'new' religions of meditation, further deprives shamanism of whatever terminological sense it once had" (1985b: 311).

* For generous help scrutinizing the English text I thank Mrs. Geraldine Hultkrantz.

My intention here is not to even attempt to achieve a comprehensive coverage of the considerable research on shamanism and the attention that shamanism has caused in other areas. However, I will take up some points of interest and attempt to give a brief account of one of the important contributions to shamanology for the last five decades. This is the writings of Åke Hultkrantz, where the first contribution is a review of Ernst Manker's *Die Lappische Zaubertrommel*, Volume 2 (1950) in 1951. In a number of articles Åke Hultkrantz covers the scholarly discussion and the history of research on shamanism, and in an essay, "The Place of Shamanism in the History of Religions" (1989), he presents a concise and lucid account of the main characteristics in the debate (see also 1997b, 1998b, 2000). There are two fields in the world of religions that are of special interest to Åke Hultkrantz in the analysis of the shamanistic complex, namely the indigenous religion of the North American Indian and the Scandinavian Saami.

The purpose of the present paper is not a survey of the study of shamanism but a very brief outline of Åke Hultkrantz's contributions to the study of shamanism and also some points where this study has caused debate with other scholars.

Questions of Definition

In a research review "Swedish Research on the Religion and Folklore of the Lapps" (1957a), a very useful reference for all students of the indigenous Saami religion, Åke Hultkrantz makes some important statements. First that generally speaking Saami shamanism has a very close connection with Siberian and circumpolar shamanism. In addition, it can be said that what particularly characterizes Saami shamanism is the ecstatic techniques, the soul-flight, the participation of guardian spirits and the use of the drum as an extra implement. Another point is that Saami shamanism should not necessarily be interpreted as being "transmitted to the Lapps from the East." Rather, it should be placed in a basically more common cultural pattern that links the peoples of the far North (1957a: 85).

However it is in quite another connection than indigenous Saami religion, that Hultkrantz seriously concerns himself with questions of

definition on shamanism. It is in his work on the Orpheus myth among North American Indians (1957b). Later the problems of definition are argued in the essay "A Definition of Shamanism" (1974), but also in the introductory chapter of *Studies in Lapp Shamanism* (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978). The chapter in question is entitled "Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism." In later works one can mention that Åke Hultkrantz often refers the reader to these accounts (see 1993a, 1997b, 1998b, 2000).

Let us now see how the shaman is described in the work on the North American Orpheus Myth. Here he is defined as "the miracle-worker of the hunting society, its physician and mediator between man and the supernatural powers, the trance . . . bringing about contact with these powers" (1957b: 236). The key words in this definition are: supernatural powers, physician, mediator, trance, and hunting culture. Generally speaking the shaman is characterized as a miracle worker. Most of these ideas appear again in later definitions. What is significant according to earlier and recent research, is the trance, even though it is comprehended in different ways. In the Orpheus book we are presented with a definition of the trance as: ". . . a psychogenic, hysteroid mode of reaction that forming itself according to the dictates of the mind. It may also be described as a mentally anormal state of introversion, which may be provoked suggestively or with suggestive means (drugs, narcotics etc.) and which is an expression of the conscious or the unconscious desires of the visionary." (1957b: 236) In a later work Hultkrantz emphasizes that "shamanic séances often discloses an admixture of psychoactive ingredients as well" (1997a: 7). This archaic use of drugs by the shaman can not however be taken as a justification for hypotheses about the use of drugs as the original ground for shamanism (1997a: 170 ff.).

This definition is presented by Hultkrantz even in the introductory chapter of *Studies in Lapp Shamanism*. Perhaps the negative part of the trance is emphasized by the formulation "anormal state of introversion." The characterization of the trance as a mentally anormal state is probably more an expression of external analysis than the indigenous man's own opinion. One also gets the impression that Hultkrantz interprets the trance in Freudian terms, describing it as "an expression of the shamans conscious or unconscious wishes." Let us however compare the definition

in 1957 with the article entitled "A Definition of Shamanism" (1974). It starts in a similar manner to the previous one, and has the following wording ". . . a psychogenic hysteroid mode of reaction that forms itself according to the dictates of the mind and that evinces various depths in various situations. It swings between frenzy and hilarious rapture on one hand, death-like comatose passivity on the other, and a mild inspirational light trance in between." (1974: 28)

Here the relationship between the different depths of trance and the actual situation is accentuated. I see here a more constructive way of looking at the trance and a more interesting description of the trance phenomenology. Nevertheless, let it be said, that the use of psychiatric terminology may arguably be motivated but that terminology of this kind does not necessarily say anything pertinent about the shaman's status, prestige and social role in the cultural environment he was active in.

To return to the conception of the North American Orpheus Tradition where, according to Hultkrantz, there is a shamanic character. Hultkrantz touches here on an interesting and principally important question, the question of the age of shamanism. As early as 1957 Hultkrantz stated that the shamanistic ideology played a role in the appearance of spiritual notions, belief in High Gods and cosmology (1957b: 240). This formulation seems superficially cautious but is really an important statement on the origin of religion. Experts are in agreement as to the age of shamanism and Hultkrantz often accentuates the fact that it is rooted in the ancient hunting culture (e.g. Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978).

The geographic distribution of shamanism has caused debate and led to divergent opinions. Åke Hultkrantz deals with this problem in the introductory chapter in *Studies in Lapp Shamanism* (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978). Here he makes a profound phenomenological analysis of shamanism, partly in a somewhat irritated state of polemics with some of the American anthropologists, Geertz (1966) and Spencer (1968), who both questioned the word 'shamanism' as a meaningful concept. Hultkrantz has, also in other connections aimed his criticism at the one-sidedness in certain anthropological research (1970, 1978: 86, 93). His analysis of Saami shamanism arrives at the conclusion, that the concept shamanism is "a meaningful and clearly designated concept" (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 30). It is a global phenomenon, but

has its greatest pregnancy in North Eurasia and the bordering areas. It is stressed that, "the real stronghold of shamanism" is to be found in Siberia and North Europe (see also 1987: 110).

At a symposium on shamanism in Åbo in 1962, Åke Hultkrantz contributed with an account of a first hand experience of a shamanistic séance, "Spirit Lodge, a North American Shamanistic Séance" (1967b). Here the author points at the difficulties regarding the typology of North American shamanism. In this connection Hultkrantz differentiates between two main forms of shamanism. The first type is characterized by considerable variation and usually low intensity in its expression. The other main type is more limited and is characterized by uniformity and intensity. Hultkrantz calls the first type "general shamanism" and the other "Arctic shamanism." With regard to Arctic shamanism, it has undeniably developed on the basis of general shamanism (1967b: 35), a statement however that ought to be more adequately demonstrated. In any case Hultkrantz accentuates that "ecstasy does not function as a constantly prevailing factor" in what is called general shamanism, whereas "the trance is an integral part of the shamanistic procedure" in Arctic shamanism (1967b: 36). The range of shamanic elements consequently varies from region to region but a minimum definition of general shamanism is formulated by Hultkrantz: "I consider trance, direct contact with spiritual beings and guardian spirits, together with the mediating role played by the shaman in a ritual setting, to constitute the minimum requirement for a case of shamanism" (1993a: 10). This general and simple form of shamanism is found everywhere and should be distinguished from the Arctic/Siberian form with its more specialized and distinct characteristics as described by among others for instance, Vajda (1959).

It is possible to perceive a certain oscillation in Åke Hultkrantz's dealing with the definitional and distributional aspects of shamanism. On the one hand shamanism is described as a "general" phenomenon with global occurrence, on the other hand as an Arctic and Sub-Arctic form in the classical area. This oscillation does not necessarily imply a contradiction, even if it leads to a somewhat unsatisfactory situation. This inconvenience is however discussed by Hultkrantz in connection with other scholarly used concepts such as *numen*, *fetish*, *totem* and *mana*, all existing in indigenous languages. These words are used by

the scholars as generics and are thus more an expression of scholarly ideas than their connotations in the indigenous situation. Still, it is, according to Hultkrantz, necessary to use indigenous concepts as terminological tools in scholarly discussions (1973: 66 ff.), an opinion that is relevant with regard to the Evenki word *shaman*.

With reference to the meaning of the concept shamanism Hultkrantz distinguishes five different groups of opinion:

(1) The original theory that shamanism is a ritual practice and conceptions only existing in the Arctic and Siberia.

(2) The spirit possession is the genuine characteristic of the true shaman.

(3) The contemporary movement in especially western countries to achieve healing with shamanistic methods.

(4) The opinion that there does not exist any homogeneous shamanism.

(5) Shamanism is a homogeneous phenomenon complex, existing in different places even if there are differences in details.

This presentation by Hultkrantz demonstrates the actual differences regarding the view of shamanism. Hultkrantz is himself convinced that shamanism is a homogeneous phenomenon having its origin in the culture of primordial hunters (2000: 28 ff.). This lack of terminological unity could for the sake of clarity motivate a more elucidating terminology by using phrases such as "Arctic" shamanism, "urban" shamanism and "general" shamanism.

Now, however, let us once again peruse Hultkrantz's presentation (1974) in the essay "A Definition of Shamanism." Even if shamanism during different times and in different environments has been influenced by historical and geographical fluctuation Hultkrantz nevertheless discerns one of the main characteristics of shamanism as being of especial importance: the trance or the ecstasy (1993a: 10, 1998a, 2000: 33 ff.). Hultkrantz accentuates that ecstasy or trance is the inner core of shamanism. Therefore it is somewhat bewildering that, in his aforementioned essay "Spirit Lodge," he makes the following statement: "In general shamanism, ecstasy does not function as a constantly prevailing factor." (1967b: 36) In spite of this statement there is, on the whole, no doubt that the trance according to Hultkrantz is an unconditional characteristic in the phenomenon of shamanism. Thus this emphasizing of the trance has led to an animated debate between Åke Hultkrantz and

the French anthropologist Roberte Hamayon. To Hultkrantz a cardinal point in the shamanistic complex is the task of the shaman to act as a mediator between the human world and the spiritual or supernatural world (1997b: 44). This contact is achieved in a state of ecstasy with the help of the guardian spirits of the shaman. That is the meaning of ecstasy or trance, and makes it inalienable to shamanic action (1998a: 170). The ecstatic ability of the shaman is to be understood in a conceptional totality of mythological and cosmological ideas. It is also of importance to stress the fact that according to the view in Saami indigenous religion the trance of the *noaidi* is regarded as the loss of his soul, according to Hultkrantz the free soul. The theory of soul dualism and the free soul in the shaman's trance was elucidated by Hultkrantz in his doctoral dissertation (1953: 277 ff.; see also 1984: 28 ff.).

The opinion of Roberte Hamayon is founded on field research among contemporary Mongols and Buryats, which leads to the conclusion that terms like 'ecstasy' and 'trance' ". . . are unfit to serve, first, as descriptive tools, and secondly as analytical concepts." (1993: 6) One problem is though that in shamanic societies there is no equivalent to the word 'trance' and according to Hamayon that "three different levels of considerations merge implicitly with its use: physical behaviour (possible attitudes and gestures), psychic state (or state of consciousness) and culturally-defined behaviour." (1993: 7 f.) This might be so but usually the problematic concept in question is used to represent states of consciousness. To Hamayon it is a difficulty "how we actually know about someone's 'trance' as a psychic state" (1998: 177). This leads her to the conclusion that the shaman's behavior expresses what is "prescribed for his function" and that ". . . the shaman acts out a role and brings his behaviour still closer to a dramatic performance. The shaman in 'trance' is like the actor in stage." (1993: 14 f.) It is probable that also the pre-Christian Saami *noaidi* had a more or less important faculty for dramatic performance at least in the introducing phase of the shamanic ritual. But this is not the main point of the ritual gathering and according to the sources from 17th and 18th centuries it is evident that the *noaidi*'s behavior indicates a mental state, deviating from the everyday consciousness. To the present writer it seems natural to designate this state as trance, in the original meaning of the word, especially as the mentioned sources often bear witness to the fact that

the *noaidi* prior to the shamanic ritual drinks what is called “magic” beverages of unknown contents; drinking of aquavit is also mentioned. This makes one undeniably think of the use of drugs in shamanism, resulting in a change of personality and/or consciousness.

The different opinions of Hamayon and Hultkrantz about the trance seems to have its reason that Hamayon founds her opinion on the contemporary successors of the Siberian shamans, who “. . . confine themselves to such practices as speaking with their patients, laying on of hands, massaging, etc.” (1998: 181) Whilst Hultkrantz’s opinion, to a considerable extent, is founded on the afore-mentioned source material representing the practice of the *noaidi* in a religious dimension. Roberte Hamayon argues in her capacity as anthropologist, Åke Hultkrantz as a student of comparative religion.

In Hultkrantz’s definition of the shaman he is, however, also described as “a social functionary who, with the help of guardian spirits, attains ecstasy in order to create a rapport with the supernatural world on behalf of the group members” (1974: 34). Here the stress is laid on the importance of the social role of the shaman, who manifests “solidarity with his own people and carries out their wishes and demands . . . a mediator between man and the powers” (Ibid.).

The Religio-Ecological Approach

So far this has been an account of a more definitional analysis of shamanism. Hultkrantz has also applied another method in approaching Arctic religion in general, thereby including shamanism. It is the religio-ecological interpretation which in detail was developed in the Symposium Volume *Hunting and Fishing* (1966), where Hultkrantz’s contribution is entitled “Type of Religion in the Arctic Hunting Cultures. A Religio-Ecological Approach.” The first part of this essay, which in its entirety, in my opinion, is one of the central works in Åke Hultkrantz’s authorship, is also reproduced in *Ethnos* 1966 (1967a). The religio-ecological approach is also used in the introductory chapter in *Studies in Lapp Shamanism* (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978 and later, in 1994).

The interpretation of religion in relationship and interplay with nature is nothing new in the history of research but contrary to, what Hultkrantz

calls exaggerated environmentalism, he argues that one should not ignore the importance of historical tradition and acculturation. The basic idea is, nevertheless, to reach an understanding of the religious phenomena in their interactions with nature. It is Åke Hultkrantz's studies of the North American Indians religions that clarify "the fundamental importance of natural (environmental) conditions to religious development" (1967a: 133). Hultkrantz, however, clarifies his opinion and emphasizes that no religion grows out of ecological, economic or technical circumstances. It is only the religious forms that can be ecologically definable. Religion as such, the religious experience, cannot be explained ecologically. What does the connection between the natural environment and the religious phenomena look like? According to Hultkrantz, the connection can be partly seen as though the surroundings supply the materials for the formation of the rites and partly as though the religious structure reflects the social structure.

The essential factor here is to characterize a specific type of religion in the same way that Steward (1955) describes the type of culture in his *Theory of Cultural Change*; consequently Hultkrantz defines the type of religion "as a constellation of religious traits and complexes which in different places have a similar ecological adaptation and represent a similar cultural level" (1967a: 146 f.). The type of religion that Hultkrantz presents as an illustration is the Arctic hunter's religion with roots in an Arctic hunting culture. In his presentation of the Arctic hunters religion, Hultkrantz supplements the diffusionistic view of culture with "the old idea of independent invention" (1966: 281). Here we observe another of the cardinal points in Åke Hultkrantz's work with reference to his opinion about the importance of local and regional invention. We note here the wording 'independent invention,' not 'independent development.'

We can thus establish that Hultkrantz does not exaggerate the ecological approach *ad infinitum* but sees it as an important complement to diffusionism and local invention. An example of a ritual element that has been spread through diffusion is the bear ceremonies (1966: 295). These, in particular, can otherwise be seen as excellent examples of an independent invention with ecologic influence. The theory nevertheless implies certain problems in deciding from case to case what is

the result of culture diffusion and what is caused by regional or local ecological change.

The Arctic types of religion have, according to Hultkrantz, a number of specific characteristics but also a general religious pattern:

(1) accentuation of concepts and rites that relate to animals and hunting;

(2) "local worship" dependent on the surrounding circumstances and the hunting area;

(3) the sacrifice is considered to be relatively unimportant ("most undertakings being secured through hunting rituals and magic");

(4) the concept of a universe that represents the dwellings to be found in the circumpolar region;

(5) the intensity and some of the characteristics of the Arctic shamanism.

This general religious pattern is noticeable through the lack of professional shamanistic specialization and status determined differentiation of the supernatural powers. Furthermore, the rites and the cult places are uncomplicated and the religious beliefs are more important than the rites.

Nevertheless, with regard to the subject at hand, Arctic shamanism must be attended to. In this respect Hultkrantz refers to Åke Ohlmarks (1939) without interpreting shamanism as the individual's evasion of a hard environment. One must however take into account the severe Arctic environment's influence on the shaping of Arctic shamanism. The severe cold, the long polar nights, the desolation, the lack of vitamins and food are ecological factors that are decisive in this connection. Culture, is of course, affected in this particular environment by the natural conditions. Clothing, homes, implements, hunting methods and game, fish and fishing methods have different qualities in different environments. How on the other hand, religion, and therefore, the interwoven shamanism, in detail is influenced by environmental factors appears to be a far more complicated question. Åke Hultkrantz is certainly correct when he states that the Arctic religious types, among other things, have been influenced ecologically taking into account hunting and the animal world. Here the shaman's theriomorphic guardian spirits are a good example. The severe Arctic environment is however understood as being particularly necessary for the shaman's ecstasy and

hysteroid reactions as well as man's considerable need for contact with a supernatural world in frightening surroundings. I feel a certain doubt as to whether Ohlmarks and Hultkrantz are not interpreting Arctic man's experiences of his environment from a more southerly and climatically milder horizon.

Saami Shamanism

Åke Hultkrantz has treated Saami shamanism in several works. Here we can mention in particular *Studies in Lapp Shamanism* in cooperation with Louise Bäckman. It is necessary to point out the fact that the concept 'shaman' is lacking in the Saami language. The corresponding word is *noaidi* (cf. Finnish *noita*, Ob-Ugrian *näit*, *noait*). Also there is no equivalent to the scholarly concept 'shamanism'; the Saami *noaidevuohta* (*noaidi* 'knowledge') indicates the ability of the *noaidi*.

Our knowledge of the indigenous Saami religion before the process of change to Christianity is mainly based on written ecclesiastical sources from the 17th and 18th centuries. Due to lack of space here it is not possible to present any extensive analysis of how the different sources relate to each other and how they are to be evaluated. These questions have earlier been discussed by among others Håkan Rydving, who has treated the intricate source problems in a most thorough way (1995; see also Pentikäinen 1997: 52 ff. and Mebius 2003: 21 ff.).

We can establish that there are no older sources of independent Saami origin. In this sense the available source complex is of a secondary character. Åke Hultkrantz has a partially critical view of these older sources, often written by missionaries, whose texts are described as biased, incoherent, vague and difficult to read (1979: 46). In a later essay this judgement is more lenient. The stern criticism is admittedly, generally speaking, still legitimate yet the older source material nevertheless mediates "much information that seems reliable, and . . . sufficient for an analysis of even some finer shades of Saami shamanism" (1992: 139). Here I am in complete agreement and would also like to elevate one of the older texts that has very often been regarded as having a high source value. I refer to Jens Kildal's text "Afguderiets Dempelse, og den Sande Lærdoms Fremgang" [The reducing of the heathenism and the success of the true faith], written in the 1730s. A

central section of this text deals with a Saami shamanic séance. In a meritorious way Hultkrantz reproduces this section in English both in 1978 (see Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978) and in 1992. A pious hope is that one of these days Kildal's text in its entirety, and also other texts from the same time, could be translated into an international language.

There is also another source material of the Saami religion, namely the Saami folklore recorded long after the religious change. In the introduction of *Studies in Lapp Shamanism* this kind of source material is judged in a negative way since it contains "so many transformations, innovations and supplements from migratory oral traditions that it only can be resorted to with utmost caution" (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 5). Absolutely correct but one should not reject this indiscriminately. In Saami folklore there is much valuable information that varies depending on the insight of the informants and a number of other conditions. For example we get a good picture from more recent material of the pre-Christian Saami sacrifice ritual, where on the other hand the folkloristic material regarding the Saami shaman, the *noaidi*, is both reticent and disparate in comparison to the data from the 17th and 18th centuries. In an article from 1992 Hultkrantz gives a somewhat different view of the folkloristic source material with both Lappish and other Scandinavians as authorities. It is characterized as being "rich and varied" (1992: 139).

However interesting the validity of the older, folkloristic source material of the indigenous Saami shamanism may be, we may now proceed to the picture of Saami shamanism that Hultkrantz provides us with based on the ecclesiastical sources.

In the previously mentioned research survey from 1957 the main parts, ecstasy technique, the soul journey, the guardian spirits and the use of the drum (1957a: 85) are specified. This is repeated a few years later in volume 3 of *Die religionen der Menschheit*, where it is also underlined that the Saami *noaidi* is primarily an ecstatic and that his activity was dependent on his ecstatic powers (1962: 298 f.) and that Saami shamanism "auf engste" is part of Arctic shamanism (1962: 297). Hultkrantz's definition of Saami shamanism is the same as the one regarding shamanism in general (1979: 47). In *Studies in Lapp Shamanism* Saami shamanism is described as a variation of the Arctic form of shamanism in North Eurasia. This opinion is carefully observed

when Hulkrantz takes into account three different factors that have formed shamanism in the most northerly hunting religions. It is the inheritance from a shamanism that was once common to all the peoples of North Eurasia; it is even the consequence of diffusion and not least the religio-ecological factors (Bäckman and Hulkrantz 1978: 40 f.). Here again it is emphasized that both the intensity of the *noaidi* experience as well as the depth of the trance are dependent on “the pressing environmental forces in the Arctic” (Bäckman and Hulkrantz 1978: 41). The functions of the *noaidi* are given as curing, divination, hiring the dead and the sacrificial service (ibid.: 44 ff.). In a later work hunting magic is also given as one of the Saami *noaidi*'s functions (Hulkrantz 1992: 142).

It is evident that Hulkrantz regards the Saami shaman's most important mission as that of medicine man or healer (Bäckman and Hulkrantz 1978: 44). He is summoned in cases of serious illnesses, while for the less serious cases other methods are implemented. These ways of dealing with illness are also described by Hulkrantz in a longer essay on Saami healing methods (1963). Regarding divination he differentiates between ecstasy divination and drum divination without trance; the latter could be performed by the Saami without the use of the power of the shaman (Bäckman and Hulkrantz 1978: 47 ff.). The drum was a tool in ecstasy divination aiming at ascertaining the causes and cures of certain sicknesses, to find out about conditions in distant places, to practise divination in connection with hunting and reindeer husbandry, and to predict the future. It should be noted that many present day Saami use the Swedish word *spåtrumma* (i. e. 'divination drum'). As is correctly stated, the *noaidi* has also functioned during the ritual sacrifice performed after his trance-journey to the underworld to retrieve a sick person's soul. As a mediator between man and the supernatural powers, the *noaidi* has taken part and has even been a leader or adviser in such important matters between man and the powers as the ritual sacrifice. Here Hulkrantz's opinion is clear (Bäckman and Hulkrantz 1978: 53): “the sacrificial priest may have been a *noaidi* but not every *noaidi* was a sacrificial priest.” Perhaps it would be more relevant to change “sacrificial priest” for “sacrificial leader” since there was no specific priesthood in Saami religion.

The *noaidi* implemented the drum to achieve a state of trance, and by performing the *juoiggus* (a kind of Saami chant), often together with the other participants in the *noaidi* ritual. The drum has caused a considerable interest among scholars of different disciplines. At a symposium in 1988 Hultkrantz paid particular attention to the shaman's drum, and especially to its place in Saami shamanism, even if earlier research perhaps exaggerated its importance (1991: 129). He states that the drum has been used both as an instrument of ecstasy but also as a tool of divination and suggests that the latter function represents a more recent invention. The age of the drum is contemporary with the age of shamanism and is therefore a part of man's oldest culture, i.e. the hunters (1991: 23).

There are few things that have caused such an abundant speculation as the figures on the Saami *noaidi* drum. It is a comfort that Åke Hultkrantz does not spend time on speculative reflections of this kind. In a more recent work from 1992 the excellent English translation of Jens Kildal's account (1730s), which was published as early as 1978, is reiterated. We are also presented with an account of how the drum and its figures can be used for divination without any ecstasy being involved. To do this a small metal or reindeer horn object was placed on the drum skin; the object then moved over the figures when the drum was drummed on with a small hammer.

Since the Saami hunting and fishing culture changed with time and was complemented with reindeer husbandry in different forms, religious conceptions and ritual expressions still showed obvious conservatism. Even though nomadism in the Saami culture has changed material and social conditions, religion has, according to Hultkrantz, remained almost unchanged (1985a: 23). This is probably the case but as Åke Hultkrantz states according to his own religio-ecological approach, there is reason to take into account the influence of historic change and the influence through acculturation and invention with regard to the Saami religion.

The arrival of Saami reindeer husbandry has never completely replaced the ancient ways of living. Hunting and fishing have, alongside reindeer husbandry, continued to be an integral part of Saami culture and there exists a large variation in the state of affairs between reindeer husbandry and hunting/fishing. Hence we do not need to see the appearance of nomadism as being more dramatic than is motivated. Saami shamanism

changed, according to Hulkrantz, because of the development of reindeer husbandry and the disappearance of the wild reindeer. The drum only used as an instrument of divination was accentuated during this process and it was during this change that the rich array of figures on the skins of the drums were developed (1985a: 27 f.).

One of the most interesting parts of Hulkrantz's research on shamanism, particularly among the Saami, is to be found in the final chapter of *Studies in Lapp Shamanism*. Here he attempts to, based on the sparse source material available on this topic, examine the relationship between the different levels of the *noaidi*'s trance and the different aims of the shamanistic séance. The trance is in the same way defined as earlier but with an accentuation that implies a total "absorption into an idea . . . so complete that all other ideas and disturbances coming from his surrounding world are debarred" (Bäckman and Hulkrantz 1978: 92). The *noaidi* himself controls the content of his ecstasy experiences, which have the purpose of maintaining contact with the other world. This process involves an enormous exertion. Hulkrantz's opinion is that it is possible to distinguish three different trance states: the light trance, during which the *noaidi* is in a conscious state, the dream experience and finally the deep trance that leads to a state of unconsciousness. The description of the deep trance produced through the will of the *noaidi* with the help of drumming and singing and sometimes even drugs (see 2003), is provided by Hulkrantz with reference to the whole arsenal of information to be found in different sources. We are presented with a picture of the Saami *noaidi* séance in all its drama and intensity. I believe that, this representation correctly describes the course of events when the *noaidi*, to use a contemporary terminology, enters into a shamanic state of consciousness. Hulkrantz has mediated a highly acceptable summary of evidence derived from a very complicated source complex. Sources that are often consulted are Isaac Olsen's (after 1715) and Jens Kildal's (1730s) comprehensive and coherent relations of the Saami religion. Olsen's and Kildal's authority on the subject would almost be sufficient and other text sources could comparatively be regarded as less informative. In summation Hulkrantz makes the following judgement of the paradigm of the shamanistic trance: "Whenever spirits had to be consulted . . . the shaman resorted to a light trance; occasionally he received messages from them in a nightly dream. When-

ever the spirits had to be sought up by the shaman and a journey had to be made by him and his helping spirits to the underground powers it was necessary for the shaman to fall into a deep, cataleptic trance.” (Bäckman and Hultkrantz 1978: 106)

We now leave the subject of Saami shamanism in Åke Hultkrantz’s research, well aware of the fact that it is an impossible task to do it complete justice in a few pages. Let us now as a completion to Hultkrantz’s conception of the age of Saami shamanism see what he has to say about its survival in more recent times. In his essay “The Healing Methods of the Lapps” it is stated in a small type note with a reference to Guttorm Gjessing: “Among the Scandinavian Lapps shamanism appears to have been preserved in certain remote areas until very recently.” (1963: 336) This much we can certainly say, and that is that even today the *noaidi* and his powers are not forgotten.

The Shaman’s Path

That Åke Hultkrantz has an unconventional view of shamanic phenomena can clearly be seen in his presentation in “Ritual und Geheimnis: Über die Kunst der Medizinmänner, oder: Was der Herr Professor verschwiegen” (1981). Here he causes the reader to understand that according to his view much of what is experienced in the North American Indians shamanic séances cannot be measured with current scientific methods. As an example he gives, among others his own—and for critical and sceptical western thinkers experiences that are difficult to explain—experiences from the Arapaho-Indians “Spirit Lodge” ceremony, in which Åke Hultkrantz had the possibility to partake in August, 1955. This attitude to the unexplainable can be one of the factors that is the reason to Hultkrantz’s view of the neo-shamanism is “a dynamic new movement in modern societies, an attempt to synthesize the insights of shamanism with modern therapy” (1993a: 11). There is no doubt that the shaman in the environment where he or she was an integrated and natural member possessed unusual insights and ability. It is a fact that shamanic traditions have had a renaissance in certain western circles. In the daily press a few years ago the reader was offered, under the headline of Courses and Education, the possibility of applying for an introductory

course in Nordic shamanism where the participants would attain "power and insight through ancient knowledge." There are many examples of how shamanism has an existential value for modern day man and Hultkrantz evidently regards this as a positive development (1988: 37 ff., 1993b: 40 f.).

This urban shamanism aims at providing harmony and health. In an American anthology entitled *Shaman's Path. Healing, Personal Growth and Empowerment* (Doore 1988) there are contributions by physicians who have the opinion that shamanic wisdom can play a part even in modern medicine. Åke Hultkrantz's contribution to the anthology is entitled "Shamanism: A Religious Phenomenon?" Here shamanism is characterized as "a religio-magical cultural complex" (1988: 36). Religion is defined as "a belief in the existence of a supernatural world" and what is important for the scholar is that this existence, for the believer, is apprehended as a whole and should be described as such. It is within the boundaries of this totality that Hultkrantz interprets and treats shamanism and the conception of the two realities. Here Hultkrantz gives support to Michael Harner's theory of "the ordinary state of consciousness" in contrast to "the shamanic state of consciousness" (1988: 37 f.).

Finally I would like to mention how Åke Hultkrantz regards shamanism from a purely historical viewpoint. Already in his work on the North American Orpheus Tradition he emphasized the importance of shamanism in the development of soul conceptions, the belief in High Gods and ideas of cosmology. Later these questions have been treated in, among other places, the contribution to the afore-mentioned anthology *Shaman's Path*. Here Hultkrantz argues against Weston la Barre's theory that the shaman is the creator of the original, ancient religion. According to Hultkrantz it is more likely that religion as "the intuitive certainty of another world" was studied by the shaman only in a secondary way (1988: 39). The same basic view is also put forward in an article from 1989 "The Place of Shamanism in the History of Religions," even if it is strongly underlined that shamanism is "one of the strongest powers behind the historical formation of religions" (1989: 49). Although strictly it is not empirically possible to form a definite opinion regarding the dawn of human thought and the history of human faiths, it is nevertheless

both reasonable and highly likely that, to quote Hultkrantz "the intuitive wisdom of another world" was the most primordial.

During a long period of time, Åke Hultkrantz has, in different contexts and in different ways dealt with an area of research that has had such a power of attraction: shamanism. In these few pages I have attempted to reproduce some essential parts of his work and hints of the discussion it has caused.

During my work with the present paper I have noted that there to some degree has been a certain change in Hultkrantz's shamanistic research from a strictly scholarly approach to the subject, to a tendency of a deeper and more personal insight, however without compromising with the intellectual edge. In conclusion I would like to refer to Åke Hultkrantz's contribution to the text of homage to Mircea Eliade, *Sehnsucht nach dem Ursprung* (1983). The headline of the appreciative although critical article is "Mircea Eliade. Schamanologe oder Zauberlehrling?" I now ask the question: Åke Hultkrantz: shamanologist or wanderer on the shaman's path?

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The *Noaidi* and his Worldview: A Study of Saami Shamanism from an Historical Point of View*

LOUISE BÄCKMAN

STOCKHOLM

The article considers the changing status of the noaidi, or Saami shaman, over historical time. It is obvious that, at the beginning of the historical period, the noaidi was the religious specialist among the Saami. This means that he (all sources see the noaidi as a man) was familiar with "the realm of the divine" through his experiences of the spiritual world. Although the Saami had contacts with neighboring peoples, including non-Saami Scandinavians, that influenced their view of the noaidi, their religion as a whole did not change and the noaidi remained the specialist in religious matters during this early period. At the end of the 12th century, however, a new factor threatened the noaidi's authority—Christianity. The Christian missionaries worked to convince the Saami that they, not the noaidi, were the bearers of divine truth, but it was 600 years before their efforts achieved complete success. During this time the noaidi gradually lost his role as the religious specialist and his status was degraded to that of a wizard and juggler.

There is no doubt that, like other members of human kind, the Saami of olden times searched for answers to the eternal and fundamental questions of life: where do we come from, why are we here, and where are we going? The *noaidi*, or Saami shaman, was thought to be able to answer these questions, being uniquely chosen by powers from another reality to act on behalf of his people as the mediator between the human world and that of the gods. In so far as the available sources on Saami religion can be understood and trusted, the mythical truths in which the Saami believed and the worldview they embraced are partly characterized by the *noaidi* and his experiences. These sources are

* This article has been revised by Jérémie Michael McGowan.

documents that were written by non-Saami people. An encounter with divine revelation is deeply personal and requires an acceptance that is wholly individual. Thus, in their contacts with the gods, or the “other reality,” the *noaidi* would have had their own, unique experience, but nevertheless all *noaidi* were acting within a culture that provided each with the same frame of reference. All of them were brought up in the same religious tradition and interpreted their experiences in a traditional way but, at the same time, in accordance with their personal experience. Following his individual personality, a *noaidi* was able to renew Saami mythology, but he did not change the fundamental structure of the belief system or the religious ideas. When one looks at the pictures on the ceremonial drums that the *noaidi* made and used in his search for spiritual help, one can see that he was able to mold religious traditions in a personal way. He preserved and effectively transmitted traditional myths and was also able to renew them as well as create new ones. Thus, the *noaidi* also acted as a mytho-poet. Additionally, the Saami were involved in an historical process in the course of which their culture encountered other worldviews, through which the *noaidi* gained new perspectives on the “other reality.” He was then able to conceptualize new things and incorporate them into his own speculations. This process of cultural change is still going on.

The Sources

Those who have provided our sources on the Saami, especially the clergymen and missionaries of the 17th to 18th centuries, were all men. Consequently, the available information about the Saami shaman is written from a male perspective, meaning that, according to the authors, the male culture was the norm. The authors were looking at what Saami men believed in and observing how they acted in ceremonial situations. Inherent to this perspective is the assumption that women followed the behavior of the men. Another factor one must take into consideration is that the information the writers received did not come directly from the Saami themselves; rather, much of it was obtained from people living adjacent to the Saami. These informants had prejudices against the “otherness” of the Saami, which rendered them terrifying in the eyes of neighboring cultures. The actions of the *noaidi*

were regarded as *trolldom*, which means “sorcery” or “wizardry,” a phenomenon with which the non-Saami northerners were quite familiar. For example, the northerners believed that certain people were able to bring evil upon antagonists by sending *maran*, “the nightmare,” to injure the enemy. Furthermore, the northerners believed in *hamnskifte*, “guise changing,” and “hag riding,” and the like¹—skills, it was opined, that the *noaidi* also practised but in a more powerful way. Thus, he was known among the northerners as “the wizard of the first order,” and hence he belonged to the powers of chaos that threatened the social order of non-Saami societies. We also learn from accounts of the Saami that “Saaminess” was defined by outsiders, and that the Saami were referred to as “giants,” “dwarves” and “elves,” all beings from the supernatural world (Mundal 1994; Pálson 1998). The “we” and “the others” in these stories are only too recognizable. The two culture groups lived side by side and seem sometimes to have cooperated, but the mental universes of the Saami and the northerners remained apart. The worldview system of the Saami was not really disturbed until the arrival of Christianity, and even then the impact was at most gradual.

Encountering Other Religions

Over the course of history the Saami in Scandinavia encountered at least four different systems of religious belief, each of which affected their traditional religion to a greater or lesser extent. Generally they seem to have tolerated new gods, and even incorporated these new gods into the Saami pantheon. However, the rituals surrounding their gods did not change. When needed, new rituals were created, but always in accordance with cultural traditions. Saami mythology was extended, while the system of ritual remained to a large extent traditional. The external religious influences encountered by the Saami were:

- (1) the religion of the Scandinavians before Viking times,
- (2) the religion of the Vikings,
- (3) the Roman Catholic mission (approx. 1100–1400),
- (4) the Lutheran mission (1500–1600–1700).

¹ See Raudvere 1993.

In spite of these sometimes revolutionary influences from the outside world there were elements in the Saami belief system that remained genuine. Broad traditions that have been present since the very beginning and still live in the narratives of today include:

(1) the cult of the Master of the Place or Animal, manifested in a stone, a cliff or a fell, called *sieid' di* by some Saami, and regarded as sacred;

(2) animal ceremonialism that is connected with the *sieid' di* and maintained in the bear ceremonies of modern times; and, above all,

(3) *noaidism* (shamanism), or the behavior and knowledge of the *noaidi*, called *noietetemmie* in the language of the southern Saami and *noaidivuolta* in the northern Saami language.

The rules of Saami society were determined by the clan system, which is usually referred to as *sii' da*, a word from the language of the northern Saami. The elements noted above are still well known in the oral narrative traditions of contemporary Saami, but the names of the goddesses and gods are completely gone—with the exception of *Sáráhká*, the goddess of the home and family, who has her place in the *árran*, the fireplace. Her name is used in some proverbs.

The *Noaidi*

For the northerners, the closest neighbors of the Saami, the *noaidi* was the Great Sorcerer, possessing mighty skills that were believed to originate from the Evil World. For the Saami themselves the *noaidi* was the religious specialist who fulfilled many duties. He was the mediator between human kind and the divine, the diagnostician and healer of ill health, a prophet and foreteller of the future and the leader of some sacrifices and ceremonies. Sometimes a *noaidi* acted as a “cultural guide,” meaning that he exhorted people to behave in a Saami manner; likewise, he was the preserver of traditional myths and tales while simultaneously creating new myths and transmitting Saami knowledge to the younger generation. Thus, the *noaidi* was both a conservative authority and an agent of renewal. In some regions a *noaidi* was consulted when a name was needed for a newly born child because it was of

great importance that a child receive the right name. By receiving a traditional name the newborn was encultured into Saami society since the infant's name was to be found within the kinship network to which it belonged. It is not certain that *noaidi* acted as the director of funeral rites or other kinds of rites of passage. However, his most important task was as the "stabilizer" of society because, in times of distress, the *noaidi* had to assume the agony to which the community was subjected and thus protect it from mental chaos. The *noaidi* may be called a "therapeut."

According to the source writers, the Saami shaman was a man. In his teen years he was "called" by spirits to be a *noaidi* and was introduced to his future helping spirits. An old woman could act as healer or prophet, but she had no access to helping spirits and did not use a drum.

As the Saami had contact with other peoples, we may ask whether the encounter with other systems of religious belief changed the *noaidi*'s ethnic and traditional religion or his status in society. The economy of the Saami took different directions as history progressed. Most scholars are of the opinion that some groups moved from a simple economy based purely on hunting, trapping and fishing to one based on reindeer rearing and breeding. Instead of having a hunter's mobility, i.e. of following game, the Saami switched to reindeer nomadism, i.e. of following a herd of reindeer.² This basic economic shift meant that the collective economy of the hunters changed into an individual economy of herd owners, but the *sii'da* system still regulated work to a certain degree. The role of the *noaidi* also changed, as did some elements of Saami religion.³ However, some of the basic elements of this belief system remained intact, such as the cult of *sieid'di* and the animal ceremonies mentioned earlier, together with a belief in a multiple cosmos. So even if the *noaidi* lost his status as a *religious* specialist, he did not lose his other skills.

² On reindeer nomadism see Ruong 1969; and Lundmark 1982.

³ See Bäckman 1978.

(1) *The pre-Viking Period*

From the time before the ninth century there are some archaeological finds, above all grave gifts, which show that the Saami and the northerners had trade relations. Linguists have also found a few words of Germanic origin that have enriched the Saami language, loan words from before the sound shift of the Old Nordic language, i.e. before the eighth century (Bergsland 1967; Sköld 1979). This means that the two culture groups must have been in close contact. Did this acceptance of foreign words mean that the Saami language was seen as a language of lower status than the neighboring Scandinavian languages? Or were both groups, or the Saami, bilingual? Curiously enough, there is no information about the language the two peoples used when communicating, but obviously the Saami and the northerners understood each other. Some early historians of religion also maintained that the 17th and 18th century sources on the Saami people describe a religious system that is reflective of the Bronze Age religion of the Scandinavians.⁴ No historians of today would wholly support this opinion. However, some current students of Nordic religion are more inclined towards the idea of a common origin for the religious beliefs of the Scandinavians and the Saami, including the Finns (Drobin and Keinänen 2001). This is an interesting twist on an old opinion. Whatever the case, during the pre-Viking period the *noaidi* clearly acted in the traditional role as the sole religious leader and specialist of the Saami.

(2) *The Viking Period*

The time of the Vikings, approximately 800 A.D. until 1000 A.D., is of great interest. The Vikings were above all traders (and sometimes robbers), and they extended their trade expeditions throughout all the Saami territory. Vikings certainly met the *noaidi* in person. In the Icelandic Sagas, written in the 12th or 13th century, there are many tales about the Saami and their supernatural skills. From that time until now the *noaidi* is called a *trollkarl* (sorcerer), and the ceremonial drum he used is called *trolltrumma* (sorcerer's drum). In Norwegian the drum is

⁴ See, for example, Fritzner 1877.

known as *runebomme* (a drum with magic signs). The Sagas, as well as other documents describing the confrontation between the Saami and the Norsemen in Northern Scandinavia, are most likely based on oral traditions that were transferred from one generation to another long before they were written down. The stories tell of the frustration of the bold Vikings when confronted with the power and supernatural skills of the *noaidi*. It can be inferred that the Scandinavians were able to take advantage of the *noaidi*'s skills for their own purposes, and that the Saami "sorcerers" were eager to show off their supernatural powers, even using this power as a weapon. For example, in the Norwegian *Kristin réttir* (approximately 1120 A.D.) the Scandinavians are forbidden to go to the Saami to exploit Saami "paganism," i.e. witchcraft. This documented ban indicates that the Scandinavians had a long tradition of making use of Saami "sorcery." Among other things, the sorcerer possessed the magic with which to create storms and other atmospheric disturbances and also had the power to allay them (Moyné 1981).

The conditions of Saami life were still a hunter's, but according to archaeological finds hunting was combined with holdings of small reindeer herds as beasts of burden or decoy. It is also possible that the hunters milked reindeer cows. Ottar, a Nordic chieftain and large landowner who lived in the vicinity of the Saami in Halogaland tells in his accounts (approximately 830 A.D.) that he owned about 600 tame reindeer. Ottar also describes four of these reindeer as decoy animals, useful to the Saami. Saami herders most likely tended Ottar's reindeer.

Judging from this early literature, the *noaidi* was the person who was able to reach the world of the spirits and, accordingly, acted as a religious specialist. By participating in and observing the ceremonies of the neighboring Scandinavians (for example *blot*, sacrifice), the *noaidi* was introduced to another belief system. His own mythological speculations were thus broadened, and he accepted, at least in part, some designations of Nordic origin for Saami gods. This is true especially in the regions where the Saami and Scandinavians practised varying forms of close cooperation. However, the traditional characteristics of the Saami gods were not changed. For instance, the Saami thunder god bears many names, referential to different activities, but one of this god's names among the southern Saami is *Hora-galles*. The word *galles* or *gaille* is the Nordic *kall*, meaning 'man' or 'old man.' Thor/Tor is

the name of the Scandinavian thunder god. Seemingly, *Hora-galles* is the Saaminized “Thorr-Man.” According to linguists, this name for the their thunder god was accepted by the Saami around the beginning of the 11th century (Sköld 1985). They adopted the designation of the “Thorr-Man” for an already existing Saami god (Pettersson 1961).

There are other god names of Nordic extraction in Saami mythology—for example *Vearalden Olma* (the Man of the World) and *Radi-en/Rararet* (the Ruler), both designations of “the High God.” Maybe by using Nordic names the Saami wanted to be better understood when attempting to explain Saami myths to outsiders (Bäckman 1991).

During the Viking period the Saami were still primarily hunters. Some, at least those living in the coastal areas of Northern Norway, were also small-scale cattle breeders, just like the Norsemen of the time. Due to encounters with an encroaching culture that held different religious beliefs, the *noaidi* was able to renew Saami mythology and, as usual, insert an individual personality into traditional Saami religious ideas. The *noaidi* still held the position of religious leader in Saami society during the Viking era.

(3) *The Roman Catholic Mission*

It was during the Catholic mission that the *noaidi* began to lose power as the sole carrier of religious knowledge. By the beginning of the 13th century or earlier, Catholic monks were meeting Saami people, first of all in market places. These were usually the locations where churches were built, first along the Norwegian coast, initially serving non-Saami populations. In the middle of the 13th century a church was built in Tromsö; it was called *ecclesia sancta Marie de Trums iuxta paganos* and was built to serve both non-Saami and Saami (Kolsrud 1947). There are also documents showing that the monks went into the mission field, meeting people in a domestic setting as sellers of indulgences and as teachers of another religion (Widén 1964, 1980). In some regions the encounter between the Saami and the Catholic monks was intense, leaving a profound impression on Saami mythology as well on Saami life as a whole. According to 18th century sources, Saami ideas of what happens after death were clearly influenced by the dogma of Purgatory and the dichotomy of Hell and Paradise, which teach that

there is one realm for those who obey God (or gods) and another for the disobedient. In traditional Saami beliefs there was only one universal realm for those who died in an ordinary way. But if death was caused by violence the victim went to another destination; likewise for a woman who died in childbirth. The Christians, as the new religious specialists in Saami areas, introduced among other things the concepts of sin, retribution and redemption, and these Christian concepts influenced some of the Saami mythmakers. The *noaidi* was no longer the only one who was able to give answers to the fundamental questions of life and death.

(4) *The Lutheran Mission*

The fourth religious system which the Saami encountered and had to deal with was the Lutheran mission, which started in approximately the first half of the 16th century. During this time integration into the Church congregation intensified. The Swedish authorities, for example, became more conscious of Saami “paganism,” and churches were built at traditional Saami meeting places. In the first half of the 17th century the mission became increasingly active. For instance, Saami people were made to remain near the church for weeks so that they could be instructed in Christianity. This policy was applied throughout Sweden and Finland. As described above, Saami living in the Norwegian area were inducted into Christian teachings earlier because churches and monasteries were built in Norway as early as the 13th century along the Atlantic coast in the northern part of the country.

Unlike the Christian priest, monk or missionary, the *noaidi* is not a “preacher.” A *noaidi* is an administrator of religious matters, and he acts when needed by members of the group. With the arrival of foreign religious specialists who actively and openly conducted religious practice, the *noaidi* was outmaneuvered as the one responsible for the well-being of Saami society. Thus, the importance of his traditional role declined. The *noaidi*’s skills, however, have never been forgotten, and there are many legends of *noaidi* and their activities.

Even if the Saami encountered Christian missions as early as the 12th century, Christianization of the people took a very long time. In the 18th century the authorities of the Nordic kingdoms still had to

deal with “paganism” in the Saami area. Why did Christianity have such difficulties in changing the minds of the Saami and influencing their religious outlook? It took approximately 600 years for the Saami as a whole to accept the new god as the only god. One reason for this prolonged process is, perhaps, that there were no native chieftains or kings to direct, decree or dictate that their people should embrace the new beliefs. Nor, because the *noaidi* was not a political leader, could he encourage conversion. Indeed there was no one in Saami society in a position to do so. Conversion to Christianity was a personal decision. Although, as we have seen, there were pressures from outside, each individual had to consider the consequences of abandoning the traditional Saami gods and powers for a foreign and, according to the Christian message, more powerful god.

In contrast to earlier periods, the Lutheran mission represented a parallel political agenda. The Saami were faced not only with a religious decision but with the adoption of a political affiliation as well. Starting with the Lutheran mission, pressure to integrate them into national states was intensified. Integration equalled Christianization. For example, it was required that all Saami children be baptized by clergymen. The children therefore received Christian names, which identified them as members of Church congregations and members of a state under the rule of a king. However, children were often first given a traditional name and an identity unique to their culture. Thus, many Saami possessed two identities. The first identity, often kept secret, located a person within a specific Saami clan circle. The second, ecclesiastical identity was used as an official identity in juridical and other state business.⁵

The Christianization of the Saami is a long, complex and exciting story, worthy of further study. A deeper analysis of this problem is needed, but it falls beyond the scope of this study, which has discussed historical issues concerning the *noaidi* and the *noaidi*'s duties in a changing world.

⁵ See Randulf 1903 and Olsen 1910 concerning name-giving ceremonies.

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LOUISE BÄCKMAN, Ph.D., was appointed professor in the Department of the History of Religion, Stockholm University, in 1986. Her predecessor in the post was Professor Åke Hultkrantz. As a Saami herself she was interested to learn more of the history of her people, a project to which Åke Hultkrantz gave active encouragement. In her professional work Louise has primarily looked for the origins of shamanism among the peoples of the North, including the Saami, but she has also analyzed the pre-Christian religious beliefs of the Saami as reported by early missionaries. Now in retirement, she is working on the history of Christianization of the Saami as seen from the Saami point of view.

Shamanic Buddhism in Burma

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Although Burmese spirit mediumship is flourishing, developing and changing, it has not received much scholarly attention. The ceremonies, the nat pwes, are performances by Buddhists for Buddhists in which music, singing, dancing and acting are important and necessary elements. In Burmese religion there are not only monks and mediums, but also weikzas and bodaws, i.e. wizards, magicians, alchemists and wise men. The most venerated weikzas, although believed to have already entered an invisible world, may be present at nat pwes, inspiring and even possessing participants, and charismatic bodaws may act as mediums and dancers. In Burma there is thus a close interaction between the shamanic, the occult and the normative Buddhism.

When preparing to leave for my first fieldwork in India and Nepal in 1970, I remember my supervisor, Åke Hultkrantz, expressing his satisfaction at my intention to study Tibetan spirit mediums and not Tibetan Buddhist philosophy (as he had feared). Anthropology and people are still, I believe, closer to his heart than philology and texts. Later though, after spending half a year in a village in the Nepalese countryside working closely with three Tibetan spirit mediums, I realized it was impossible to understand their world of thought and their rituals without also taking into account the complexities of Tibetan Buddhism. The mediums were Buddhists and, moreover, saw their practice as Buddhism. Later, and when time permitted, I have continued my studies of spirit mediumship in Taiwan, Vietnam and Burma (Myanmar) in the same way. I believe that studies of history and texts are essential to a full understanding of what you see at ceremonies and learn in conversation with spirit mediums.

This short paper is a report from ongoing research on Burmese spirit mediums in their religious context in contemporary Burma. Åke Hult-

krantz is still busy writing books and articles, and I hope that my modest and unfinished contribution here may be seen in this spirit: research is a never-ending process, and as long as there is curiosity it must go on.

Burmese religion is a rather complex and also politically complicated field that has not received much scholarly attention. On this field many actors are playing with or against each other, or maybe not even participating in the same game. This has to do with the country's cultural and ethnical composition, as well as with its history. In Burma are to be found a rather large number of ethnic groups with religious traditions of their own side by side with Buddhists, Muslims, Christians and Hindus. Within these "greater" traditions there are, furthermore, sectors and layers with different historical backgrounds. The historical interaction between these groups is not well documented, and this is one of the reasons for the many obscurities in Burmese religious history. And, in addition to this, the state of affairs in the country has not facilitated anthropological fieldwork in the last forty years or so. The monographs that are available are mostly the results of fieldwork carried out before 1962.¹ From more recent years there are a few dissertations, articles and popular works on religion.² For the study of Burmese spirit mediums, one of the themes of the present paper, the monograph and the large number of articles by Brac de la Perrière are fundamental, and the reader is referred to them for a wealth of information and reflections. The presentation in this paper is based on material collected during three visits to Burma during which I attended a number of *nat pwe*s and interviewed spirit mediums, singers and dancers, mainly in Pegu (Bago), Mandalay, and the Popa area.

The *nat* cult is not only an arena for mediums, musicians, singers and dancers but may also be seen as a point of intersection or a forum for dialogues between layers, tendencies and processes within Burmese religion today. This is because it offers space to actors with aims and purposes other than just those of the *nat*. Here our attention must be turned to the apparently rather fast growing cult of *weikzas*, or Buddhist

¹ For example Mendelson 1975; Nash 1965; Spiro 1967; and 1970.

² For example Brac de la Perrière 1983, 1989, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1998a, 1998b, 2001; Jordt 2001; Moilanen 1998; Rodrigue 1992; and Schober 1989.

“wizards,” such as Bo Bo Aung and Bo Min Gaung, in which so many ideas and practices of differing provenance are to be found.³ These two *weikzas* are quite visibly present at the spirit medium ceremonies and can furthermore be seen as the most important figures connecting spirit mediums to so-called occult and messianic Buddhism.

The third type of actor introduced here, apart from the spirit mediums and wizards, are the *bodaws*, persons considered to have supernormal abilities and capacities. The *bodaws* in present day Burma seem to be consulted as healers and diviners, and as distributors of charms and protection. Connections will be demonstrated between the spirit mediums, the *weikzas* and the *bodaws*, and together they can be seen as examples of what might be called “shamanic” Buddhism.

Little space will be given here to “normative” Buddhism, consisting as it does of Burmese variations on the general Theravada theme, although it certainly has relations to the mediums, the wizards and the charismatic *bodaws*. Monks bless the *nat* ceremonies, prominent monks are considered to be approaching *weikzahood*, and monks are also to be found among the *bodaws*.

The Spirit Mediums

Besides the family’s daily cult of the house *nat*, Burmese *nat* ceremonies can be said to be of two kinds. On the one hand there are the rituals performed in the head temple of the respective *nat* at fixed days on the calendar and attracting large numbers of people, spirit mediums and other worshippers, and on the other hand are the ceremonies ordered by clients and carried out in *nat* temples, in homes, or in huts arranged for the purpose, and involving spirit mediums, dancers, singers and musicians.

Burmese spirit medium ceremonies are often quite extensive arrangements, full of minor procedures and sub-rituals that stretch over three days. I will not attempt to trace the historical background to the present performances, but structuring the cult of these *nats* may be

³ For *weikzas* and related phenomena, see Ferguson and Mendelson 1981; Mendelson 1961a, 1961b, 1963a, 1963b, Nash 1965: 166–206, Pranke 1995; and Schober 1989: 252–349.

discerned a hierarchical order of temples, temple functionaries, spirit medium masters and spirit mediums with their roots in the world of the Burmese kings and their court rituals. It seems as if now the world of the Burmese spirit mediums is changing in various ways, but it is perhaps too early to guess at the changes that may ensue from the modernization of the dance, clothes and music which are said to be being introduced in some circles by “gay” urban spirit mediums. The discussion here will be confined to just a few of the more important elements of Burmese spirit mediumship.

The Gods

The gods who are active during spirit medium ceremonies form a somewhat heterogeneous pantheon and their histories have in many cases not been traced. Traditionally a group of thirty-seven *nats* is referred to, but it does not include all the gods who possess the mediums.⁴ This pantheon is supposed to have been formed when the first Burmese kingdom was founded by Anawratha (1044–1081) as part of the unification process. The pantheon consists of 36 local Burmese *nats* with Indra as their head. Most of their stories, in the form of legends, tell of suffering, misery and torture under unjust rulers from different periods of Burmese history. The majority died or were put to death under the most agonizing circumstances, and hence they have become morally ambivalent supernatural beings. Not all the members of this pantheon possess the spirit mediums at every ceremony—some are obviously more popular than others. Only a few appeared at the ceremonies I attended, and to give an idea of the character of the *nats* I will here limit myself to some of them.

In many of the narratives one faces interesting but difficult problems concerning their genre and the history of their most significant elements. Beneath Indra in the pantheon is found Mahagiri, about whom the following story is told.⁵ Mahagiri was once a blacksmith and was such a powerful man that even the king feared him. The king married the

⁴ On the thirty-seven *nats*, see Brac de la Perrière 1989: 15–47; Htin Aung 1982: 83–113; Rodrigue 1992: 24–41; Scott and Hardiman 1900: 17–26; and Temple 1906.

⁵ See e.g. Scott and Hardiman 1900: 19 ff.

blacksmith's sister and told her to send for her brother. When he arrived he was immediately seized by soldiers, bound to a tree and burned to death. His sister, the queen, threw herself into the fire and died along with him. Later, their heads were found unharmed in the ashes. The blacksmith and his sister became *nats* and chose a tree in the palace garden as their abode. There they now and then killed passers by and ate them, wherefore the king finally had the tree felled and thrown into the river. The tree grounded on the bank of the river near Pagan, where the two *nats* continued their murderous activities. The king of Pagan finally heard of their sad story and ordered a temple to be built for them on Mount Popa. This was done and the tree was relocated there. As a consequence of their proper treatment, the *nats* ceased their destructive activities and became helpers and protectors. This summary clearly indicates the ambivalence of the *nats* caused by their suffering, as well as their benevolence if well treated. Potentially dangerous kings are also a prominent theme in many narratives.

The legends of the two famous so-called Muslim brothers, Shwebyin Naungdaw and Shwebyin Nyiday, also present a dramatic and violent plot full of intriguing details.⁶ Their main temple is in Taungbyon, north of Mandalay, and is the seat of the largest *nat* festival in the country.⁷ The father of the two brothers, Byatta, was found as a child drifting on a raft with his brother. They were discovered by a monk, who surmised that they were probably from India. He brought them to his monastery, gave them new names and treated them as his pupils. One day the monk found the body of a dead alchemist, which he ordered his pupils to bring back to the monastery to be roasted. The roasted flesh of an alchemist was thought to give unusual strength and power to anyone who ate it. The monk accordingly went off to invite the king to the meal while the Indian boys kept watch over the body. During the night they saw the roasted body of the alchemist shining like gold. They could not resist tasting the flesh, however, and as they found it very sweet they ended up eating all of it. This made them feel brave and strong, and one of them turned the monastery upside down while the other placed a large rock in the road to block the return of the

⁶ See e.g. Htin Aung 1982: 68 ff., 91 f.

⁷ For details of this *nat* pwe, see Brac de la Perrière 1992; and Grant Brown 1915.

monk. Then they fled and began a life as thieves and robbers. Eventually the king caught the elder brother and ordered his execution. But as no weapon could harm him, the elder brother finally decided to kill himself. The body was cut to pieces and the pieces were buried in the palace grounds, while the blood was smeared over the palace walls. This gave such powerful protection against enemy attacks that not even the armies of the great King Anawrathas could enter. The younger brother, however, managed to enter the palace, where he immediately became engaged in a fight with a strange soldier who turned out to be his dead brother. The dead brother told him of his fate and also informed him that one section of the walls had not been smeared with blood. Anuwraha's soldiers were therefore able to enter at that point, dig up the buried parts of the body and remove the magic protection they afforded the palace. As a reward Byatta was given the task of bringing fresh flowers from the Popa region to King Anawraha every morning. Byatta possessed a magical swiftness which made this feat possible. But one day on Mount Popa he met the Flower-Eating Ogress and fell in love with her. This delayed his arrival with flowers for the king, who expressed his displeasure. When two sons were born to Byatta by the Ogress he was again late with flowers for the king, who had him executed. The Flower-Eating Ogress died of a broken heart and became a *nat*, known as Popa Medaw, who often appears during the *nat pwes*. The two orphans were taken care of by the king, and later they gained great distinction as soldiers and heroes. They were, among many other things, involved in bringing Buddhist relics from China, but inevitably they provoked the king's anger through some minor negligence while building a pagoda at Taungbyon village, and they were castrated and killed. Having become *nats*, they often visit the *nat pwes*, where they are easily recognizable by their general behaviour and dance style.

These narratives have been summarized here to give a glimpse of the world of the *nats*, characterized as it is by strong emotions, outrageous injustice and sudden death, but also by magic, alchemy and supernatural powers.

There are some variations in the list of the thirty-seven *nats* and also in their relative positions. Some of the most active and popular gods

are, furthermore, not included in this royal pantheon.⁸ The Flower-Eating Ogress, Popa Medaw, is for example not one of the thirty-seven. Nevertheless, her statue is often found in market places, and her appearance at ceremonies offers the spirit medium an opportunity to display a range of dramatic gestures and choreographic movements. Another goddess not found on the royal list but very popular is Bago Medaw, the “Buffalo Cow from Pegu” (Brac de la Perrière 1995; Rodrigue 1992: 44 f.) (pl. 1). When spirit mediums are possessed by her and enact her tragic story, the emotional stress in the audience is quite visibly intensified. Apart from her possibly historically and phenomenologically complicated background, she is now considered to be a goddess of the Mon people in the southeastern parts of the country. Her legend tells of how she, the buffalo cow, takes care of a prince lost in the forest, but how her motherly love is rewarded with death when she follows him back to civilization. Whatever the reason, it appears that Bago Medaw’s popularity is increasing today in Burma.

The pantheon may have been assembled with political considerations in mind, but despite this there is a flexibility and an openness which allow outsiders considerable space in the ceremonies.

The Spirit Mediums

A traditional term for spirit medium is *nat kadaw*, meaning *nat* “wife.” This indicates the relationship between god and medium, which is one of marriage. Not all mediums are women, however; in fact many informants maintained that today more men than women act as spirit mediums. Whether this is true or not, it is obvious that male spirit mediums are on the increase, especially in urban areas. This is not the place to enter into discussion of this process, which seems to imply a growing professionalization of spirit mediumship at the expense of the traditional emphasis on a vocational experience and on an individual, intimate relation with the god. This process also seems to indicate that, to the spirit medium’s rôle of making the *nats* accessible, several other aspects have been added and stressed—namely, the ability to act dramatically and to sing and dance beautifully, or, in short, the acquisition of skill

⁸ See e.g. Rodrigue 1992: 42 ff.

as a show artiste. Naturally, this development also affects treatment of the phenomenon from the point of view of comparative religion. Maybe this process can be compared to the development of urban neoshamanism in the West, in which, as has been pointed out, a large amount of playfulness and fantasy is allowed for in the liminoid sphere of the ceremonies (Lindquist 1997: 177).

The few spirit mediums and dancers I have been able to interview, however, all stressed the importance of the call from the *nats*, which they experienced as a loss of consciousness and control of the body. They had danced without wanting to, or fallen to the ground in a faint. They all said that they themselves had not chosen to establish this relation to the gods; rather, the gods had chosen them. It was also characteristic that the first experience of this kind happened when they attended a *nat pwe*, or had listened to *nat* songs and music. This initial experience was often followed by a period of trouble and difficulty, which ended after consultations with a master medium concerning the identity of the *nat* that was seeking contact. Eventually the new spirit medium may end up marrying the *nat*. This happens during quite a complex ceremony the aim of which is to place the soul of the *nat* in the spirit medium; a prerequisite for the possession is that the human soul leave the body to make room for the soul of the possessing god (Brac de la Perrière 1989: 104 ff.). Hence the change of personality and behaviour. The process is not unknown: suffering leads to an initiation and a restoring of balance and health. Through the marriage ceremony a special relationship between god and man is established, but also an important relation between spirit medium and the initiating master. This constitutes a gradual progress during which the medium gets closer and closer to the *nat* (Brac de la Perrière 1989: 94 ff.). However, one can participate in *nat* ceremonies, dress in the required clothes, dance and also feel the trembling nearness of the *nat* without being a spirit medium. One of my informants is such a *nat* worshipper and once, when sitting beside him at a puppet show, I felt him trembling when the *nat kadaw* doll performed. Thus, not everyone who has met the *nats* proceeds all the way to marriage and becoming a *nat kadaw*.

It is sometimes said that after a ceremony many *nat kadaws* are unable to remember what happened during the possession. It must be said, though, that at the ceremonies I have attended the possession was

indicated very briefly by a trembling and perhaps also a staggering, upon which an assistant would place himself behind the spirit medium with outstretched arms, ready to catch the falling dancer. This very slight indication of possession may be compared with what I have seen with Vietnamese mediums, but is in contrast to what can be observed among Tibetan *dpa' bo* mediums and Chinese *tang ki*, where we meet with a very dramatic staging of the ritual change from man to god.⁹

The Ceremonies

There are two kinds of ceremony at which the *nat kadaw* is active. One is the calendrical rituals in the main temple of the respective *nat*, when the main events in the myths and stories are celebrated. The most famous, which attracts thousands of spirit mediums and other worshippers, is held in August in the village of Taungbyon. The other kind of ceremony is the *nat pwe* ordered by a client for some special purpose. These can be expensive arrangements since many people may be involved: spirit mediums, dancers, singers and musicians. The ceremonies I have seen have all been ordered either by families, by relatives or by other groups. They are held in special *nat* temples, in private homes or in specially constructed huts. A special altar is arranged with flowers, fruits and other gifts to the *nats*. A number of *nat* statues are also placed on the altar; these are considered to be the living gods. The *nat pwes* consist of sequences of rituals that extend over parts of three days. As a ceremony requires an orchestra of several members, permission from the authorities to play music late at night is nowadays required. The *nats* are believed to like a certain kind of music and singing, and consequently singers, male or female, also participate. Essentially, the songs recount the legends and main events in the lives of the *nats*. Innovations are said to have been introduced recently in some *nat kadaw* circles. Thus, traditional songs are rewritten according to a modern and youthful taste, and pop music may also be used. Possibly this is primarily an urban phenomenon.

The ceremonies are always given a Buddhist frame by monks blessing the procedures and by paying homage to the Buddha as an introduction.

⁹ See e.g. Margareta Berglie 1998, 2001, and 2003.

After that, the supernatural beings are mentioned in due order, starting with Sakka (i.e. Indra), who is followed by the *weikzas* (wizards), alchemists and magicians, and by Min Mahagiri, the “Lord of the Mountain,” and his female companions and so on. According to circumstances, as when the ceremony is performed at a place with special ties to a certain *nat*, or if the clients have a special relationship with a certain *nat*, the order may be changed and the god in question given a more prominent place.

The ceremony then moves on, with one *nat kadaw* after another performing a number of *nats* to the accompaniment of singing and music. If features of “ecstasy” (that is, of behaviour interpreted as due to loss of control of the body) seem to rather rare among the spirit mediums, such incidents can be seen more frequently among people in the audience or among clients. This was the case at two ceremonies I attended. At one it was a woman, the main spokesperson of the family which had ordered the *pwe*, who fainted when led up to the statue of Bago Medaw by the *nat kadaw*, who was in a state of possession by the goddess. With the help of the medium she woke up after a few minutes (pl. 2 *a*). In the other case, it was the female leader of a small group of Bo Min Gaung meditators, who had ordered the ceremony, who lost consciousness when dancing and had to be supported (pl. 2 *b*). In her case, the cause was said not to be the overwhelming feeling of presence of the *nat* but of Bo Min Gaung himself. Obviously the emotional level fluctuates during the long ceremonies and is perceived in different ways by different participants.

There is also a constant flow of gifts and money from the clients to the *nats*, the audience, the *nat kadaws* and the musicians. This indicates, of course, the economic and social status of the clients, besides showing Buddhist loving kindness and generosity. Sometimes ritual elements that are intended as comic are presented, as when some of the *nats* use vulgar language or behave in a startling way. When it all ends—usually late in the evening of the third day—gifts of fruit and food are collected and taken away to be offered to homeless ghosts and spirits. No one is forgotten; as one participant said, everyone must have something from the *pwe*.

Verbal communication between the *nats* and the clients does not seem to be the most important object of the ceremony. Instead, the

main aim is to please the supernatural beings and render them well disposed. One informant told me that sometimes one can put a specific question to the god, but usually it is the god who gives advice and, on occasions, some information about the future. The aesthetic dimension is more apparent, perhaps, composed as it is of the singing, the music, the attire of the spirit mediums and of the dramatic performance, often heavily charged with emotions.

The Buddhist elements are evident. All the performers are Buddhists, Buddha is always referred to at the beginning of a ceremony, all the merits gained through the ceremony are dedicated to those in need, and so on. Spiro (1967: 205 ff.) used the term “shaman” of the *nat kadaws*, well aware that they were not shamans in the Siberian sense. Even if “shamanism” is taken to include the phenomenon of possession, I think the term “shaman” is not very appropriate here, terms such as “mediums” and “mediumism” being perhaps preferable, however vague they may be. In spite of the fact that the early career of a *nat kadaw* (the call from the gods, the difficult time that follows, the initiation, the supernatural marriage, the soul ideology, etc.) seems quite “shamanic,” it is perhaps more natural to view the Burmese spirit mediums in the context of South Asian possession cults, as observed in Cambodia (Trankell 2003) and Vietnam (Margareta Berglie 2001; Durand 1959; Larsson 2001; and Nguyen 2002). The differences in terms of possession ideology, performance, aims, social context, etc., seem to be considerable between South Asian spirit mediums and the mediums observed among Tibetans and in Taiwan (Per-Arne Berglie 1976, 1983; Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, resp.; and Margareta Berglie 1998). Obviously we see a quite different pattern of spirit mediumship here.

The *Weikzas*

As mentioned above, some of the *weikzas*, the Buddhist “wizards,” were also present at the spirit medium ceremonies.¹⁰ Statues and pictures of the two most famous, Bo Bo Aung and Bo Min Gaung, can be seen

¹⁰ See note 3 above. There are also studies by the anthropologist Keiko Tosa which unfortunately I have not been able to consult; for instance Keiko Tosa. *Weikza Belief in Burma* [in Japanese]. 2000. Tokyo: Keiso Shobo Press.

all around the country, as well near the altar of the *nats* (pl. 3). The *weikzas* were also referred to at the beginning of the ceremonies, after the Buddha but before the *nats*. As I have also mentioned, at one ceremony ordered by a small group of female Bo Min Gaung meditators, one of the women experienced such a closeness to the *weikza* that she momentarily lost consciousness. This indicates a strong link between the world actualized at the *nat pwe* and the particular sector of Buddhism represented by the *weikzas*.

To my knowledge there have been few studies of the *weikzas*, and most are rather short and based on fieldwork from before 1962. Exceptions are those by Schober (1989) and Tosa (2000). In this area of Burmese religion, too, rapid changes seem to be taking place in the cult of Bo Min Gaung, which is now evident almost everywhere and growing (Bekker 1989: 52 f.). It would be interesting if future research could uncover all the belief complexes surrounding this person, who died, possibly in 1952, on Mount Popa. With Bo Bo Aung, around whom there are also numerous legends and anecdotes, Bo Min Gaung appears to form a nexus of many kinds of beliefs and practices at different levels of Burmese religiosity.

The word *weikza* derives from Pali *vijjā* (or Sanskrit *vidyā*), 'knowledge,' 'wisdom,' etc., and refers to a being at a very advanced stage on the way to liberation. In Tantric Buddhism we know of the term *vidyādharma*, which is used of persons who possess esoteric knowledge and unusual powers with which they can help people. The Burmese *weikzas* appear to be of different kinds.¹¹ Among the higher *weikzas* are those who have gained their deep insights through mastery of the magic of numbers and letters, through astrology, or through the alchemical handling of mercury and gold. This secret knowledge and magic power help them to advance on the Buddhist way to nirvana. The most distinguished of them can thus prolong their lives and reach a high and invisible level of existence where they await the arrival of the next Buddha, Metteyya (Maitreya), when they will finally enter nirvana. This is the aim of the *weikza* practice that was most often cited by informants. In this connection, among many interesting things one may note that in this way worldly practices lead to otherworldly rewards,

¹¹ See Ferguson (1975: 66) for a very interesting list of religious practitioners.

and that the practice of alchemy and astrology, for instance, is of great help in reaching nirvana. Very few of the masters living in Burma today claim to be *weikzas*, even if their adherents consider them as such. The most venerated *weikzas* today have already passed into the other world, where they can be reached and from which they may contact believers. Thus Bo Min Gaung can appear in visions, talk to people and even possess them.

Another term used in the context of *weikza* beliefs and practices is *htwetyat pauk*, 'to find the exit,' or 'one who has found the exit' to the other world. Although there are Burmese texts concerning these traditions (Pranke 1995), the greater part are orally transmitted among rather closed groups of practitioners (Schober 1989). These wizards will reach nirvana under Maitreya, not under the Buddha Shakyamuni, a belief which allows for a certain flexibility and ability to incorporate beliefs and practices more distant from normative Buddhism.

Weikzas who are not so advanced may be believed to be able to manufacture powerful medicines or cure people in other ways, tell the future, etc., while still living in this world. There seem to be many similarities between the *siddha* figures of Tantric Buddhism and the Burmese Theravada Buddhist *weikzas*, but it is difficult to see any historical connection. It is also premature to attempt to trace the history of *weikza* beliefs. The term may be old, but the phenomenon may be rather modern, possibly having arisen in the late 18th or early 19th century.

Oral and textual sources¹² often place the lifetime of Bo Bo Aung in that period. There are many versions of his life, and I will give just a few anecdotes as examples of *weikza* practice. According to one legend, Bo Bo Aung was born into a poor family in Upper Burma, and in his youth, spent in a monastery, he studied magic squares with letters in the grid. The abbot of the monastery was meanwhile busy conducting alchemical experiments. By coincidence it was discovered that it was the boy, not the abbot, who through his mastery of the magic squares had gained the power to make gold. On another occasion he buried a magic square which included the birth date of his mother under the

¹² An unpublished book-length manuscript on *weikzas* and *bodaws* by a Burmese colleague has been consulted.

floor of her house. When his mother stepped over it, she fell down with severe pains in her stomach and did not recover until the boy removed the magic square. Bo Bo Aung grew up to be a man with a reputation of having great magical powers. Even the king, Badon, was afraid of what he might do and threw him into prison. Using his magical powers, Bo Bo Aung was easily able to free himself and wrote the Burmese letter *wa*, a circle, on one of the palace walls. When attempts were made to brush away the letter it multiplied itself all over the palace. Later Bo Bo Aung found the “exit” and now awaits the coming of Maitreya somewhere else. But he can still communicate with this world. Brac de la Perrière (2001: 247) relates how a Burmese diviner who tries to locate the souls of recently dead people invokes Bo Bo Aung.

A rich flora of stories and hagiographical anecdotes has also grown up around the other of the two seemingly most popular wizards, Bo Min Gaung. He is believed to have lived in our time, his death being supposed to have occurred in 1952. I have talked to several persons who claim to have met him in their youth in the Popa area. Most of the stories I have collected stress his odd behaviour. I will give a few examples. Once he tried to stop the construction of a railway, but was taken away and beaten so hard that people thought he was dead and had him buried. A few days later, however, he was seen walking around as usual. On another occasion he made a big log float upstream by inscribing a magic sign on it. He was also able to revive a killed chicken at a Muslim eating-place, and so on. An interesting story tells how he was once stopped by the police when driving a dilapidated car but was freed when he made the wives of the policemen lose control of themselves and dance indecently. This brings the *weikza* into connection with the spirit medium world, as this is often how a *nat* indicates his interest in a human and his wish that this person shall become a *nat kadaw*. Many of the stories told of Bo Bo Aung and Bo Min Gaung remind us of the stories of the *nats*. The two *weikzas* may, furthermore, be seen as supernatural beings protecting and inspiring those who turn to them for help. Of course, anecdotes such as these have to be analyzed as to genre and detail before their value can be judged. Again, similarities with Tantric Buddhism are striking, with its “mad saints” or “holy madmen,” so popular in some parts of Tibetan Buddhism.

The importance of Bo Min Gaung for Burmese contemporary popular religiosity cannot be overestimated. He is attracting a rich, intense and diversified cult, and he is thought to possess people in order to make his will known or to inspire them and talk to them. He can also make things materialize in the hands of worthy people, items that will be powerful and can be worn as protective amulets. There are many people today who claim to be, or are supposed to be, Bo Min Gaung reborn or manifested. Often such a person attracts a gathering of believers who try to advance along the road to *weikzahood*. Some even say that he is the coming Buddha, Maitreya. Thus, he can be seen as connected both to the mysterious world of the *nats* and to normative Buddhism in spite of the features in his hagiography that strike us as alien to the latter. Small temple constructions may be found dedicated to him and cared for by groups of believers. Outside Mandalay I found such buildings consisting of a number of small chapels filled with statues and pictures of Bo Min Gaung and other holy persons. Some of the pictures showed him having visited many parts of the world, and there was also a large painting of him sitting on the top of the globe surrounded by lions. It was meant to show him as a protector of world peace and, perhaps, as a spiritual world sovereign.

The *weikza* sector thus clearly overlaps both the *nat* sector and the sector of normative Buddhism.

The *Bodaws*

A dynamic and, according to many informants, vigorously growing area of Burmese religious life is that belonging to the charismatic figures here called *bodaws*. These are persons, historical or contemporary, who are believed to have supernatural powers of various kinds and are thus able to cure, guide and help their followers. They are generally not considered to be as advanced as the *weikzas*, even if a figure such as Bo Min Gaung might well be considered to be also a *bodaw* and both he and Bo Bo Aung appear on popular prints of the *bodaws* (pl. 4 a). Much research will have to be carried out in this field too before all the characters in such pictures can be identified and their history described. As a contemporary example I will take a *bodaw* who lives outside Mandalay and who I will call Bodaw Pye. I have met him

a number of times there and at other places in Upper Burma. About seventy years old, he was born a Muslim but is now a Buddhist. Already in his teens his ability to foretell the future was discovered and he began to help people. This supernatural power was later strengthened through what he refers to as *samatha* meditation, which in his case consisted of recitation and visualization practices. He let his rosary form a circle, and inside this circle he was able to see future or hidden things. He is one of those I have met who claims to have met Bo Min Gaung, since when he has had a special relationship with him. When for a time the Ne Win regime prohibited the practices of supernatural curing and fortune-telling, he entered the Samgha and was a monk for a few years. While a monk he was able to continue his practice within a limited circle of believers. Since then he has left the Samgha and built up quite a prosperous enterprise, and he is now consulted as a healer, diviner and adviser, not just in the Mandalay area but all over the country. At his center outside Mandalay Bo Min Gaung occupies a prominent place, being portrayed in several statues and paintings. The *bodaw* says that he is often in contact with Bo Min Gaung. These contacts take the form of visions and auditions, as well as the receipt of gifts from the *weikza*. Among such powerful objects that he once showed me was a stone resembling an eyeball, which he used to cure eye diseases, and a strange-looking object said to be the jaw-bone of a *weikza*. The *bodaw* himself has the ability to “materialize” such things, which he gives away to people in need. To me they looked like gems of different kinds.

Thus, this *bodaw* is most concerned with and involved in the *weikza* cult. Moreover, he is also a spirit medium with a special relationship with Popa Medaw, the Flower-Eating Ogress. In this capacity I have seen him perform at a *nat pwe* at Mount Popa in connection with the consecration of a stupa (pl. 4 b). The possession was only momentarily apparent, marked by his starting to fall backwards for a few seconds or so. I was told, however, that on other occasions he may lose consciousness altogether when dancing as a *nat*. With Bodaw Pye many features of Burmese religion are in evidence: the move towards “Burmanness” and Buddhism (he was born a Muslim), normative Buddhism (he was a monk for years), *weikza* mysticism (his connection with Bo Min Gaung), and charismatic holy persons (he himself is a prominent *bodaw*). It is

difficult to see any contradiction between all these parts, or even to draw any clear boundaries between them. There is, of course, a hierarchy, with the *nats* below and the *weikzas* above, but nevertheless one thing presupposes the others in a fluid continuity.

Final Remarks

This introductory paper is intended to show that Buddhism is, of course, found in one form or another everywhere in Burmese religion. Side by side we find the normative Buddhism of the majority of the monks and the “occult” or “messianic” Buddhism of the *weikzas* and charismatic *bodaws*. Shamanism in the Siberian sense is hardly found here, even if some similarities can be demonstrated between shamans and mediums and between the former and some of the *bodaws*. The term “shamanism” is widely used for many things, even among scholars, but it should be avoided when dealing with the *nat kadaws*. Still, many of the phenomena discussed here belong to the “shamanic” side of Buddhism rather than to the “clerical”, to use the terminology of Geoffrey Samuel (1993: 3–23). And, maybe, many of the contemporary *bodaws* so popular among urban Burmese can be compared to the urban neo-shamans and “gurus” of the New Age and post-New Age West. Whatever the case may be, I consider that the *nat kadaws* must best be studied and placed in the context of South Asian spirit mediumship.

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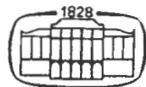
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MIHÁLY HOPPÁL

BUDAPEST

After decades of fieldwork, the author is certain that sacrificial ritual plays an important role in the practice of shamans. It can be said that the sacrifice makes the whole ritual event sacred. The other focus of the present article is the problem of trance, the reality of which has been called into question recently. The article presents an eyewitness account of shamanic trance which indicates that it is a necessary part of the whole ritual, at least among the Daur of Inner Mongolia, Northeast China. In 2003 we filmed a healing ritual in a small village where a Daur and an Evenki shamaness, working together, went into trance several times. Trance is necessary to communicate with the spirits. Furthermore, the trance indicates to participants that the spirit helpers have indeed appeared and that there is hope of recovery for the patient. At this point the gates are open to spiritual experience.

Introduction

Some recent findings in the research on Eurasian shamanism are forcing us to reconsider our earlier views of such cultural phenomena as trance and sacrifice. After accumulating the results of intensive collection and fieldwork, over the last few decades certain researchers have concluded that the sacrificial rite always plays an outstandingly important role in the ritual practice of shamans. This follows from the ideology of shamanism—specifically, from the view that if the balance of the surrounding world is disturbed through, say, illness, lack of children or death, it is the job of the shaman/ess to re-establish that balance. And if one wants something from the spirits, one has to pay them by offering some kind of sacrifice.

Sacrifice can take many forms, from real to symbolic gifts, from verbal to the most gory offerings. It ranges from the simplest offerings of food, through sacrifices of chicken, rooster, dog, sheep, cow, bull, horse and even humans. Naturally, it is the local cultural tradition that decides which elements of this paradigmatic line the shaman will use in a given situation. The type of sacrifice selected is decided by such local considerations and, of course, the financial situation of the clients or community.

All this results in the fact that a “culturally correct” sacrifice, governed by tradition and correctly organized in a “grammatical” sense, has always been a part of the rich cultural world of shamanism. It is the sacrificial rite that makes the entire event sacred. Naturally, the presence of the shaman/ess and their actions, rooted in and enacting ritual tradition, as well as the actual “work” they undertake in a specific situation, are also manifestations of the sacred in the distinguishing moments of ritual time. Since, however, the premises for presenting and conducting the sacrificial rite are determined by those who “commission” the event, this is something that changes all the time, as does the nomadic peoples’ place of residence. Location, however, is less important than the more permanent elements of the rite. Some of these more permanent features are, besides the sacrifice, the song and/or prayer invoking the spirits, and a few important objects among the requisites used by the shaman/ess. These ritual attributes (such as the drum, the stick and certain items of clothing) may be present in some local traditions but are absent in others. Thus, once again, we see that it is the local tradition that needs examination as in detail they can be very different. In other words, there is no general model which is universally applicable to all situations.

It is characteristic of shamanism that it forms a very flexible system and is therefore very easily adapted to the specific setting or occasion. Thus, for example, the rite can be conducted with the participation of one or several shamans, but in their absence the role of head of ceremonies can be assumed by one of the more prestigious members of the extended family or clan. Naturally, this applies only in cases where tradition allows.¹

¹ Cf. Humphrey and Onon 1996: 145.

The Location and the Participants

I visited the town of Hailar in Northeast China in the last week of January, 2003. It was my second trip to this northernmost part of Manchuria, which borders on the eastern corner of the province of Inner Mongolia. The little town of Hailar is notable for the fact that several different ethnic groups live nearby, such as the Bargu Mongolians, two groups of Evenkis known as the Oroch and the Solon, and the Daur. The Daur (or Dahur) ethnic group speak an archaic Mongolian language and live between Hailar and another town, Qiqihar, further to the south. According to the 1990 census they number some 120,000.

Also located in Hailar is the Inner Mongolian Evenki Research Institute, which published a Chinese translation of one of my earlier books.² It was on this occasion that I was invited to visit the area by the head of the institute, with the promise that there would also be the opportunity to do some research. This promise was kept, and on the afternoon of the very first day he took me to see a young shaman of Bargu nationality living in a neighboring village. On the second day of my visit I was taken to see a somewhat older shamaness, also of Mongolian nationality, who lived somewhat further away. When we saw her she was being visited by one of her “students,” as this was the day on which they regularly met.

Early on the third day I was taken to Nantun, a village that has become all but part of Hailar and which is also home to the Evenki regional museum.³ The village has a mixed population of Daur and Evenki people as well as Chinese, who settled later.

When we arrived at the home of the shamaness, who has a reputation as a famous healer, about eight people were waiting to be seen, both outside in the extremely cold winter weather (–27 Celsius) and indoors. As we entered I saw someone pay the shamaness’s assistant and, within

² Hoppál 1993; although the imprint says 2001, it did not in fact appear until late in 2002.

³ The impressive building of this museum was unheated, so it was necessary to keep our overcoats on while visiting the exhibition, which consisted of reconstructions of six shamanic costumes.

less than half an hour, we saw a young girl and a more elderly lady fall into a state of rigid trance under the influence of drumming.⁴

Later, with the help of my local colleagues, I conducted a long interview with the shamaness that lasted almost an hour. Her name is Sichingua, and she is a Daur. She said that she started practising as a shaman in 1999 and showed me photographs of her initiation rite. She said that the spirits of her ancestors had showed her in a dream what she must do. They also told her when and how she should have her initiation rite conducted, instructing her to jump over three fires when the flames were at their highest to demonstrate her power as a shamaness.

During our conversation another of her patients arrived—a young girl. Sichingua drummed over her (pl. 5 a) for a short time before arranging with the girl's mother to visit them next day in their home where she would carry out other healing rituals. I asked through the translator whether we could be present and record the event on video, a request to which she readily agreed. This is the event we are going to describe in the rest of this paper.

Until recently very little information on Daur shamanism was available to researchers. In 1996, however, an excellent monograph was published containing the conversations of Caroline Humphrey with Daur emigré Urgunge Onon, whose reminiscences helped shed light on many details of shamanic tradition (Humphrey and Onon 1996: 251). On the basis of this work, the main characteristics of Daur shamanism can be summarized as follows.

Among the Daur the shaman can only be someone who is blessed with unique capabilities, mainly in healing and in divination from a shoulder blade. An old member of the clan participates as assistant to the shaman, or, rather, as a specialist in certain rites (in which role he is known as *bagchi*). The two are also distinguished by the fact that the shaman is not allowed to hunt because, like him, animals belong to the sky. This prohibition does not extend to the *bagchi*. There are also other specialists (*bunian yadgan*) who, according to the Daur, have functions similar to shamans, such as healers (*otoshi*), bone-setters (*barishi*), midwives (*bariyachi*) and magicians (*kianchi*). *Bagchi* can

⁴ The young Chinese lady translator was looking on rigid with shock as she had never seen anything like this before.

do rain magic which, according to old Turkic sources, is an ancient shamanic activity. Although the Daur consider only one with the label *yadgan* and *otoshi* to be a real shaman, these other specialists play an important part in the life of the community as they participate in the organization and conduct either of everyday life or of festive ritual practices. Each has his or her unique and specialized knowledge, which is required for the proper conduct of rites and for saying the appropriate prayers for whichever deity or helping spirit it is necessary to address. This is also the case with midwives who attend to births, but it is particularly true of the bone-setters (*barishi*), who since childhood have absorbed a knowledge of anatomy as it is a part of this tradition to pass the vocation on from father to son. As bone is the symbol of the national group, this occupation can be seen as a kind of living shamanhood, the more so as these people are also entrusted with performing sacrifices addressed to the heavens if the relevant specialist (the *bagchi*) is not available. After their death shamans are buried on a tree, and it is believed that such a "burial in the sky" signifies that the body is offered up to the heavens.⁵

This rich tradition is, of course, still in the early stages of a revival these days, as Mao's cultural revolution persecuted all previous traditions. Yet, from my observations, the oppression was not as radical as that in the former Soviet Union. Thus it is understandable that, during the ideological thaw of the past decade, the old faith and ritual traditions have undergone something of a renaissance among the ethnic groups. Indeed, it is evident from photographs taken at the time that, since as early as the 1960s, such rituals have been attended by large numbers of people (Guo and Wang 2001: 38–41).

A Description of the Rite: Extracts from the Field Journal

We left our hotel a few minutes after 8 a.m. It was very cold, and a light snow was falling, giving the surroundings a foggy appearance. After nearly missing the minibus that had been sent to pick us up, we spotted it and climbed in. In the minibus Sichingua was accompanied by her husband, Batu, who was going along as chief helper, and Silpaa,

⁵ See Hoppál 2002: 78.

an Evenki shamaness. There was also a very knowledgeable old woman with a paralyzed hand. Later Batu and the old woman were to give me very valuable information during intervals in the ceremony.

After leaving the main road we waited for the crew of the Hailar local television station, which consisted of two cameramen. It would have been good if they had been able to shoot some landscape and village atmosphere, but the ceremony started so soon after we arrived that I barely had time to unpack.

At the edge of the village we had to cross some very rough country to get to the house of the parents of the girl whose treatment Sichingua had agreed to let us film. They could not have been very poor as there were 15 cows and a tractor in the yard. In the house there were two clean rooms, floored with large tiles, but the rest of the house was in a terrible state. One of the rooms was used to kill and skin the sheep—this had a filthy dirt floor that was perfectly suited for the job.

As we discovered, the aim of the ceremony was to remove the illness from this permanently ailing young girl, who was 26 but so thin she looked 16. According to the shamanic approach it is necessary first to offer a sacrifice, which will in turn ensure the success of the procedure that follows, although this can only happen if the shamans are visited by their spirits—in other words, if they enter a trance state.

The ceremony started shortly after we arrived, at about half past nine, with the decorating of the altar. This involved little more than sticking up colorful paper cuttings to cover the large poster adorning the wall. Looking back, I recall an interesting element that did not attract my attention at the time—namely, that the altar was already there when we arrived, along with the *ongons* of the shamaness (or possibly of the local family), which they framed with *hadags*. In front of these were tables richly laden with food. The whole thing had the atmosphere of a Korean shamanic altar—and, of course, Korea is not very far away, at least from a European viewpoint. At any rate, the formula was the following: icons, in front of which were various types of food, piles of fruit and sweets, and in front of these a row of little oil lamps (pl. 5 b). Who had set up this altar before we even arrived? Presumably the people of the house—a Mongolian family who were calling on the help of the Daur shamaness assisted by her Evenki colleague. Nationality is a matter of no importance to them—it seems

it only bothers us. Silpaa, the Evenki shamaness, chanted the blessing and the song in her own language, but nobody seemed to mind. After all, there were the drums, which all speak the same language.

Sichingua, the main shamaness, sat down in a corner and immediately started to drum and sing while the others continued to make the paper cuttings, which created a very Chinese impression. These were stuck to the wall by Sichingua's husband, Batu, and a helper, using sticky tape. While the women were cutting the paper, Batu sprinkled an alcoholic spirit (a kind of Chinese brandy) and milk from three little glasses that stood on the table. Both shamanesses were wearing blue clothes, and they drummed together. After only a minute they switched to a new melody (to be precise, I only noticed this because of a change in the words—the new song began with *deko, deko, dekoya*). By sprinkling the milk on the floor, Batu was performing a libational offering to the local spirits, or more specifically to the spirit master of the house. The drumming lasted barely two minutes, and when Sichingua had finished Silpaa took her drum and continued in the Evenki language, although she sang to the same tune.

In the meantime, Batu offered milk to the heads of the horse-headed sticks and to the rattle on the side of each stick, as if symbolically making them drink. In one photograph I can see that there are Chinese signs on the brass mirror of the Evenki shamaness. Sichingua sits in the background and listens. A woman in a red headscarf (another of the shamaness's helpers) offers milk to the rattles on the drum from a little spoon—so, like the horse, the drum was given something to drink. The woman and Batu gave more drink to the horse-headed sticks (pl. 6 a), including the little suspended arrows, and to the other rattles. In the background others are tearing up silk ribbons and tying them to twigs standing in the corner—they are making a *tooroo*, a sacrificial tree inside the room. This stands to the left of the altar, and in front of it there is a bowl with sweets and biscuits and a pat of butter on a plate. A lovely white silk scarf has been placed on the tree. Also to the left of the altar are two shamanic flags made of paper. While the women go on tearing a large piece of silk into ribbons, the girl waiting to be healed is looking on from the background.

On the left side of the altar were two bottles of local brandy, and oranges, apples and grapes had been placed on a plate, although someone

from the house had added three biscuits. On a second plate there was dried cream cheese, or maybe butter, broken into small triangular pieces. I tasted it but could not decide whether it was butter or cream cheese—at any rate they put some into my milky tea as a special treat! A third plate had eggs on it, presumably boiled,⁶ and a fourth had apples and oranges, and on top some large, dark blue grapes.

On the altar itself were pictures, five in all. In front of the third had been placed eggs, and in front of these 12 small oil lamps in a row in small metal holders with bases. My photos show clearly that these pictures were not the icons of the shamaness but belonged to the local people. In front of the picture on the right, which depicts a figure with a halo sitting by a table, was a dish piled high with dumplings. These were made of a white pastry similar to bread. Also in front of this picture was another dish of fruit—apples and grapes. On the right side of the altar was a large glass of milk and a glass of milky tea as well as three bottles of drink, two of which had been opened. In the meantime someone had lit the oil lamps and the ailing young woman and the shamanic helpers had decorated the little *tooroo* tree with blue, green, red and white ribbons.

Next there was some more drumming. The two shamanesses, still not yet in their shamanic costumes but standing in front of the altar, began to drum and then turned themselves to face each of the four quarters in turn, calling the spirits by drumming in all four directions (pl. 6 *b*). Each then took a horse-headed stick in her right hand, shook it and genuflected in the direction of the altar, passed the stick round behind her back and laid it down. Two minutes later they resumed their drumming.

Meanwhile a sheep was brought in and made to stand in front of the altar, with its head facing the altar. The main shamaness drummed over its head. A male relative held the animal firmly as it made several attempts to walk away before calming down. Once it was settled milk was sprinkled all around its head and along the length of the spine. After this it was smoked with some vegetable powder which smelt of

⁶ This is something else I forgot to ask about. When one is there, trying to focus one's attention on so many things at once, these little details may appear to be obvious and one does not think of asking.

hemp or cannabis. The poor creature was then led away and killed in a neighboring room using the method customary among nomads, i.e. by cutting a hole in its chest and tearing the main arteries leading to the heart. This happened at exactly 10:15 a.m.

There was then a long pause in the proceedings as the sacrificial animal had to be skinned with great care before it could be offered up in front of the altar. The offering was done in several stages. First the sheep's four legs—including the lower leg (which they call *sor*) and hooves—were brought in, tied together by a thin band of skin. A quarter of an hour later the heart, along with some pieces of offal, was placed on a strip of skin that represented the spine. A small china tea dish filled with blood was placed on the altar of the ancestors. Altogether it seemed to me that the ceremony up to this point was addressed mainly to the spirits of the ancestors. The girl who was to be healed appeared in the room from time to time, but the proceedings only focused on her later. More precisely, the impression was that something had to die as a sacrifice before the healing part of the ceremony could begin. In this way the world is made rounded and balanced, and this eternal circulation of offerings and requests ensures the balance.

After at least another 15 minutes (it was still before half past eleven) the skin of the lamb was brought in and placed over the pieces already there. As the meat cooked in the other room, we talked with the old woman with the withered arm. We learned that she too was of Daur nationality, 63 years of age and was called Shu Hui-yin (she only had a Chinese name), and that she was indeed one of Sichingua's helpers as had become clear during the ceremony the previous day. She told us that the large mirror worn on the chest of Daur shamans was there to protect the heart, and the two small mirrors to protect the lungs. The old man (who people had referred to as a *bagchi* the previous day, and who gave us a list of the types and tasks of Daur shamans) told us that there were nine kilogrammes of brass mirror on a shaman's costume. With their glitter these mirrors (*toli*) drive away evil spirits, and the little spinners strengthen the shaman when the spirits come. The ornaments of the dress ("ornament"—what a European notion!) thus act as a protective shield because here we are talking about an actual fight, not simply about winning the favors of the spirits. Talking about the crown, the old man told us that after each successful healing they tie a

new silk scarf to its horns—so it is no wonder that you can hardly see them for all the silk! In the Daur language the cloak is called *chava* and the crown is called *mahel*.

It was still before 11:30 a.m. when they carried in the rest of the sheep, and in the meantime someone had put oil into the little oil lamps.⁷ The freshly cooked mutton was steaming away, and once in the room the individual parts were most carefully assembled so that the body was reconstructed in an anatomically correct fashion. When this had been done, a smoking dish was brought in—this consisted of a tin basin full of embers over which were sprinkled dried herbs (*artis*) from time to time.

Now, at last, the main shamaness began to don her costume and to sing in a very strong, sharp voice. She put on, or rather hung round her neck, her large, heart-shaped mirror. In the meantime her husband smoked the shamanic cloak. This was made of leather and was truly heavy with all the metal mirrors that hung from it. The purging of this garment by smoking took place amid a terrible rattling from the mirrors. Two women helped Sichingua to get dressed—for example, the old lady with the withered arm took her plaited hair out from under the cloak and another woman helped her into the sleeves. When Sichingua had put on the second sleeve, which was quite tight (she may have put on some weight), she began to flap her arms up and down to the rhythm of the music as though she wanted to fly.⁸ Batu attached a shoulder ornament to the cloak, an ornament that was decorated with three rows of cowry shells both front and back, while also on the back was some attractive and colorful embroidery on black velvet.⁹ While they were adjusting the cloak and tying it up, the shamaness continued to flap with her arms. The crown was placed on her head, and when she sang the rattling produced by the brass mirrors as she flapped her arms provided a dramatic accompaniment to her singing. They then

⁷ At this time there was relative quiet for a while, so I shot some footage of the altar, the lamps, the icons and the sacrificial drinks to cut in for the periods when they sang facing the altar.

⁸ These observations would have been impossible to remember without the video as so many things were happening at once.

⁹ Of course I did not take a photo of the back! The cowry shells, 156 in all, were stitched on in a triangular shape.

began to dress the Evenki shamaness, who sang the same tune but with different words. While she was being dressed, Sichingua stood to one side by the door. Outside the door, among other members of the family in the “front hall,” there stood a young boy holding a large, shiny radio-tape recorder in his arms and lap waiting to record the shamanic rite.¹⁰

Silpaa, the Evenki shamaness, also had a male helper who dressed her and, as the last accessory, tied a green silk belt around her waist. This preparatory phase of readying the shamanesses was completed by the helpers smoking their drums. The two women then turned to face the altar and began to sing and drum (pl. 7 *a*). Behind each, holding her belt, stood her male helper.

After barely two minutes of drumming and singing, the large Daur shamaness collapsed and rolled on the ground. Batu had a job holding her down, and it was with some difficulty that they got her to sit on a stool. Watching the film again, it seems as if Batu was rolling her on the ground—the large body rolling left and right—and then the two men tried to lift her and sit her up. One of the female helpers took the drum from her hand to prevent damage and the other helped with lifting her on to the stool. The old lady with the withered arm brought the tin smoking dish and held it close to help with the smoke. The shamaness’s eyes were closed, her face distorted, and she was snarling and clacking her teeth together (pl. 7 *b*), breathing in and out heavily. They gave her the drum and she began to drum, which seemed to soothe her somewhat. The entire trance scene lasted exactly one minute! Next they took the crown off her head and she began a new tune, which Batu sang along with her. By this time the sick girl had been brought to kneel in front of her, facing the altar. Her mother knelt by her, and then the father, too, was called to come and kneel down with them.¹¹ We had to admit that it was all very impressive and, however brief, a moving experience—particularly for those actually in trouble, but also for the onlooker!

¹⁰ There was hardly enough space for us in the room as, beside Batu and the two cameramen, there was another female helper and another woman of around 30 who went into trance later. She, too, had come with the shamaness in the minibus.

¹¹ Needless to say, the video tape ran out at this dramatic moment in the ritual.

In the meantime Sichingua was given a drink from a small cup. The first drink she was offered, directly after the trance, appeared to be milk, but the second drink was vodka. Batu was holding her belt and appeared to be translating the words of the song to the family, who were kneeling there on the stone floor with tears running down their faces. The mother and the daughter were equally touched, and the father, too, was clearly deeply moved. All three bowed right down to the ground in front of the shamaness. The shamaness sang on in a tearful-sounding voice and the helpers seemed to be making gestures of approval. The poor young woman just went on crying and nodding. The mother lifted her hands, folded in prayer, to her forehead and bowed to the ground.

After a little less than seven minutes of singing mingled with crying, the shamaness suddenly cast her drum away and threw herself back, rigid. Her husband and helper had to stand behind her to stop her jumping up, which she tried to do repeatedly, and they had a job keeping the stool under her. The Evenki woman's helper assisted.

Sichingua had not opened her eyes during almost the entire rite, and that was how she sang—with eyes closed. From time to time Silpaa's helper shook the lower parts of her cloak, which were heavily laden with rattles. Now, after this last episode, she was panting and crying, but she continued her singing, and the girl and the mother were looking scared, listening to the song and the slow drumming. Batu was talking all the time, translating and giving approval. At the end of one of the verses of the song, when Sichingua said something with great anger, the helper shook the bottom of her cloak vigorously, possibly in an attempt to reduce the tension.¹²

While the shamaness, now almost sobbing, went on with her singing, others were wiping away her tears and the sweat from her forehead. Batu, standing behind her, kept up his translation. The family, kneeling and bowing, was completely under the sway of the events, and a young female member of the family was recording the whole thing with a large, hand-held tape recorder. I was told that this was the phase when

¹² This song, after the trance, lasted another six or seven minutes but seemed to be much longer. Striking as it was, done in the morning, one can imagine how dramatic it must have been in the old days when it the ritual was carried out in the evening by firelight.

the shamaness gave the family orders and advice on what had to be done. The song had been going on for about fifteen minutes when suddenly the telephone rang in the background. This did not confuse the shamaness, although she did pause for a while.

A young male member of the family was called in to join the proceedings and kneel down to listen to the song. By now Sichingua, her eyes still closed, had kept up her singing for almost half an hour, and at this point she went into a third trance. Afterwards, when they sat her down again, she gave forth huge, heaving burps, as though about to vomit. Her head dropped to one side, and they sat her down in a corner, totally faint. There she leaned against the wall in a state of utter exhaustion and was given water.

Now the Evenki shamaness took up the drumming and singing. She was in full ornamental costume, with her young male helper standing behind and holding her belt. She had hardly been singing for a minute when she began to lurch around, first throwing herself backwards in wild spasms that continued for about 20 seconds, and then going rigid. The helpers put the stool under her and sat her down. Like Sichingua she kept her eyes closed the whole time, and when they placed the horse-headed sticks into her hands, which were clasping as if in a cramp, her fingers had to be forced open and placed on the stick. She was quite evidently not conscious, for they took the stick from her hands and gave her the bells at the bottom of her costume, which she began to shake (pl. 8). Eyes closed, she went on singing and the others sang along with her. In the background Sichingua remained leaning against the wall, exhausted. She was shaking her little bells and saying something in a recitative voice that the others—to judge from their tone—heard with approval. The members of the household listened to her on their knees, and gave a full drinking cup to the ailing daughter, and it was she who presented the drink, presumably something strong, to Silpaa, the Evenki shamaness.¹³

A few minutes later the Evenki shamaness rose from her chair and, holding both red-painted horse-headed sticks in her right hand, shook them while bowing down deeply. She was evidently not quite back to a

¹³ I noticed that the shamanesses did not—or were not allowed to—touch the drinking vessel. At any rate it is not easy to drink this way as they have to use their lips to hold a small semicircular china dish.

normal state of consciousness. In her corner Sichingua, probably on seeing this, set up a strong, fast drumming. Silpaa sat down on a chair, and now a third young woman, wearing blue Mongolian dress and, like the others, a green silk belt around her waist, stood between the two shamanesses. This woman was a student and assistant of the Daur shamaness, and now we could see that Sichingua's drumming was for her. Although she was quite tall, the chief shamaness lifted her drum high and, eyes still shut, drummed at the head of the young woman, who stood there with her own eyes closed, Batu behind her holding her belt. The girl started to shake her head to the sound of the drumming and quite quickly, in barely half a minute, went into a trance.¹⁴ As she did so she began to sing, and then to jump, the man holding her firmly by her belt. She threw herself back and went quite stiff. Two helpers—the woman with the withered arm and another with a red scarf who served through the entire ritual—sang, then brought in the smoking dish and forced the horse-headed sticks into the woman's hand before sitting her down. The young woman leaned forward in a spasmic fashion, and when she lifted her head you could see that she was crying so much she could not speak. Eyes tight shut and with gritted teeth, she sobbed loudly and painfully. In the meantime Sichingua, standing over her, continued her drumming. She too seemed to be crying. She drummed more softly, and then more strongly, but nothing seemed to soothe the painful sobs of the student shamaness. The others sang along, but still the crying did not abate, so they shook the sticks in the woman's hands, placed the smoker at her feet, and finally the Daur woman put her drum on her lap to calm her down.¹⁵

After this stage Sichingua went to stand in front of the altar where, in full outfit, crown on her head, she resumed her drumming. After a few verses of song those present began to shout "hurray," holding their hands parallel and moving them in a circle in front of their bodies. They repeated the call "hurray" seven times over, the shamaness always being first to make the call as the last word of the verse. Throughout the proceedings it was very evident that she was the leader of the

¹⁴ It is almost incredible that this was possible in so short a time.

¹⁵ This woman appears to have come to practise trance. I cannot think of any other reason for her presence.

ceremony, but it was also clear how the helpers acted in accord with her and how they helped to move those present around to make sure they did the right thing at the right time.

In the meantime the Evenki shamaness had also put on her crown and went to stand alongside the Daur shamaness at the altar. Facing the altar, they started to sing the song that goes *deko, deko, dekoa*, which has a good, strong rhythm. The master of the house tied a long blue *hadag* to one horn of each shamaness's crown.¹⁶ Standing behind them the two helpers each held, clasped together in their right hand, two horse-headed sticks. The song and the drumming lasted just under seven minutes. When this was over the Daur shamaness stuck the drumstick behind the leather straps which she used to hold the drum and, holding the drum in both hands, banged it against her knees, starting on the left-hand side and progressing towards the right. She moved on upwards like this, inching her way up over her thighs and finishing on the large mirror over her stomach. Then she worked downwards again, then up again, and after the third round declared the ceremony finished. At this Batu stood in front of her and took off her crown. The other man unbuttoned her collar, and together the two men took the heavy cloak off her. After first thoroughly smoking it, they folded it up with care. One could see that the shamaness's hair was very frazzled and sweaty.

When she had finished drumming, the Evenki shamaness banged the drum against her person exactly as the other shamaness had done, but more briefly. She too was smoked, the lady with the withered hand carrying the smoker around. She passed the two horse-headed sticks around her back as at the beginning of the ceremony and, after each circle of her body, she held the sticks in her right hand and, leaning on them, bowed in the direction of the altar or acted as though she was about to kneel before it, although she never actually did so. Eventually, the helpers removed her cloak, too, amid rattling and ringing noises. The amount of smoke in the room was increasing all the time, and there was constant coughing in the background.

¹⁶ This is a point at which it would have been useful to have both cameras running as we could see more clearly what actually happened.

The people of the house—including the girl for whose sake all these shamanic bells had tolled—stood quietly by the door, appearing confused at this abrupt end to the ceremony. It was just past one o'clock in the afternoon.

Trance—The Thing That Is Not or the Thing That Is Needed

In the last few years a debate has emerged concerning the importance of trance or ecstasy—and even its mere existence—within shamanism. The question emerged partly because the title of Mircea Eliade's book¹⁷ quite provocatively implied that ecstasy (in other words, trance) is the determining element in the group of cultural phenomena which we term shamanism. In 1993 this claim was criticized by Roberte Hamayon, a professor at the Sorbonne, at the conference on shamanism held in Budapest. Her point of departure was that trance and ecstasy were indefinable concepts—"irrelevant to anthropological analysis" (Hamayon 1993: 4, 6, 18)—and therefore it was time to abandon this methodologically empty category. The French researcher's attitude is partly understandable in that her field experiences in Siberia and Mongolia from the 1970s gave her grounds for reaching such a conclusion, as this was a time when trance had almost entirely disappeared from shamanic ritual and was thus of very little importance. I should note that my own experiences in the 1980s and 1990s led me to a similar opinion. The very short phase of an altered state of consciousness, which did not even appear to be particularly deep, led me to consider this element of the shamanic tradition to be a purely symbolic element. What Hamayon considered to be the most important element of the shamanic rite was the act of symbolic exchange (Hamayon 1990) whereby, in return for the prey he or she has hunted, the shaman has to marry the protective spirit of the game they have killed.

The model of shamanism constructed from elements of French rationalism fits the action of hunting pragmatically and symbolically, but it is less applicable in the case of healing. The Paris professor considers the activity of shamans to be a collective enterprise whereby, through

¹⁷ Eliade 1964. The French original was published in 1951 and the Hungarian translation, eventually, in 2001.

his activity, the shaman wishes to exert influence on the world surrounding him or them. In this model we see the functioning of a coherent symbolic system in which shamanism is not so much a religion as a socially controlled method for experiencing the spiritual (Hamayon 1998: 184–185).

However convincing we may find Hamayon's reasoning, what I witnessed at this healing rite in January 2003 provides a convincing demonstration that trance—at least in this particular culture—is not an element that a Daur shaman can ignore or do without. By talking to shamans I learnt that trance is necessary in order to communicate with the spirits in the interest of the patient during the time of the altered state of mind. Moreover, the trance indicates to participants that the spirit helpers have indeed appeared and that there is hope of recovery. Through the shaman's contacting the spirits the gates are opened to spiritual experience, and this experience is necessary—as an underpinning to belief and credibility—both for the shaman and for the patient.

The fact that the Daur shamaness went into a trance three times indicates that she wanted to secure a positive result. This would be true whether the trance was symbolic or real, but the pain evident in her tortured expression certainly seems to suggest the latter. As the locals told me, with the appearance of the spirits, the trance indicates that something has taken place on the level of ritual communication. There can be little doubt that this is what the chief shamaness wished to have confirmed by agreeing to our presence, with a film crew, at the ceremony. It was through her loss of consciousness and spasmodic body movements that the shamaness demonstrated that she had entered a state of trance and was making contact with the spirits. Successful communication, in its turn, was represented by the advice, commands and recommendations that were subsequently announced in song.

I would not claim that there were no theatrical elements in the trances of the Daur shamaness and her student, or of the Evenki shamaness, but after the clearly visible spasms of trance, recorded on video, we can no longer deny the existence of these ritual behaviors. In their state of cultural isolation, the Evenkis and Daurs living in China have retained phenomena of archaic shamanism that no longer exist in other places.

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Shaman Dolls: On North American–Siberian Cultural Typology

ALEXANDRA A. MALONEY

ANCHORAGE, AK

Focus here is on one of the most interesting ceremonial objects used by Siberian and North American shamans: shaman dolls. Although names for this phenomenon differ among particular cultures, intriguing resemblances are found among Navajo, North Athabaskan and Ket wooden figurines in physical image, symbolism, and function. Their generalized function could be characterized as established for the Navajo figurines “communicative offerings with the power of exorcism” (Kelly et al. 1972: 14). The tradition of the shaman doll as guardian, helper, and healer is realized in different forms that could be linked together as cultural typology of the North, or even possibly as an ancient universal feature.

Acknowledgements

The research on North American–Siberian comparison in linguistics and cultural anthropology began during my Fulbright Scholarship in 2001 at Western Washington University, Bellingham, Washington, U.S.A., under the patronage of Professor Edward Vajda, American linguist and passionate admirer of the Ket language, one of the most mysterious languages in the world. At that time, working with sources of American Indian languages and cultures, and visiting local Indian groups, I was impressed by the many similarities between North American and Siberian Indigenous cultures, and by evidences of common features in Na-Dene and Yeniseian languages.

A year later my destiny gave me a chance to continue this exciting comparison being invited by Dr. James McNeley to work on the anthropological research project, “A Pilot Study for Exploring Cultural Relationships between Asian and North American Cultures,” under the fi-

nancial support of Diné College (Navajo Nation, Tsaile, Arizona), and in affiliation with the University of Alaska Anchorage, U.S.A.

The purpose of this pilot study was to gather, analyze, and document evidence of historical, ethnographic and linguistic similarities and differences between the Athabaskan–Eyak–Tlingit (AET)-speaking peoples of Northwest North America, on the one hand, and the Yeniseian-speaking peoples of Central Siberia, on the other hand. The study arises from proposals recently advanced to the effect that the AET and the Yeniseian language family, of whom only the Ket remains, are genetically related and built once a common Dene-family after the derived word ‘people’ in Athabaskan and Yeniseian: Navajo *tiné* ‘the people’ < *ti* ‘thematic prefix’ + *né* ‘people’ vs. Ket *de?η* ‘people’ < *d* ‘thematic prefix’ + *in* ‘person’ + *η* ‘collective plural suffix’ (Vajda 2002, notes). In view of recent comparative studies on AET and Yeniseian verb morphology, tone development, and lexical cognates (Ruhlen 1998; Vajda 2000, 2001), the comparison of cultural domains is turning to urgent necessity. Both ethnic groupings share the same cultural type characteristic to northern hunter and gatherer societies but only detailed comparison could show whether particular cultural elements could be linked together supporting hypotheses of genetic relationship proposed through linguistic methods. Among lexical cognates between AET and Yeniseian, there are two related to shamanism: shaman and shaman’s drum.

According to Janhunen (1986: 105), the Yeniseian languages have an old indigenous appellation for ‘shaman,’ Proto-Yeniseic **sen(-)*: Ket *šenəη* ‘shaman,’ *šenam* ‘female shaman,’ Yug *šenəη* ‘shaman,’ Kott *še:nəη* ‘shamanism,’ *še:nəη-xit* ‘shaman.’ Further connections of the root **sen(-)* to any other shamanistic term recorded from the Siberian languages Janhunen (1986: 105) calls “futile.” However a long distance cognate of this Ket root seems possible. Vajda reconstructs the Pre-Proto-Yeniseian root as **xen* ‘magic,’ and he supposes that the Yeniseian root *sen-* appears to have an Athabaskan cognate, cf. Ahtna *sen* ‘spiritual power,’ Koyukon *sen* ‘shamanistic power,’ and *-yen, -sen* ‘be a shaman’ (Vajda 2002, notes).

The Yeniseian languages also have a word of their own for ‘shaman’s drum,’ Ket *xas*, Yug *fas*, Kot *feš*, a probable reconstruction is given by Janhunen (1986: 105–111): Proto-Yeniseic **pä*. From the latter are

derived the terms for ‘drumstick’: Ket *xadbul*, Yug *fadbil*, with **bul* ‘foot,’ Kott *faytuŋ*. On the basis of these data it seems possible to establish a root **pā(-)* with the meaning ‘shamans’s drum.’ Except Proto-Samoyedic **pe(-)* ‘shaman’s drum’ Janhunen denied other candidate terms for cross cultural comparison, cf. Mongolic *kece*, Khalkha *xec*, Buryat *xese* ‘shaman’s drum,’ Nivkh *q’as/-xas* ‘shaman’s drum,’ *q’as-cas/-xas-cas* ‘drumstick’ with *-cas* ‘beater’ (1986: 111).

Vajda (2002: notes) suggested the Pre-Proto-Yeniseian reconstruction as *χas*, cf. Ahtna Athabaskan *ka:s* (< **gaas*) ‘drum,’ Eyak *gau*, *qah-k*, Tlingit *ka:w* ‘drum’ (Kari 1990; Storey 1976; Krause 1976: 241), so Yeniseian **pās* and AET **xās* could be viewed as hypothetical Yeniseian–AET cognates although without firmer evidence of a genetic link between Yeniseian and AET it is not possible to verify this assumption.

The comparative linguistic data present a challenge to comparative ethnologists because two linguistically related groups of peoples could also share common elements in their cultures, social structures, and industrial activities. Tracing the cultural background of native Siberian and North American peoples, many similar features in shamanism could be discovered. Many scholars pointed out some of these similarities since first complex publications on North American and North Asian cultures (Graves 1994; Hultkrantz 1996; McKennan 1959). The comparative study of cultural features of the Athabaskan and the Ket revealed certain common typology¹ in the field of shamanism, which, according to the classical study by Åke Hultkrantz “Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism,” may find explanations on the historical ground. Hultkrantz indicates that it is evident that shamanism is deeply anchored in the old hunting cultures with their individualism, animal-spirit beliefs and hunting symbolism (1996: 25–26). He pointed out that shamanism must be regarded as “a continuous historical complex”:

. . . . shamanism must be regarded as a continuous historical complex. Until recent times it has existed in three interrelated areas, South America, North

¹ Under cultural typology we understand after the definition of linguistic typology the classification of culturally significant components based on shared formal characteristics. Like linguistic typology, cultural typology utilizes cross-cultural comparison; classifies components of culture; examines formal features of culture (cf. Whaley 1997).

America and Northern Eurasia (with Central Asia), and in isolated fields as South-East Asia, Australia, and Oceania. There is reason to believe that these isolated fields were once in contact with the Northern Eurasian shamanism. (1996: 26) . . . The American cultures may indeed be considered an offshoot of the old Arctic hunting cultures." (1966: 26) . . . "North American shamanism is very close to the Siberian shamanism and could without doubt be regarded as an attenuated prolongation of the latter. Moreover, in its northernmost and northwestern parts, it has achieved an intensity which closely parallels Siberian shamanism. (Hultkrantz 1996: 27)

One of universal shamanistic paraphernalia seems to be anthropomorphic images. They were called "idols," "devil dolls," "spirits," "shaman dolls," etc. The tradition using this kind of human figurines as guardian, helper, and healer in North America and Siberia could be linked together as cultural typology of the North, or even possibly as an ancient cultural cognate. The aim of this paper is to observe sources describing this tradition among Na-Dene and Yeniseian speakers.

Physical Image

The Navajo, the Athabaskan-speaking peoples of the Southwest, have long practiced the tradition of carved-wood ceremonial figurines. The main source on information of Navajo figurines is a publication of Kelly et al. (1972), "Navaho Figurines Called Dolls."

These stylized human images are usually roughly hand-carved from a single flat or cylindrical branch of pine, cottonwood, or piñon. They exhibit a wide variety in anatomical features, size, workmanship, and other characteristics. Neck, shoulder, and head areas are often shown by simple rounding or flattening of surfaces by whittling and smoothing; sometimes these areas are squared as in some drypainted portrayals of anthropomorphic supernaturals. Generally, the face is flattened while the head and neck are rounded. Facial features may be made by shallow cut grooves, small twisted knife-point holes (shallow, hollowed-out places), low relief carving, or paint, but they occur only on about half of the study collection of eighty-one examples. Many figurines have arms indicated by incised or painted parallel lines along the side of the body, and are usually shown bent over the midsection. . . . Buttocks, calves, and feet are usually blocky, angular protuberances which may be badly propor-

tioned. Fingers are rarely indicated, toes never. Legs are often separated by saw cuts and whittling but several specimens show only deep grooves between joined straight legs. . . .

Total length of the figurines varies from a little less than 10 cm. (4 inches) to slightly more than 30 cm. (12 inches), . . . Most figurines are between 2 to 5 cm. wide (1 to 2 inches) and 2 to 4 cm. (1 to 2 inches) thick.

The entire group may be divided into two categories: a “jeweled” type (53 examples) and a “plain,” or non-jeweled, type (20 figures). Two figurines were weathered to the point of effacing any jewel holes which may have been present, while six examples were questionable due to weathering. These symbolic holes with stone, shell, bead, or turquoise inserts are usually made by twisting or gouging with a knife point. (Kelly et al. 1972: 14–15)

The plain figurines are often simpler in form than the others but are undoubtedly part of the same ceremonial complex. . . .

A small number of figurines, both jeweled and plain, have been discovered with cloth wrappings, or “shawls” (11 exemplars), prayersticks (5 specimens), or other ceremonial materials. (Kelly et al. 1972: 16, see pl. 9 *a, b, c*)

The corresponding human wooden images are briefly described in the Northern Athabaskan culture. According to Mousalimas (1989: 312), “small dolls in human form and in animal form were made by Dena’ina, Chugach, Eyak, and Tlingit shamans.” The researcher of Tlingit shamanism, Rosita Worl, mentioned “shaman dolls” among Tlingit ritual objects (1996: 27). Cornelius Osgood who did the summer research in 1931 on the Northern Athabaskan Indians observed wooden human figurines of Dena’ina shamans, “devil dolls,” and described their physical appearance as “carved in the form of a miniature human figure.” The size could vary, since “little” shamans used only very small images. The shamans themselves carved the “dolls” and in some cases they were dressed in complete clothing of caribou skin (Osgood 1966: 179). Plate 9 *d* demonstrates a pretty recent Dena’ina figurine (photograph from Osgood 1966).

There is evidence that Koyukon Athabaskan Indians knew of similar shamanistic paraphernalia. In the Koyukon Athabaskan Dictionary, based on materials of Jules Jétté collected in the early 19th century and Eliza Jones’ knowledge of her mother tongue, there is a word *gook* ‘baby, doll, carved image’ that is “used by medicine men”; in the

Upper Koyukon dialect the word often designates rudely carved images, used by medicine men (Jétté and Jones 2000: 194).

The Ket people, the only surviving Yeniseian speaking ethnic group in Central Siberia, have at least three kinds of wooden sculpture in human image. The Ket shamans possessed figurines called *kitats'* (Aleksenko 1981: 176). One of such images was purchased in 1914 and attributed at Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St. Petersburg (Ivanov 1970: 130). Unfortunately, there are no detailed descriptions of the functions of shamans' wooden images. They were found in special shaman boxes *kossul* made in the form of miniature sledges. Those images looked similar to the other wooden image called *alel*, *alal*, or *alalt*. The latter shows parallels in physical image and in functions with the noted Athabaskan images. The Ket wooden anthropomorphic images *alels* were regarded as domestic guardians who assist the home and the hearth. Information about the *alel* is presented in publications of Anuchin (1914) and Aleksenko (1967, 1971, 1971a, 1977, 1981, 1984, 1996).

The Ket peoples considered the *alels* as female creatures and often called them "granny." They usually made *alel* from cedar (Siberian pine), but sometimes stones of special form were used. These images were about 15–30 cm high. They had big flat faces and small slim bodies. They didn't have normal arms, but they always had legs and feet. The nose and the mouth were carved. The eyes were made from beads. The face was often painted with okra. The forehead and cheeks of one *alel* in the collection of Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St. Petersburg were decorated of thin copper plates. The head (except the face) and the body were pasted over with fur (squirrel, sable, wolverine, bear). The contour of the face was pasted over with beads. Aleksenko proposes that this fur covering derives from ancient clothing. This kind of clothing doesn't agree with Ket traditional clothing, which doesn't include this high-necked kind of parka with a hood. This phenomenon is considered a mysterious fact because the Kets adopted their present fur clothing from their northern neighbors. The figurines of *alel* were wrapped up with cloth, beads and bead-decorated belts. Usually, *alel* have fur clothing as underwear, and the traditional fabric clothing, or just a piece of fabric instead, over it (Anuchin 1914:

86–87; Alekseenko 1971: 51). Plate 10 (*a, b, c*) demonstrates Ket images (photograph courtesy of Dr. Edward Vajda).

Ceremonial Functions

According to Kelly et al., Navajo human figurines were used in separate ceremonies, so-called “enemy’s *ye’ íí* rite.” The Navajos believe that illness may be caused by inadvertently behaving in a manner prohibited by supernatural sanctions, and that such human mistakes must be ceremonially corrected.

During the remaking ceremony the baby figurine is animated through song and prayer, and by the introduction of semiprecious stones, shell fragments and beads, and an eagle feather into its wooden body. Thus given “motion,” it is capable of carrying away the infecting element, which has been exorcised out of the body of the patient and drawn into its own. This function is explicit in prayer patterns of the rite and the actions of the participants, that is, pressing of the baby figurine against a patient’s body from the soles of his feet to the top of his head, followed by a motion in which the figurine is held toward the *hogan* (house) door. . . . Once made and deposited the figurine is no longer a thing of men, but a property of the supernatural. Due to this condition and to its absorption of contagion, the figurine can be a focus of potential illness and is strictly avoided by those aware of its nature and whereabouts. (Kelly et al. 1972: 59–60)

No one is supposed to take the figurines away, and children never play with them. John Walters stated that “you are likely be bothered in the same place you hurt the doll.” To damage the figurine or steal it means a big harm for the family: the concept of “like will produce like.” (Kelly et al. 1972: 61) . . . The figure is often made as part of curing practices for children, and sometimes adults as well. The figurine was kept in the “home’s rear corner, . . . at the fireside.” [actual reference is to main support beam] (Kelly et al. 1972: 50, 40).

According to the old Dena’ina beliefs, “. . . the novice shaman had a doll, and when his spirit was out of his body, the doll temporarily housed his spirit [so he would not die]. When he returned to his body, he became his normal self again.” (Kalifornsky 1991: 13)

Cornelius Osgood gave the following information about the functions of Dena'ina "devil dolls":

The shamans themselves carve the "dolls" and in some cases they are dressed in complete clothing of caribou skin. These "dolls," like everything else, are animated, and when at night the occupants of the house are fast asleep, the "dolls" run around and play. At the first ray of dawn, however, the "dolls" fall down and one looking at them in the daylight sees no appearance of life at all.

The "devil dolls" are one of the most important means of extracting the evil spirit from an afflicted person. When a shaman is called upon to save a patient in serious condition, he darkens the room and begins to dance to the accompaniment of a drum, holding the "doll" close to his breast. At the very height of the ceremony, when the drumming is deafening and the shaman ecstatic with emotion, he suddenly thrusts the "devil doll" at the patient. When the noise has died away and the shaman sinks in exhaustion to the ground, the "devil doll" has disappeared. It can have gone no place, it is said, but into the body of that one for whom the performance was being made.

On the following night, the shaman comes again to the same house and dances in a mad fury while his assistants pound wooden pestles heavily on the drum boards. Again at the climax of the proceeding, the shaman thrusts his hands at the patient's chest. When he has finished, the "devil doll" is once more clasped in his arms, having returned from the body of the sick person whose evil tormentor has been forced by the superior power of the "doll" to evacuate its victim. The patient, of course, arises almost immediately with renewed health but still weak from the shock of the spirit's battle.

Sometimes the "devil doll" is defeated because of inferior power and the case proves hopeless unless a more powerful doctor can be found. (Osgood 1966: 179)

According to Mousalimas (1989: 312), Dena'ina, Chugach, Eyak, and Tlingit shamans used wooden human figurines in the ceremonies to extract the sources of illness from patients. During a shaman's performance, a doll might act according to its shape: that is, a bird-form by flying, a halibut-form by leaping, and a human-form by walking. Shamans claimed they could send their spirits into such dolls at will.

It was known that the Ket accepted the *alel* as a female spirit of the earth, and her mistress was a female deity of the underworld—evil Hosedam, which provided shamans with the spirit of the *alel*, so that

the shaman was able later to insert this spirit into the wooden images made by people (Alekseenko 1984: 58–65).

The *alel* was kept in a birch bark box in the sacred part of the tent, behind the fireplace. In the daytime the *alel* slept, but at night wandered in the tent, cleaned, turned out evil spirits, cherished children, and watched the fire. She helped the hostess perform women's jobs: sewed, spun, etc. The *alel* used to be knowledgeable about the past and the future of her hosts. If the person made a new *alel*, the shaman was invited to install a spirit into the body of the wooden figurine. Usually, the *alel* was passed on from one generation to another, guaranteeing the continuity of the family (traditionally from the father to the youngest son) (Anuchin, 1914: 84–87).

The *alel* was connected with Ket shamanism. The shamans or the sorcerers (*bangos*) kept in touch with all *alels* and advised people about the time of changing clothing, or of offering gifts (Anuchin 1914: 84–87). The *alel* seemed also to be a helper of the shamans of the category *kandelok* "associated with the principal spirit of Earth." The shaman used the *alel* as ceremonial paraphernalia too (Alekseenko 1996: 39). There was a ceremony of changing the clothing of the *alel*. The shaman prepared this ceremony and informed all members of community about it. He said, "Granny [*alel*] wants to change her clothing." The elder women and the relatives of *alel*'s owner gathered in one tent to sew clothing. At the day of putting on of new clothing, all the people gathered in one tent. They brought food to feed the *alel* and put this food in front of the *alel* first; then they ate it by themselves. The girls brought gifts for the *alel*: beads, ribbons, clothes, and rings. The women asked the *alel* for children, health etc. The *alel* helped women in childbirth and in bringing up children (Alekseenko 1971: 269).

The functions of the *alel* included protection of the house and the family from evil spirits and bad luck. There was a story about one *alel* that rescued furs in a burning tent. There was a special connection between the *alel* and members of the family. If someone felt pain, people watched the *alel*. For example, if the *alel* may have lost a bead from her eye someone felt pain in his or her eye. The shaman used the *alel* in healing advising to put *alal*'s clothing items or beads on a

patient's wound or body part that was hurt (Anuchin 1914: 84–87; Alekseenko 1977: 58).

All family members could use the *alel* for predictions: they threw the doll up, and if it fell face up it was a good sign. Every family tried to treat the *alel* in the best way they could: fed her the best food, dressed her, kept her in the sacred (clean) part of the tent, offered her beads, ribbons, cloth, rings, and other gifts (Anuchin 1914: 84–87).

It seems that the notion of *alel* in Ket culture was broader and included not only wooden figurines but many other artifacts: skin of flying squirrel, skin of squirrels of unusual color, figures of birds, and anthropomorphic stone images (Alekseenko 1971: 270).

Appellations

In Navajo the term *alileeh* is used to refer to supernatural power in general; '*álúl*, 'magic, legerdemain, ceremonial paraphernalia, ceremonial rite (*be' álúl*)'; '*awééshchíín 'análnééh* 'reproduction of the doll figurine' (Kelly et al. 1972: 40).

It is tough to establish the original term for wooden figurines in Northern Athabaskan groups because of their euphemistic substitutes; e.g., Koyukon Athabaskan *gook* 'baby, doll, carved image used by medicine men' (Jétté and Jones 2000: 194); Dean'ina *k'enin'a / hnina* 'medicine doll,' cf. *qwninal hnina lqquya* 'doll' (Kari 1977: 240, 242).

The Ket term *alel* seems to be of Yeniseian origin. The Ket term *alel* 'idol (home, wooden, small)' and the Tas Selkup term *aqlalta* 'home idol (in the shape of a wood doll with bead-like eyes)' were linked together (Helimski 1982: 238). However, the Selkup word is not present in the southern Selkup dialect area; therefore only Ket could be the donor language. Helimski argues convincingly that this word came into Ket and Turukhan Selkup from Evenki (Helimski 1982: 239). This idea could be questioned because Ket *alel* was estimated as a very archaic phenomenon. Alekseenko traced *alel* tradition to ancient time with other ancient cultural phenomena like cult of Mothers of Nature (Earth, Fire, etc.). The cult of *alel* existed evidently independent of shamanism, later phenomena (Alekseenko, 1971: 271). Alekseenko suggested that the word element *il-/al-* could be explained from the Ket language as 'belonging to the earth' (Alekseenko 1984: 53–54).

American–Siberian Typology

Images like Athabaskan “devil dolls” or Ket *alel* were common for other Indigenous North American and Siberian people.

There was presented the idea of cultural Hopi inspiration on Navajo doll tradition. However the preliminary study of the Hopi ceremonial human images (*kachina*) shows significant differences. The term *kachina* can be applied to spiritual beings central to Hopi religious life as well as to the dolls that depict them (McManis 2000: 5). A *kachina*, meaning spirit-father, is a supernatural being who represents the power of an ancestral spirit capable of acting for good or evil. The *kachina* spirits visit the Hopi villages during the first half of every year to bring gifts and dance for rain. The *kachina* spirits are believed to live in the mountains of Arizona, where they sleep during the warm season, until the time of the winter solstice in December, when they visit the Hopi villages. The purpose of their visit every year is to bring the rains that help the crops grow. During the *kachina* ceremonies the performers present the covered wooden dolls to the Hopi children. Hopi men covered *kachina* dolls from the root of the cottonwood tree. The doll is not just a toy, but is a part of the religious education of the children. The doll teaches *kachina* recognition and acts as a constant reminder of *kachina* importance (Hanauer 1970: 9–24). In spite of their neighboring location and many Hopi cultural penetrations into Navajo culture the tradition of the doll ceremony in Navajo shows much greater similarity to northern Na-Dane representatives and indigenous people of adjacent northern territories than to their southern neighbors.

The tradition of making dolls has been practiced by Alaskan Eskimos for as least two thousand years. Figurines of the Okvic culture represent the oldest (300 B.C.) doll-form carved of walrus ivory. The Eskimo elders remember that only shamens had dolls (Fair 1999: 46). The northern-most Yup’ik shamans kept them secretly, hiding them in isolated places and consulting them as oracles. Central and western Aleutian Island shamans surreptitiously made human-sized dolls to carry out deeds. Self-animating, these dolls could, after doing the shaman’s deeds, act of their own volition, even bringing destruction to whole lineages. They were therefore dangerous and local norms prohibited them, but as Venjaminov wrote, “there was always someone among the shamans willing to make one” (Mousalimas 1989: 312).

Of the Siberian peoples the Nenets (Samoyed people in the Arctic North of Russia) wooden images so-called *myad' pukhutsya* (the hostess of the tent), shows the greatest correlation in shape and functions with the noted Athabaskan and Ket figurines. This is a female wooden figurine from the class of *syadej* (wooden idol). Like other female *syadej* figurines *myad' pukhutsya* has a rounded head with cut face features (a nose, eyes or eyebrows, and a mouth) and has on traditional clothing. Every Nenets clan possessed their own *myad' pukhutsya*. She was made both by ordinary clan members and by a shaman and was regarded as a clan guardian and helper. Her primary function however was patronage of women, relief of childbirth. The image of *myad' pukhutsya* was kept in every tepee in the place for old women, at the entrance where the image hung in a special bag. The most important function of all Nenets *syadejs* in general was healing of clan members. The people rub the sore spot with the body of *syadej* or pricked it with its sharp nose (Ivanov 1970: 75–77).

Another Samoyed group of Nganasan possessed *koika* (wooden idols) with corresponding functions. However the shape of the Nganasan *koika* was very different from the figurines observed among the Kets and the Nenets. It was a forked stick with a head carved on each tine of the fork and often a third head carved on the opposite end of the stick. Probably the two heads on the forked end represented the host and the hostess. The semantics of the third head is not clear. They could be dressed in clothing or fabric. Like the Nenets figurines, these figurines were kept in the women's part of the tent but not in a bag. They were often stuck into the ground. The Nganasans always took their *koika* with them wherever they travelled. The *koikas* were passed on from one generation to another, from father to son, although they were respected as female protectors (Ivanov 1970: 99).

Another wooden image used for healing among the Nganasans was a wooden image of a fish. The Nganasan shamans touched with such images the sore spot for the purpose of curing (Ivanov 1970: 109).

The Selkups (Samoyed peoples, neighbors of the Kets in Turukhan region) possessed wooden female images called *aqlalta* and *loosy*. The first name is by all evidence borrowed from the Ket *alel*. It seems the Selkups experienced the cultural influence of the Kets, and the Selkup wooden female figurine *aqlalta* was a result of this influence. There

were female figurines called *loosy* that were pretty similar to the Ket *alel*. However, they had a sharpened head top, and their clothing didn't include fur underwear with a hood (Ivanov 1970: 113–124), see pl. 11.

The Selkup *loosy* figurines have analogs in the Ob-Ugrian culture. There was described a big class of *yunkh* figurines. One of these *yunkhs* represented *Pujos*, the daughter of the supreme deity of the Heaven *Numi Torum*. This female wooden figurine was regarded as a patron of women and as a helper with birth. Unlike the Ket figurine Khanty *yunkhs* had more classical proportions, oval head and absence of fur underwear (Ivanov 1970: 24–26), see pl. 12.

There were several wooden images among the Evenki, one of Tunguz speaking group in Siberia, also the Kets' neighbors, with very similar shape and functions. The spirits of the forest (they have different names: *ekheken*, *khijken*, *semekci*, *bellei*, *edzhen*, *baralak*, etc.) had round or oval heads, cut face features, covered with fur, and had beaded decoration at the rim of the hood (like the Ket's *alel*). However, their functions differed from the *alel*'s functions: they were regarded as patrons of hunting. They were kept at the places of hunting in the taiga (Siberian forest) and the hunters offered them fabrics, fur, or small objects asking for luck in hunting. The Evenki shamans used for healing ceremonies larch bark images. The spirit of disease was believed taken out through the navel of a diseased person into the navel of the doll (Ivanov 1970: 168).

Ivanov proposed classifying the Siberian wooden sculptures into the following types:

(1) the North Siberian type represents figurines with a sharpened head, the face shown with two cuts, and the body of a stick-shaped image without arms and legs;

(2) the West Arctic type represents poly-headed figurines; and

(3) the West Siberian type represents female guardians of the home and the hearth.

The comparative study of Siberian sculptures led Ivanov to conclude that the Ket *alel* belongs to the West Siberian type of wooden sculpture. The features of this type are as follows: the figurine has legs and arms, although the arms are too short, round head, and a well expressed face (Ivanov 1970: 175).

Conclusions

Representations of the physical forms of humans and of other animate beings (animals, birds, fish, reptiles, and insects) are common features in ceremonial art of most Siberian and North West American Indigenous cultures. Wooden human figurines with rounded faces dressed in traditional clothing have common functions as domestic guardians and shaman's healing and predicting paraphernalia. Such wooden figurines could be linked together as one type, and namely the West Siberian type. This typology could be derived from an ancient North Asian tradition that was spread all over Siberia, being known there in many indigenous cultures. Despite suggested thousands of years and oceans of separation, beliefs and practices relating to shaman dolls show striking similarities, as well as the range and degrees of differences that would be expected under such circumstances.

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Åke Hultkrantz's Contributions to the Understanding of Souls, Their Return and Their Place in Shamanism Confirmed by Contemporary Cases

ANTONIA MILLS, CONNIE MATCHATIS and GEORGINA HILL

This paper explores the multiple aspects of soul that Hultkrantz has depicted, using the example of a Gitksan Elder who is noted as returned multiply while also helping her relatives from her spiritual abode; and it also presents compelling examples of contemporary rebirth from the Chipewyn peoples (by Connie Matchatis); and from the Kitkatla Tsimshian (by Georgina Hill). The Chipewyn examples include shamanistic healing. The Tsimshian example relates to the inverse of the Orpheus tradition; rather than being unable to bring back a deceased wife from the under or netherworld, the Elder plans his future parents before expiring and being reborn.

Some years ago I, Antonia Mills, sent a letter to Åke Hultkrantz via Anna-Stina Kjelstrom when she went back to Sweden. At that time Anna-Stina was a Swedish graduate student at UNBC (she is now pursuing her Ph.D. at York University); she looked forward to meeting this distinguished Professor Emeritus. My letter to Dr. Hultkrantz told him that I had used *Soul and Native Americans* (Hultkrantz 1997), the greatly revised version of his Ph.D. thesis that had just come out, in the course I teach at the University of Northern British Columbia called First Nations Studies 409: Indigenous Perspectives on Reincarnation and Rebirth. I was surprised to receive word back that Professor Hultkrantz had no idea that this book had come out. Dr. Hultkrantz immediately got in touch with the editor Robert Holland and learned that when Holland tried to contact Dr. Hultkrantz to send him the revision that he had made of Hultkrantz's copious 1953 book on this topic for

his comment, he was informed that Dr. Hultkrantz had expired. It turned out that it was a different Professor Hultkrantz at a different University in Sweden that had expired, but because of the elision of their identities, the publication went ahead on the well supported presumption that editing from the other side is difficult to achieve. Thus this rebirth of Hultkrantz's 1953 publication of his dissertation occurred, unedited by the author. Is this an analogy of how rebirth takes place, with a touch of mystery as to how souls or parts of souls come back across from the other side? Hultkrantz's original 1953 thesis and its compacted edition are both about the multiple or dual souls that Hultkrantz meticulously shows have different names through out the vast array and entirely unrelated seven different language families of North American Indians/Aboriginal/Indigenous peoples on what has come to be called the North American continent or Turtle Island.¹ So there is the original dissertation of Hultkrantz and its rebirth, which was made in an effort to have the reincarnated book available to reach a wider audience of people interested in First Nations concepts of souls and in the concept of rebirth. Both have elements of the "body soul," the physical object that we can hold in our hands and read with our physical eyes; both seek to explicate the "free soul" that travels out of the body, in dreams, in shamanic journeys and after physical death. Both elucidate or obfuscate the more than dual forms of "souls" as in the shadow soul that is a manifestation of the body soul in its relation to light, but which becomes invisible in darkness, and sometimes elides with the free soul journeying to realms beyond the earthly plane to after, upper and underworlds where some essence of the souls seem to remain even when some edition(s) of them have come back and been reborn in new bodies.

Had Hultkrantz had the opportunity to edit the new incarnation of his dissertation, would he have updated the terminology of the 1953

¹ Thomas King repeats in good narrative tradition, his telling of the Turtle Island story in every chapter of his book *The Truth About Stories* (2003). As he tells the story, someone always asks what is underneath the Turtle that is the world and the answer is always, another turtle; and then underneath that another turtle, all the way down. Perhaps these multiple turtles may serve as an analogy of the succession of lives of the aspects of soul.

thesis, bringing it up to date in terms of current sensitivities of First Nations who resent being called primitive and placed at the bottom of a hierarchical evolutionary scale, with all its judgmental implications of being dispensable and of no account in terms of rights to land?² Those terms are completely absent from his more recent work *Shamanic Healing and Ritual Drama: Health and Medicine in Native North American Religious Traditions* (Hultkrantz 1992). Would the Hultkrantz edited incarnation be clearer than the original and than its version edited by another hand? We can imagine that other edition, and our imagining of it is doubtless different from Åke Hultkrantz's. What we want to do in this paper is allude to a few of the new stories of rebirth that have emerged from students in the First Nations Studies course on Indigenous Perspectives on Reincarnation and Rebirth. These narratives of rebirth demonstrate that reincarnation experience is definitely not a thing of the past, but ongoing, even as the language of articulation of these stories changes from the Indigenous languages with all their careful nuances of kinds and aspects of soul stuff, to the English language with its more limited and unitary construction of the soul. As Professor David Newhouse, the Chair of Native Studies at Trent University, said in visiting First Nations Studies 409, these stories are "decolonizing the world." The truth about rebirth stories is that they are alive and well and as layered as Thomas King's turtles. In this article the students in the class (from different layers of years in which it has been taught) will present you with new stories that demonstrate that the twenty-first century is opening replete with the resurgence of these narratives as expressions of truths, of how things work, have in the past, and will in the future.

Multiple Come Backs of One Gitxsan Elder

A few years ago one of the students in the Rebirth and Reincarnation class was the mother of two of the twelve comebacks of one Gitxsan

² See Mills 1994a, 1995, 2001a, 2001b and 2003a, and Daly and Mills 1993 for a variety of discussions of the role of reincarnation belief in land claims and the challenges of having either of these concerns taken seriously.

elder. She brought her daughters to class when they were about 3 and 8, where they proudly represented themselves. While the Gitxsan do not in general think that a person comes back more than once at the same time, Jean Slade (pseudonym) is the exception to that rule. Jean Slade, a greatly admired Gitxsan Elder, told me in 1984 that "a good person comes back seven times." Then she laughed and said, "I am going to come back eleven or twelve times." Since she passed away in 1986 there have been twelve little girls that are identified as Jean Slade come back. I will not recount all of the details of all of these instances here as the case of Jean Slade come back has been presented several times before (in conference presentations Mills 1998a, 1998b and in print Mills 2001a). Furthermore, the multiple simultaneous instances of Jean Slade coming back will be included in the book I am working on called *That's My Chair: Rebirth Narratives of the Gitxsan and Witsuwit'en*. Here I would simply like to summarize the case of the elder sister who came to the class, Kimberly, and a few of the other cases, because this case relates to the question of what an "individual" is, and whether this concept is related to Hultkrantz's careful depiction of the multiplicity of aspects of the soul.³

Of these twelve cases, one (Cindy) is quietly disputed by the mother, who remarks that her daughter resembles another deceased woman much more closely. One of the come-backs (Beth) herself passed away tragically in an auto accident when she was a toddler. In some of the other instances, I have not yet had the opportunity to meet the child or hear all the particulars. However, at least two of the little girls (Kimberly and Tracey) have made many striking recognitions and exhibited similar concern for the family as Jean Slade.

At the same time these examples of Jean Slade come back are replete with instances where Jean Slade is not only acting in or through these little girls, but being experienced as a Spirit Elder who is looking after her relatives and appearing to them particularly in their hour of need. For example, Stan, the father of another Gitxsan rebirth case, experienced Jean Slade, who was his Greatgrandmother, comforting him and telling him he was going to survive after he was hit by a pick-up and sustained near fatal injuries. His near-death-experience included not only bright

³ The examples of Jean Slade come back given in this paper are from Mills 2001a.

and beautiful light, but also the presence of Jean Slade as a soul comforter, assuring him that he was going to be okay. This is an example of Jean Slade as that aspect of the soul that goes to another realm after death. But Stan also described how Tracey (one of the little girls noted as being Jean Slade come back), before she could walk, crawled over to him when he was in rehab near Vancouver, and began massaging and massaging his legs. When this little girl was a little older, the first time she saw the young man who was driving the pickup that struck Stan, she went up to him and started punching him and punching him, this from a toddler that usually had a sunny disposition. Tracey is definitely noted as one of the come-backs of Jean Slade.

And yet at the same time there is another little girl, Kimberly, who came to the class with her younger sister, both of whom are noted as Jean Slade's come-backs. Kimberly's behavior is, like Tracey's, strikingly reminiscent of Jean Slade. Three elders dreamed of Jean Slade coming back just before Kimberly was born, two of whom apparently did not know her mother was expecting. Kimberly is addressed as *Naah* or *Granny* by many of the family members. They are convinced she is Jean come back by many of her ways, which include when three years old staying up until 3:00 a.m., ever vigilant on Christmas night, until all family members of all ages were safely asleep. This same little girl recognized an unacknowledged family member that resulted from such late night revelries, adding to the conviction that this child knows more than meets the eye.

Another little girl noted as Jean Slade come back, Ruby, is described as a toddler in Mills and Champion 1996. When I saw her when she was five years old and very verbal I wondered if a linguist could tell from listening to her if she was speaking English with Gitxsan phonemes: it seemed to me that she spoke English with the same Gitxsan accent as Jean Slade although both her parents speak English without any trace of an accent. Such are the subtleties of these cases.

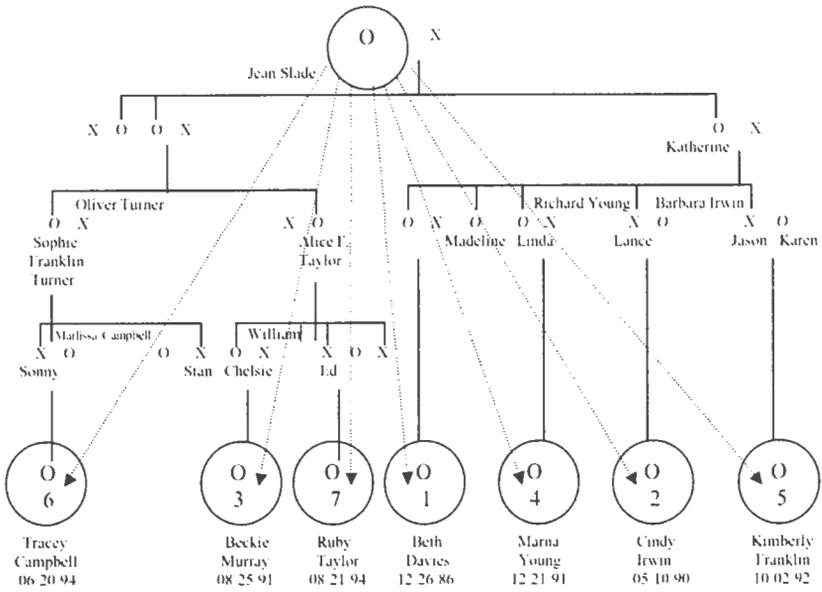


Fig. 1. Jean Slade and Her First Seven Come Backs (Partial Genealogy). Key: O is female, X is male. Numbers are in chronological order of birth. Circles connected by arrows shows where Jean Slade has come back. Note: Pseudonyms are used in these cases.

Sample Cases of Rebirth: A Chipewyan Community Perspective by Connie Matchatis

The topic of Reincarnation and Rebirth has long been of personal interest to me. As a member of the Chipewyan First Nation, I grew up listening to the legends and myths from long ago that were verbally passed down from generation to generation. Some of these stories that were shared included descriptions of specific events alluding to the possibility of experiences of rebirth. This paper will introduce you into process of our oral tradition, then share intimate personal accounts of rebirth and finally give insight into the possible purposes of the belief system of the Chipewyan people with regard to rebirth and reincarnation. I was first introduced to the rebirth stories as a young child by my adopted grandmother, Rosalie Andrew. As a child, my grandmother was responsible for assisting my mother with the task of child minding. Our interactive ritual involved my brother and me threading beading needles and stringing loose beads together for hours while my grandmother would share countless stories of events that had occurred in the past. From a child's view the content of these stories were complicated further due to a language barrier, you see Mrs. Andrew spoke only Chipewyan and my brother and I were English speakers with limited understanding of the Chipewyan language. Whenever we didn't fully understand the story, we would just humor her by laughing along when she laughed, and nodded occasionally when she would cue us to do so.

Mrs. Andrew was believed to have lived into her hundreds; no one knew for certain her date of birth as no documentation was available. One of the ways that she was able to approximate her age was through her recollections of her family participating in the 1885 Frog Lake Massacre (Morton 1950); she believed that she was about ten years old at the time. Mrs. Andrew was married twice and bore eighteen children, out of which only three children survived to adulthood. From the time that I remembered Mrs. Andrew, she was already widowed and none of her children were alive, however, she did have four grandchildren and a few great-grandchildren. Mrs. Andrew grew up during a period of time when the lifestyle of the Chipewyan people was predominately nomadic although a number of Treaties were underway. The routine of the people during the summer included fishing and hunting game and in the winter camps were set up along the trap lines. The severe winter

weather conditions, the nomadic lifestyle, and disease greatly impacted the mortality rate among the First Nations people. The influenza epidemic had a significant effect as the disease claimed the lives of Mrs. Andrew's husbands, children and many relatives. As a result of Mrs. Andrew's great personal loss, she adopted my father in the customary adoption process, which is how she came to live with our family throughout the majority of my life until her death on June 28, 1979. It was through personal conversations between Mrs. Andrew and myself in 1968 that she revealed the following account of her experience with the son she believed to have been reborn. The details of these recollections have since been verified by other members of my immediate family who were also informed of these stories (Interviews with Joyce Metchewais, Nora Matchatis, Val Wood, Cecile Matchatis, September, 1999).

The story Mrs. Andrew shared with me was in regards to one of her sons, Umbrose, who was approximately seven years old at the time that he revealed details of his past life. She said that one day while she was working in her yard, her son was playing along side her when he began telling her of this mean woman who used to be his mother. He claimed that Izadora and Baptiste Janvier were his parents in a past life. He claimed that as her child, Izadora was very cruel to him and that he had died as a means of escaping her torture. He proceeded to tell her that he used to have a dog and that he named Goolbo and that he missed his dog very much. In order to verify his story, Mrs. Andrew packed a lunch and went to visit this woman who he alleged was his mother in his past life. When they arrived at her house, there was no one home at the time except for the dog. Apparently, this dog had been known to be quite mean and guarded the house very well. As they approached the house the little boy stopped, pointed at the dog, and told Mrs. Andrew that the dog belonged to him. He proceeded to call the dog who quickly responded by wagging his tail and as he got close enough to the boy he began licking Umbrose's face. The little boy then jumped on top of the dog's back and rode around and played for some time. As Mrs. Andrew began piecing the information together she recalled the fact that prior to Umbrose's birth, one of Mr. and Mrs. Janvier's sons had died of Tuberculosis. She believed that the young child was approximately seven years old at the time of his death. While the information Umbrose provided and the experience that had occurred

convinced Mrs. Andrew that her son had not fabricated the story it was the knowledge of Mrs. Janvier longstanding reputation in the community of being cruel and unfriendly that solidified her belief in Umbrose' account of himself as Mrs. Janvier's son in his previous life. Mrs. Andrew did not mention whether she shared this story with Mrs. Janvier perhaps to avoid creating unnecessary conflict.

Other stories that were passed on to me were from my mother, Nora Matchatis (Interview, October, 1999). One particular story involved an incident in which my oldest brother, Ken, who was about five years old at the time, was browsing through some of my mother's family albums when he recognized some photos of my mother's house in Ft. Simpson, N.W.T. The photos were taken years before the birth of my brother and my brother had never visited my mother's house. When she sat down beside him he began pointing at the pictures of her house and told my mother that the house belonged to him and he began describing the inside of the structure including where his bedroom was. He told her, "Remember, this is where we used to live, you used to take care of me." Since there was no known possibility that my brother would have been able to describe what the interior of the house looked like, my mother believed that Ken had been her father and had been reborn as her son.

On another occasion, my mother shared with me a story that involved my father. Before my mother married my father, her grandmother told her of a situation that occurred when my father was approximately seven years old. She told her that one morning when he awoke he insisted that my grandmother take him over to the home of an elderly couple on the reserve. On the way over there he told her that he had been having these dreams and in which he was instructed to go to visit the elderly woman. This woman had been blind since birth, was gradually becoming deaf, and her overall general health had began deteriorating to the point where she was no longer able to walk. During this time in her life her husband had been providing all of her personal care and this responsibility had begun to take its toll on him.

The couple lived in a one room log house. In one corner of the house was the bed in which the elderly woman laid, in the opposite corner stood a wood cookstove, and in the centre of the room was the air tight wood heater. Next to the heater was the wood box. To the

right of the door was a wash stand with a basin on it. Next to the wash stand was the table and a couple of chairs. When my grandmother and father arrived they were welcomed in by the elderly man. They were offered some hot tea as it had been a cool day. After my grandmother explained why they had come to visit, the elderly man was instructed to refill the basin with some clean warm water. My father then proceeded to call the elderly woman by her name. Upon hearing her name the elderly lady got up from the bed and without help she walked towards my father who was standing beside the wash stand. He then asked her to wash her face in the water. To the disbelief of the elderly man and my grandmother, the elderly woman's ability to see, hear and walk were significantly improved. This story had been verified by the relatives of the elderly couple over time.

Both of the examples mentioned above reveal specific indicators that include the following traits listed in the Trait Index (Matlock and Mills 1994): first of all, the type of report would be coded as C = case or example cited. The type of belief would be R = Reincarnation belief present (human-to-human rebirth). The signs used in identifying reincarnations in these cases are: RC = Recognitions (spontaneous); RT = Recognition tests; VC = Verbal claims; Possibly CO = Reincarnation for children only, however not clearly outlined, no Related Practices revealed. Other signs of rebirth and reincarnation such as babies born with strands of gray hair and that babies who were born with teeth were considered to have been reborn although, there were no specific details provided by those children who had been born with teeth. However, the shamanic traits in this last story could be correlated to the Trait Index's category SE = Reincarnation for Shamans especially, but not exclusively (Matlock and Mills 1994).⁴ The people of my community

⁴ Note that the Trait Index provided by Matlock and Mills (1994) uses categories that cannot plumb the depths of the experience of these traits. Instead they serve to try to depict some of the aspects of cases that have been recorded in the literature for First Nations /Aboriginal or Native people in North America. Mills (1994b) provides a more comprehensive depiction of some of these qualities of rebirth, where Mills notes that one of the areas that is least well documented in the literature on reincarnation for North American Indians is what Matchatis' describes, the healing abilities that relate to reincarnation. This may be because medicine powers are something that their possessors are careful to not boast about, and therefore they do not talk about this aspect in public.

believe that Shamanistic abilities were linked to having a direct yet mystical relationship with the spirit world. The reincarnation aspect of shamans is a trait that both mothers believed the stories of the boys exemplified.

One of the arguments some raise against the notion of rebirth or reincarnation relates to validity and purpose.⁵ First, since the memories of the children fade over time, the opportunity to explore or probe for additional details becomes nonexistent, therefore it is difficult to qualify or quantify these claims of rebirth. Secondly, one needs to ask, could it have been possible that some of the memories of the children are the result of *in vitro* communications? The evidence to support that conversations are overheard by a fetus and recalled later in life are inconclusive although this does not eliminate the total possibility that this type of memory could have originated through the development of the fetus process. Furthermore, the mystery surrounding why some people are reborn and others are not seems to pose another set of questions without definite answers. Could rebirth stories and other mysteries be incorporated into cultures as means of psychological control, or because holding on to the memory of loved ones is easier to live with than accepting their death? These are just some possibilities of the types of questions that surface when discussing rebirth and reincarnation. None of these stories mentioned have been previously documented to my knowledge and such stories continue to be passed on from generation to generation by way of customary oral tradition.

Note that Eliade (1964) notes the reincarnation aspect of shamans but does not elaborate on it extensively. See the writings of Ian Stevenson (1974, 1975, 1983, 1987, 1997a, 1997b, 2000), the pioneer of reincarnation studies, for further depictions of the traits of cases of rebirth in a variety of cultures, including the Tlingit Indians (1974, 1994). The cases in this paper do not include striking birthmarks, unlike some of Stevenson's Tlingit (1974) cases and the numerous cases he presents in his two volumes on birthmarks and birth defects related to reincarnation (1997a, 1997b).

⁵ Mills and Lynn (2000) attempt to address some of these issues, using an example from India where the child talked of being someone unknown to his family. One aspect of the relative absence of rebirth among non-Native North Americans is addressed in Mills 2003, related to cultural perception.

Georgina Hill's Account of Scott Hill

To understand reincarnation in my family it is useful to give a little of the Tsimshian history of our community of Kitkatla. The relationship that my matrilineal maternal family has with each other and with other matrilineal families plays an important part in reincarnation. This will situate my account of my cousin Scott Hill. This story is important in showing how family relationships that develop through clan links and obligations are part of reincarnation.

The people of Kitkatla are very rich in tradition and ceremony. Although some of the old ways have been lost through contact with Europeans the basis of our society is still rich.

The people of Kitkatla have occupied the same territory for thousands of years. Many Coast Tsimshian responded to the arrival of the Europeans by moving from their traditional homes to areas centered around European commerce at Fort Simpson, Port Essington, as well as followers of William Duncan to Metlakatla, however the Kitkatla people did not move from their traditional homes. (Seguin 1984: 3)

We are a matrilineal community that is divided up into four exogamous phratries or clans: Blackfish, Eagle, Wolf and Raven. This means that everything, such as songs, dances, names, land tenure, even chieftainship goes through the mother's side of the family. Within the phratry or clan, individuals were ranked according to the stature of a name inherited (Seguin 1984: 3-4).

In general, each village was an independent territorial, economic, and political unit. The territories controlled by a village were the property of the local segments of each matrilineal *phratry*. There are four such divisions among the Tsimshian. On the coast they were called Blackfish, Eagle, Raven, and Wolf, after the principal crests displayed by each Marriage was always outside the crest group within the Tsimshian tribal groups, and outside the parallel "friend" crest group with the other tribes. (Seguin 1984: x)

Now that I have established a background of the Tsimshian people I can tell the story of my cousin Scott. Scott like my Mother and me is a member of the Eagle Clan.

Just before my grandfather Stanley died he had chosen, or as my mother puts it "hand picked," a wife for his son Matthew. Her name was Joanne and she was from the Raven clan. Until I started thinking about it I had never realized that my Aunt Joanne and Grandfather Stanley were from the same clan, but they were. Of course Matthew was from my Mother's Eagle clan. As Mills says (1994b: 196), "In the Northwest Coast data, reincarnates are usually reborn into a socially identical position in society."⁶

My Grandfather had done everything according to tradition where the marriage was concerned. He went to the family and made traditional agreements and brought gifts on behalf of himself and his son. I heard it said that this was the last time anyone in our community had seen such a traditional request for a woman's hand in marriage.

The family accepted my grandfather's gifts and proposal of marriage. So he happily started to make the arrangements for the wedding. It was to be a big wedding; my Uncle Matthew was in line for the position of a chief.⁷ This was why my grandfather thought it was important to see to it that he would have a suitable wife.

⁶ Note that while Northwest Coast First Nations in general reincarnate into their same Clan, and the presumption that Stanley's wife would do so meant that the Hill family does not think Stanley's wife has come back in the Eagle Clan, some of the comebacks of Jean Slade are outside of her Clan. These are cases 2, 5, 6, and 7, which represent three of the strong cases. This is explained on the basis that Jean Slade was so fond of her grandsons that she chose to come back as their daughters, which in this matrilineal exogamous society necessarily means these girls are members of their mother's clan, which is different from Jean Slade's clan. Note that Sergei Kan (1989) also goes into the clan affiliation aspect of what he calls "symbolic immortality."

⁷ The Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs book *A Guide to Aboriginal Organizations and Services in British Columbia* (2000) lists on page 8 Matthew Hill as the Chief of the Kitkatla First Nation. This position is an elected one, but in Northwest Coast societies, the people who are elected as Chief are typically those who hold Chiefly names in the traditional system where people are given Chiefly names through the potlatch system, sometimes to often on the basis of who they are come back from. See Mills 1988a, 1988b, 1994a, 1995, 2001a for depictions of the interplay of rebirth and succession to chiefly titles and positions of political authority.

Everything was going well, and then as the wedding day approached sadly my Grandfather passed away suddenly from heart failure. He was 65 years old when he expired on November 17, 1971. Usually in circumstances such as this, with the sudden death of a distinguished Elder, the wedding would be postponed for a year; however in this case everyone felt that because it was my grandfather's wish to see the two united in marriage the wedding should go on, and it did.

As cultural knowledge became increasingly concentrated in certain individuals within families, clans, and lineages, the loss of a person meant the disappearance of particular skills, stories, wisdom. (Kelm 1998: 10)

The following year, September 10th, 1972, my Uncle and Aunt were blessed with their first son, and they named him Scott. Last winter when I spoke to my Uncle Matthew about Scott he told me that Scott was very much a community baby, that the whole community raised him. Everyone was drawn to him, Elders really took notice of him, and my parents, siblings and I were no exception. Scott was raised like a brother with my siblings and me and we were more than happy to have him.

There was definitely something special about Scott; he was a very smart child who picked up things easily. He talked early, walked early, and reading came quite easily to him as well as did writing. He was fulfilling Mills' statement that "Such evidence [of rebirth] includes scars and other physical signs, as well as precocious behaviour, especially the early acquisition of language" (Mills 1994b: 198).

When Scott was about three years old he accompanied his father, mother, and grandmother Charlotte Brown (maternal side) on a seaweed-picking trip to Banks Island. Scott being so young had never been to Banks Island before. When they arrived by boat Scott pointed up to where the houses used to be and asked, "Where are the houses that stood there?" His parents were astonished because they knew that when Stanley was alive there were temporary summer houses on Banks Island that were used while people fished from there. Later the Department of Fisheries and Oceans prohibited fishing in that region and so the houses were abandoned and taken down.

On that same trip, Scott's first trip to Banks Island, he persistently asked his father to take him ashore, insisting that he wanted to show him something. His father was still very busy getting their equipment ready for picking seaweed and paid no attention to his son's requests. Finally the grandmother spoke up, and told Matthew (Scott's father) to go and see what the child wanted. He gave in and took Scott to the shore. Scott took his father by the hand, pointed in the direction he wished to go, and proceeded to tell him that there is something that he's going to show him. As they walked along Scott told his father, "I have a boat, and it's over there." To my Uncle's amazement, when they went around the bend where Scott was pointing, they found the remnants of an old boat pulled up just off the shoreline. When talking with other family members it was not unusual for my grandfather, in his younger days, to make boats in different camps that his family occupied in various seasons. As Mills says, "The reincarnated child is thought to be aware of his or her own previous life and thus possesses private knowledge" (Mills 1994b: 198). This was what Scott was doing.

At the same time that I spoke to my Uncle about these happenings last winter (2003) I also had a brief conversation with Scott. He told me that he remembered something about all of this when he was young, but now he has no recollection of anything. Scott is now 32 years old. I remember baby sitting for him, and we always asked Scott, "Who's that?" pointing to a photograph of my grandfather Stanley hanging on the wall. Scott would say, "That's me." This was when he was little.

From all of this information that I have gathered, as well as from the popular traditional belief among the Tsimshian people, it is my conclusion that my cousin Scott is my Grandfather reincarnated, and also that he picked Joanne to be my Uncle's/his son's wife and his Mother so that he could come back to us in our own family and he in his own clan. So my Grandfather has come back as his son's son, and is born into his same Raven clan. He knew where he had kept a boat that none of us knew existed, and he knew there used to be houses on Banks Island. No wonder we were so fond of him; we loved him like our Grandfather and he had come back as a child.

Discussion in Relation to Åke Hultkrantz's Scholarship

The examples of rebirth recorded above relate to a number of aspects of Hultkrantz's scholarship. The tales of multiple come-backs of one Gitksan woman and chief defy most Western concepts of soul unity, but make more sense in the context of Hultkrantz's groundbreaking work on the dual or multiple aspects of elements of the soul in North American Indian religious traditions (Hultkrantz 1953, 1997).

Connie Matchatis notes in her Chipewyan rebirth stories the element of shamanic presence and powers in those reincarnated. Hultkrantz has done a fine job of depicting the varieties of shamanic practice in the various North American religious traditions, a task Mills also undertook in her Ph.D. dissertation (Mills 1982, summarized in Mills 1986/92). Shamanism has key components in the variety of North American spiritual traditions, despite the ravages of colonization (see Mills n.d.). As Richard Sampson, a Gitksan young man and hereditary chief said in the class on reincarnation, "Shamanism cannot die out because the shamans (he used the Gitksan word *halait*) just keep on getting reborn." This was a theme expressed also by the Chiefs in the important *Delgamuukw* land claims court case (Mills and Clifton-Percival 2003).

Stanley Hill's arrangement of the marriage of his son Matthew to someone from Stanley's clan demonstrates a way of selecting his future parents for his next life. Note how this is related to Åke Hultkrantz seminal book *The North American Indian Orpheus Tradition* (1957). While love of a deceased spouse typically takes the mourning husband to the edge of the afterlife, he usually is not allowed to cross into that other realm to be reunited with his spouse or to bring her back. But in North American Indian religious traditions, one often reincarnates so as to marry in successive lives the spouse death had taken away. See Mills 1988a and 1988b for examples of this expectation that one can come back and marry again a spouse of the former life. In the 1980's one Kawakwakawak Chief whose wife had predeceased him and been reborn he said he intended to marry in his next life. In Scott's case, it doesn't seem that he has married Stanley's wife, who predeceased Stanley when she was 50. She was from the San people of Alaska and was of the Blackfish clan. Those San people were wiped out, Georgina

Hill's father explained. Scott has married a woman from the Eagle clan.

Åke Hultkrantz has done a comprehensive job of demonstrating the array of North American Indian spirituality. The First Nations people themselves are doing a fine job of continuing, and sometimes resurrecting, those traditions. Perhaps Yogananda's 2004 revelatory interpretation of the teachings of Christ will impact both First Nations people whose belief has been impacted by missionization and colonization, and non-Native people who have not yet seen the wisdom of understanding and embracing the animistic and reincarnational component of Native American spirituality. The Indians of both continents have much to teach us. We are grateful to Åke Hultkrantz's contributions in this important domain.

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Shamanic Power and the Collective Unconscious: An Exploration of Group Experience*

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*This paper describes the phenomena by which shamanic power can be recognized, and something of the nature of the world in which the power makes play. It acts as actual connectivity, as an extension between people, which we feel as a second way of being social, like Victor Turner's *communitas*. We are collectively conscious of it in a dim way. It is the collective psyche, which appears to be operating at every turn, just as both sides of our brain operate at every turn. It seems to be an endowment with which we were born. And as such, it is very much the subject for serious ethnographic exploration.*

This article discusses a possible new hypothesis on the nature of consciousness among groups combining in shamanic or parashamanic performance. In other words I am looking at the *social* in these activities, which is the social in its most intense form. When a shamanic oracle receives the god as in Tibet, or Africans are trying to extract a harming spirit from the sick, the surrounding group's work is not merely that of "joining in," but becomes involved with something not much examined in research. A kind of power develops, a unison action, a connecting force, which has associations with Jung's collective unconscious. Here I see a sense of tapping into certain shadowy abysses—looking at them as a reservoir (a rising and flooding medium that can waken into activity the existing connective tissues between people), a power potential which can join people, or even in action as some kind of person or volitional

* The paper was first read at a conference on "Shamanism in Contemporary Society," Newcastle upon Tyne, United Kingdom, June 1998.

entity (spirit) that can take the initiative, sometimes coming in collective visions. Is the “reservoir” the home or origin of such figures, or how are these things, reservoir, power, and person-spirit, connected? Are they connected? I refer to a variety of cases where this “social II” operates. The fragile nature of the subject matter requires restraint from making any hard and fast definitions. Feedback from practitioners of shamanism would be of great assistance.

My essay turns attention to the social in cases of shamanic change of consciousness, where the consciousness of the social group is changed as well as that of the shaman—producing the social in its most intense form. The material I use will show the “support” principle in evidence on certain great spirit occasions. I see this work of backing up, fervently provided by the community, as a great effector. But it is often taken for granted in the literature. “Large crowds attended the pilgrimage devotions,” and so forth. But what was going on? Maslow talks of “peak experiences.” They are often Social II affairs. How do changes of consciousness take place in the milieu of groups? And more importantly, how do such concerns fit into the social aspect of our present-day Western life, pebbled as it is with fragmentation. There seems no hold that the true social can take on our lives, which is life often without shared meals or much cooperative work. The “social” plant has no cohesive substance into which to root itself.

What set me off on the topic of “support” was the description of the anthropologist, Ter Ellingson (1998: 51–76), of the monks’ support of their leader during the contemporary Tibetan State Oracle ritual, a yearly occasion in which the monk goes into trance, is then burdened with an immense heavy crown, and bursts from the monastery shooting with a bow and arrow. The crowd presses forward, eager to receive a wound from the arrow. Ellingson describes the preliminary drumming, the attendance of the other monks and assistants, the chanting and prayers. He gives as illustration what looks like a typical Buddhist holy picture:

[The monks in the monastery] use “supports,” including evocative symbolic gestures [folded hands], music of drums and cymbals, and conical-shaped offerings and the painted images of 3 multi-armed dark gods to evoke the presence of the actual gods.

In Ellingson's video, which I have witnessed, these drums produced an unforgettable slow, rising, hastening, and thunderous sound, culminating in a climax, followed by a fading away. The intense focus on the actual gods in their spiritual form, and on the trancer's abandonment to the process the worshipers are applying to him, bring about his trance, of which he remembers nothing. Ellingson goes on to say:

Turning to explanations constructed within the tradition, we find that the Oracle's transformation of consciousness is interpreted by himself and others in terms of the ideas and images of Buddhist Tantric meditation, and the cultural patterns of specialization of roles associated with them. Gods represented by statues, paintings, and other "supports" are visualized existing in celestial Mandala palaces. The meditator generates an evocative syllable (mantra) in the heart of the god and his own heart, which are joined by a ray of light that fuses the two identities "like water flowing into water." Participants other than the specialist who actually merges identities with the god are also suffused with waves of "blessing." The meditator, now become a god, projects the god out into the space in front of him, and continues the meditation as a "god worshipping a god." The projection is usually into a vessel, and the process is facilitated by specialist assistants who arrange and control the various supports, or in our terms, attractors, in ways appropriate to stages in the ritual process

The music played in the induction process is one of the "vocal supports" of the meditation. It works as a support, or in our terms, as an attractor, by attracting the mental energies of the participants to the perception of time, not as a mechanically passing chain of abstract equal units, but as a progressive and climactic experience, [when] experience and motivation "fall" together into the decisive moments that can change lives In musical invocations, the characteristic musical/rhythmic process is the "fall," a continuous acceleration of beats and compression of time perceptions, that moves inexorably to a climax that coincides with the "fall" or descent of the god into the meditator, support, or vessel—in this case, the Oracle. It is in fact at the conclusion of one such elaborately-constructed musical "fall" that trance seems to have overcome the Oracle

The special consciousness of the Oracle is part of a more complex issue that also includes and depends on a special kind of consciousness evoked in others. This begins with the audience, who are also brought into a heightened state of consciousness. Hundreds or thousands of people begin to assemble in the predawn darkness before the induction ritual begins. A few may catch a veiled glimpse of the induction through an opening in a window or curtain of the building where the ritual is occurring; but for most, the only direct perception that they have of the intensity of cultural/religious energy present at the invoca-

tion of the god into the Oracle is the intensity of musical energy that escapes the building and pervades the crowd, moving them to excitement about the perceived ritual climax

The crowd pushes in [in frenzy] to touch the Oracle and present white greeting scarves. The induction process does in fact evoke so radical a shift of consciousness in the audience that they themselves are brought into a crisis state no less dangerous than the Oracle's, calling for careful controls and safeguards. When public contact occurs between the emerging Oracle and his audience, both charged with a highly volatile energy, the result is a frenzy of attraction. Men, women and children charge forward, reaching for contact with the Oracle, trying to present him with traditional white greeting scarves, or simply throwing them at him, oblivious to everything, including the stinging blows the assistants strike with their rosaries to keep them from crushing or smothering the Oracle or one another. I shot the video scene of the crowd meeting the Oracle with one arm holding the camera, and one arm and one leg wrapped around a tree, and had all I could do to keep from being swept away by the crowd.

The induction process necessarily produces a heightened consciousness in his assistants as well, at this point when increasing attentiveness, professionalism, and urgency coalesce towards the dangerous and unpredictable shift from self-possession to god-possession.

The music attracts the mental energies of the participants to the perception of time, here as a progressive and climactic experience. Here Rory Turner, an anthropologist working on drumming, has commented on this ritual. Drumming, he says, the music peculiar to shamanism, is not just another aspect of human experience, for the performance of drumming has in fact a special character. How do we come to know that we are not, as we thought we were, separate from one another? We know it when we can participate in precisely the same experience. We cannot do this spatially because we have bodies; they have skins, that is, boundaries. But we can merge by *sharing time*, together as one, in the drum music. How do we come to know the spirits and gods and reach an ultimate sense of them? Through different things; but time itself and the regularity of time is one way. Being involved together in the regularity of time is a way in which the truth of the spirits and gods is disclosed to us—and this is by direct perception, which arrives when one is in a single continuum of musical blending.

Then comes the shaman's work.¹ This phenomenon points to another means we have of experiencing an aspect of the collective unconscious.

Thus, in one of the most graphic scenes of human ritual, the support given *by* others, and the reflexive feedback effect *on* others, are major and complex elements in the oracle scene. People do appear to be able to combine in effecting the presence of a spirit or god. Is there a kind of sociality ("Social II") that carries the effects, that links people?

Another example is to be found in the Ihamba ritual of the Ndembu of Zambia (E. Turner 1992: 133–150). In the following passage imagine you are in the middle of a collective effort to draw out an afflicting spirit from a sick woman named Meru—a ritual in which the medicine man uses cupping horns:

"Ngambu!" said Singleton the medicine man, and we shouted, "Yafwa!" The drums began with a rapid threefold beat. The doctors called for ax heads and soon the deafening clink compelled our hands to clap, starting an effect like strobe lights in my brain. They sang in plangent woodland harmony.

"Shake, shake, if it's you, Nkomba," they commanded Meru—or commanded the spirit inside her body. She twitched one shoulder, then the other; her body rocked in time to the music as she sat with her palms turned up.

"Is it Kadochi? Shake if it is. Quick now!" Singleton danced the antelope mating dance before her. Soon the group had increased to a crowd of about thirty persons. Then Singleton danced all around the assembly in a clockwise direction, holding the people together and sacralizing the group. They sang, but support for the song faded. All present knew that support was of the essence.

"What's happened to the drumming?" asked Fideli.

"No one's drumming, no one's singing. Nothing."

"You play the drum. I'll sing and do the cupping."

"These boys don't know how to sing," grumbled Etina, so they tried different songs.

Singleton looked at Meru the patient. He addressed the spirit in her, "I haven't seen you shake happily yet. You did when we began, but now you're stiff with worries. What's the matter? There must be something else."

They applied the horns again and resumed.

¹ Rory Turner, personal communication.

Irritation was growing, and uncertainty, and the weather was hot. Now Mulandu addressed Meru's body. "If you're aggrieved because your sister cheated you, shake, and if not keep still."

(Some of this sounded like a legal disposition. It was neither that nor psychoanalytic case material, but it was related to the inward tooth that was afflicting her, again stoppered up by the stopping up of words or grudges. The flow of human relationship was the concern; we ourselves might envisage it as the traffic flow of human intercourse, either flowing smoothly the way the system intends, or snarled and dangerous. To explain the snarl Africans do not use psychological terms such as neurosis and psychosis, which are imponderables, abstractions from individuals' behavior, but they see something concrete amiss in the physical and social body—and they see that "something" as concrete/spiritual, in this case a wandering tooth.)

There was a connection between the foreign body inside Meru, that ghostly entity the spirit, and one's emotional state in relation to the social group. The power and character of the ihamba tooth—from which sprang the effort to get it out—spread to us all. Singleton was tracing the effect of ritual, tracing its delicate tuning in those sensitive psyches who, being kin, knew one another very well. The importance of tuning was seen in the simple statement, "It's difficult for ihamba to come out if the people don't sing"—and the reverse, "It is easy when they do"—as happened at the climax. I began to see the whole sequence as a lesson in opening up, the disinhibition of the psyche.

Just then the central figure swayed deeply: all leaned forward, this was indeed going to be it. I realized along with them that the barriers were breaking. Something that wanted to be born was now going to be born. Then a certain palpable social integument broke and something *calved* along with me. I felt the spiritual motion, a tangible feeling of breakthrough going through the whole group. Then it was that Meru fell—the spirit event first and the action afterwards. I was clapping and singing with the others like one possessed, while the drums bellowed, and Singleton pressed Meru's back, guiding and leading out the tooth—Meru's face in a grin of tranced passion, her back quivering rapidly. Suddenly Meru raised her arm, stretched it in liberation, and I *saw* with my own eyes a large thing emerging out of the flesh of her back. It was a big gray blob about six inches across, a gray opaque thing appearing as a sphere—a kind of plasma, definitely there. I was amazed—de-

lighted. I still laugh with glee at the realization of having seen it, the ihamba, and so big! We were all one in triumph. The gray thing was actually out there, visible, and you could see Singleton's hands working and scrabbling on Meru's back—and then the thing was there no more. Singleton had it in his pouch, pressing it in with his other hand as well. The receiving can was ready; he transferred whatever it was into the can and capped the lid over it. It was done.

Immediately afterwards Singleton showed me the ihamba. This time it looked like—it was—an old human tooth, quite solid, but very hungry and in need of feeding.

This was a ritual of many levels. The doctors knew the deepest of the levels well. They knew it was hard to *see* the ihamba, yet they were operating the actual process of getting to *see* it. It was a thing *and* a spirit. It was thus polarized as a symbol is, as Victor Turner found:

I mean a certain polarization of meaning in which the subsidiary subject [the spirit here] is really a depth world of prophetic, half-glimpsed images, and the principal subject, the visible, fully known, at the opposite pole to it, acquires new and surprising contours and valences from its dark companion. On the other hand, because the poles are "active together" the unknown is brought into the light by the known. (V. Turner 1974: 51)

The healing community collectively had to come to the point. Their music, their support, finally drove the moment up to its climax. I felt this unison effect through the group, vividly. We had reached, not a chance high spot, but a condition in which the community was one. The Ihamba ritual does this. There *was* a "social II."

Let us turn to the religious world of the Dene Tha Indians of north-western Alberta. Here "support," "social II," the "community of different consciousnesses" in altered states of consciousness, operated very privately within the tribe and was fed, equally by ritual as by the recounting of stories of their own strange experiences within this other world—one inhabited by helping animals, informed by dreams, and gifted with experience of the dead and of reincarnation. The ethnographer Jean-Guy Goulet (1994: 130) himself saw the dead in a vision. A young girl whom Jean-Guy knew well had been accidentally shot by a hunter. After this event Jean-Guy had to attend a conference in Ottawa. A Metis shaman was talking, when suddenly Jean-Guy saw the dead girl,

smiling and radiant with light, in midair. Later when he had returned to the field he gave back this support story to the girl's mother, who was touched and excited. The tribe also were strengthened by the story. After that Jean-Guy was part of the mother's life and that of her people. The mother was touched by his account. "Social II" was part and parcel of her life, and now she could recognize Goulet in it too.

Goulet says:

Among Athapaskans . . . religion is predominantly experiential; . . . a person with religious experience is described not as a believer, but as someone who "knows" . . . Discussion occurs between those who are "in the know". . . Information most often takes the form of stories. (Goulet 1994: 114)

A Carrier Indian said to another researcher Guédon, "We can only explain dreams and visions to people who can understand" (Guédon 1988: 6) . . . this was after the researcher had become a mother and had shared personal dreams with her informants. (120)

"To refer to the subjective or perceptual correlate of commonsense reality is not to ignore the fact that it is a *preeminently social* phenomenon" (my italics; 132). Goulet shows that telling a story by "one who knows" to another who "knows" has the effect of conveying the experience whole cloth, and the recipient now *has* the experience. In the private world of the Dene Tha, people are careful not to spill their precious talk with those that do not know enough to receive it. This is similar to the nature of an electric current which needs two poles—you simply cannot talk unless the other listeners are in that circle of knowledge too, they also *know*. If they are in it, the story may be about the returning soul, messages from the dead, second sight, many awesome matters. The tribe and its religion become the community of experiencers. Those who can do the supporting are essential to the process and enable the message to go through.

Yet another example comes from central Africa again, found in Colin Turnbull's essay, "Liminality: A Synthesis of Subjective and Objective Experience" (1990). We see Turnbull in the Ituri forest with pygmy singers, participating in their curing or "making good" rituals:

On the third occasion [of watching the rituals], no longer looking for any explanation, [I was] just intent on enjoying myself . . . And by the same

illogic I felt free to join in the singing. And in an instant it all came together: there was no longer any lack of congruence, and it seemed as though the song was being sung by a single singer Then I made the mistake of opening my eyes and saw that while all the others had their eyes open too, their gaze was vacant there were so many bodies sitting around, singing away Something had been added to the importance of sound, another mode of perception that, while it in no way negated the aural or visual modes of observation, none the less went far beyond them. (56)

What is needed is a technique of participation that demands *total involvement* of our whole being. Indeed it is perhaps only when we truly and fully participate that we find this essentially subjective approach to be in no way incompatible with the more conventional rational, objective, scientific approach. On the contrary, they complement each other and that complementarity is an absolute requirement if we are to come to any full understanding of the social process it provides a wealth of data that could never be acquired by any other means. (51)

The sense of the group being a “single singer” is the clue here, and the penetration into a world “far beyond the aural and visual.” A band of people has been joined into one. Nigel Rapport has recently written that this is only an illusion, the uniting cannot be done; mere individual act is all that is happening, aided by a temporary artificially-constructed uniformity of performance. He reiterates, “There is no revelation,” there not even anything truly social of itself. He has fixed his sights on the belief that in the Durkheimian world of social fact, where “God is actually only society,” all is indeed constructed. In the terms of Turnbull and the Mbuti, this world is “the village,” the world without music—in the dichotomy consisting of the village and the forest, where “the forest” is the other side, the world where the Molimo songs really have power to heal (corresponding well to Castaneda’s tonal and najual). It is strange to read Rapport, an Englishman who is color-blind, tone-deaf to the curious social world I am tracing, but who yet claims there is beauty in freedom just for itself, and also claims randomness as the basis for the survival of the fittest. Of course there is beauty in a lot of things

I remember at my girls boarding school how we played a game in which about five of us would get in a circle around one girl in the middle. I think it was called “flying.” First, all the five put their hands on top of the center girl’s head and pressed her head down hard, using

all their weight, until she was crouching under the weight. Then each of us put a forefinger under her armpit and raised her up high above our heads, where she hung for a minute before she came tottering down. I saw the Ndembu girls do this much later, and have heard from various women how they did it too when girls. No one quite knows how it happens. But it does. The important thing is that you are in a group. First you are literally brought low, then very easily you're propelled, levered up in an uncanny fashion. The monk Oracle is the focus of assistants, with drumming and songs to bring the god. Then he is weighted down by the fifty pound crown, and charges out having received the god. He gives and receives psychic power. The Ndembu singers and drummers gather around for a focused purpose, to cure the woman afflicted with a spirit. The sick woman endures bloodletting, is encouraged to tell her nastiest grudges, falls, then becomes the center of an extraordinary sense of social release—and out pops the trouble. The tiny pygmies take Turnbull into the forest away from village, food, and business, and open their throats in song. They merge as they sing, Turnbull sees them at it and feels that strong thing, something “far beyond sound, another mode of perception”—a different consciousness again. This social group has merged, as “social II.” Then in the private world of the Dene Tha, a people careful not to spill their precious talk with those that don't receive it, it has become like the nature of an electric current which needs two poles—you simply cannot talk unless the others are in it too, they also *know*. If they are in it, the story is about the returning soul, messages from the dead, second sight. The tribe and its religion become the community of experiencers. Those who can do the supporting are essential to the process and enable the message to go through.

Thus one begins to perceive something of the physiology of the social in the realm of the different levels of consciousness. These are only a few of the forms of ritual that evince it.

We need an anthropological theory of shamanism which will encompass many types of experience (even including experimental and New Age explorations, which fill in the vacuum of spirituality created by the church), experiences such as when I *saw* the bad entity leave the suffering woman. Now where are we, what are we talking about? Where did that spirit form come from? What was it? Or, the phone

rings, you have just been thinking about so and so, and it's her. Funny. I get healed by a young Eskimo woman in Alaska. It is not supposed to happen, but it regularly does in that village.

In what world does this sort of thing take place? In some "spiritual" world? That is not quite it. Nevertheless when I list ways of looking at the collective unconscious, that is one of them. I didn't feel particularly holy when the Iñupiaq woman healed me. Just wretched until she did it, that's all. At the Ihamba, I was excited and thrilled to see the entity come out of the patient, but it was among a gang of Africans, no one was meditating or anything, just bellowing out songs and drumming. The Tibetan trancer is in the midst of a power focus that thrusts him into the bosom of a god.

Others have described similar times and called them the greatest experience of their life. I note them nowadays with nodding familiarity. *Still* one is drawn to the puzzle of it.

More and more it appears necessary to turn to Carl Jung (1928) and the strange underworld of powers that he calls the collective unconscious, keeping in mind that Jung lacked the true social; for him, the one possessing the sense of the collective unconscious was always an individual. Jung did not understand collective *rituals*, experience undergone by a *group*. Imbued with the individualism of European scholarship, and unlike anthropologists in the mid and late twentieth century, he appears to have never fully participated in a group ritual. His experiences with Christian ritual were negative and his reaction to it seems to have propelled him into psychology, the study, of course, of an individual's psyche. His notion of the collective unconscious was that of the "Self" of an individual expanding and becoming aware of wider symbolisms that were embedded somehow in history—the archetypes. There is a significant difference here to social symbolic anthropology.

As regards "social II," the other type of collective unconscious, we need to beware the deconstructionists. We need Occam's razor, the rule of parsimony. We do not want to go out of our way to invent complicated explanations like those of the deconstructionists just so that we do not have to include the dreaded word "magic" in the explanation. We must be free to use what terms apply.

So let's see. One might indeed see the possibility of an actual reservoir of power somewhere—and classically the power is not "owned" by the

giver, it comes through him or her. People know it very well when they are “in” it. Vic Turner called it *communitas*—another name for it. It seems to be where healing takes place, where the burden is lifted, as my son Rory put it. It is God to Monsignor Chet Michael. I am taking a course on Jung and other matters with him. Yes, for him, Jung’s collective unconscious is God. You receive it. It is somehow the Holy Spirit. (But how?) *It* has the initiative, not you—just as the whale, for the Iñupiat, has the initiative and will come to a good person (E. Turner 1996), and just as the shaman’s helper spirit has the initiative. A person could get reprimanded by a spirit like that, as I was once by a shaman spirit teacher.

Mary Watkins in *Waking Dreams* (1984) also had the same odd idea: the forms that come up in waking dreams just before you wake up—figures that she calls “imaginals”—have an independent life of their own, and they have purposes for you. The Iñupiat, too, are quite clear that the spirit animals desire humans to be spiritual and are trying to teach them this.

Is then the collective unconscious an entity in its own right—or a power—or a reservoir? One may also see it as Keats’s “negative capability.” It is where those ideas come from. You cannot remember the exact word that is on the tip of your tongue, and when you do not think about it, there it is. You leave a problem overnight and the darn thing solves itself. It is weird. The effect might be associated with a kind of meditation, the kind that comes over you; it is as if something out there lifts you away from the mundane focus, and you’re off.

You sing in a group and it really takes. You blend, and get thrills up your spine, “cold chills.” All kinds of situations manifest it. The sports game goes just right. It is the “flowing” of Csikszentmihalyi, that magical state of the perfect “doing it right.” And when a big group “gets it right” and knows it, and is happy with it, there has taken place an enormous natural focusing such as could produce heaven on earth. I think the great cathedrals of Europe were produced like that, and Stonehenge, the Avebury Rings, and the Black Pagoda.

What appears to be the case is this. Jung implied by his term that around his well-known idea of the Self, which is more able to make connections than the “ego” of Freud (has more “prepositional plugs” as Vic Turner put it—with, to, in, for, by, from, of, all kinds of “extension

cords” from one person to another)—around and part of and in all this connective “tissue” floods an impalpable element—like blood plasma—which carries—just as the air carries our voices—thoughts from person to person, conveys body language and states, transmits love, the shaman’s powers, the witch’s lethal act. It is the place in which the halo shines and that the angels inhabit; people you meet at a party put their hand near your hand or above your head and feel the tingling and vice versa. It is a kind of integument which is clothing around us all, providing a natural imperceptible connection between person and person. Among peoples who are treated with gross injustice the integument sometimes gets scarily sick, as in Hitler’s time—like a horrible deadly peritonitis.

Sometimes that thing in its person-mode decides, for reasons known only to itself, to come to a suffering community and give it a huge leg up, as in the apparitions of the mother spirit woman in the Catholic church in Mexico, Ireland, and Poland, the Bodhisattva Kwannon spirit woman in the Buddhist regions, or the goddess Sakti in India.

In a way it is the Hindu idea of *man*, or *manas* in Sanskrit, “mind,” meaning “mind that is also the feelings, the heart, and soul as well,” existing as a sense of being that is not confined by the brain, but is a collective consciousness (so often unconscious) which may be pooled as a much wider “soul-mind,” escaping its confinement to the brain and body of single persons, and connected with the sense of reincarnation. We know, for instance, what it is to be in a group of people who are “soul-mates.” This may not be just a nice feeling, but could be the actual way things are. And it is over this “ether” that healing flows, sometimes even like a jolt of electricity, as I experienced in November 1996. I was suddenly ill and very weak, when a healer gave me a tremendous jolt of energy that I felt all up my spine, causing a very strong tingling in the back of my head. It cured me instantly.

The idea of souls may include persons in the past. African Ndembu healers will utter the names of their healer ancestors six generations back, calling them up from the dead to be there with them when they go out to gather herbs. One healer said that these spirits tell him how to proceed.

It goes without saying that what Victor Turner and I saw happen in the betwixt and between period of rites of passage, happened precisely

in this sector of the social psyche. For this is where norms do not apply, it is “the crack in the mirror” as Jay Ruby called it, the crack between the worlds, the looking glass world of Alice, where animals and chessmen speak—and reprimand the visitor. By now the liminal is becoming recognized, even though it is still hard to put into logical terms.

There is more, and it is about ethereal beings—and this was outside Victor Turner’s public bailiwick (though not his private). This “spirit”—this “integument”—this “consciousness-escaped-from-the-body-and-become-a-fluid-sea-of-its-own”—may persist through time, being beyond the body; and possibly that is what people see formed in ghosts, and in the spirit entity I once saw in Africa. As I have said, this kind of element may also be the condition or sphere in which reincarnation takes place, may be the in-between world where souls after death take the paths where they have to go. Souls are somehow still individuals in it, yet with far more fluid powers than souls in ordinary bodies. In Native American thought the souls of the dead seem to get syphoned here and there, to heaven and simultaneously to a grandchild, all kinds of ways. Such thinking defies our logic altogether.

For Jung, the collective unconscious is the “Shadow,” as in Arjuna’s famous vision of Krishna as a terrible being. It often makes itself known in dreams. It may have a form that is unmentionable, demonic, scatological. This side of it too can be oddly fruitful and should not be sanitized.

We “grope,” and “get inklings” of it, “intimations,” to quote Wordsworth—*that* is our kind of language about it. And this is why you hear so many people saying, “I can’t put it into words,” “It’s hard to describe.”

And here lives the Anthropos, the earth itself in a sense, Leonardo’s outstretched human, small in Leonardo’s enlightenment picture, yet able to resonate in a certain way with the whole planet. What that figure of Anthropos is, is still as mysterious as the collective unconscious itself. Philosophers have tried to encompass it. Paracelsus said that “heaven is a human being and a human being is heaven, and all humanity together is one heaven, and heaven is nothing but one person” (quoted in Dossey 1989: 228). This Anthropos could be human, an animal, or a natural object. One handle on the concept is that it presumes a process world, not a static one that is part of a pyramid of power. A Buddhist

saying suggests this: "Whatever creates is also created, and the process of creating and being created goes on simultaneously without beginning or end." This is known as the concept of dependent origination.

Looking further at Anthropos, we see that Gershom Scholem (1965) has unveiled it a little. Its other name is Adam Kadmon, and we learn that it is the Primordial Man (or Primordial Human, of course), very like Blake's Albion on the rock of ages. This Adam Kadmon is as huge as the universe, "of enormous size, which filled the universe," but was "reduced to human, though still gigantic, proportions . . . the power of the whole universe is concentrated in him." (162) "Here the God who can be apprehended by man is himself the First Man" (104), "the increate Adam Kadmon." "For this secret world of the Godhead manifested in the symbol of man is both . . . the world of the 'inner' man, but also the realm which opens only to contemplation." (104)

What is this idea of something "so rich in archaic myth" (162) that resonates with what we are discussing? A commonly felt positive sense of it is when one feels one's soul going out to the grandeur of the universe, giving a dim sense of unity with it. Again we have to go beyond the "vague feeling" here and hang on to that "sense," in which something is trying to tell us something. The unity and cycling of the universe as understood by Inuit peoples may be even grander than the "Anthropic" principle; for them, all beings are in interchanging relations.

William Blake also tried to enter this swimming bath of fertile spirits in his huge archetypal figures of Albion and Los. They were strongly personal to him, but to few others. Various similar attempts to personify the power in the form of a human figure are all part of it. As I repeat, there seems to be a sense of an initiating consciousnesses involved in the manifestations—almost every culture feels it.

We note that Scholem shows this thing also as the world of the "inner man" that "opens only to contemplation." With Blake, it opens up to the artist, Los, the creator of the sacred.

Even the Iñupiat creation story shows something of the same primordial being. In this Native American story the "whale"—an animal, note—seems to be that "one person which is everything" to which Paracelsus refers. Here the Iñupiat raven trickster pulled the whole world up out of the sea with his harpoon while he was paddling on the endless ocean in his kayak. It was "the" whale that he pulled up, it was

the point at Point Hope, Tikigaaq, it was the woman, the shaman, it was the world. There is no contradiction in this kind of thinking, it is true in the real world of the shaman. "It works," as the Iñupiaq healer woman said.

There is ambiguity at every step, and it is fitting. Logic is not the tool for this material. Let us review the ambiguities: it is power, or a reservoir or shadow world, or an "ether," and/or a biological endowment, a faculty which we will need in the last analysis; or "flowing" in focused enterprises (ritual or sport or any work). These ideas are potentialities, conditions, elements, or elemental forces. *Or*, and also *and*, it is the inner person, or a primordial person the size of the universe, or God, or the shamanic helper spirit of the Inupiat and many other cultures, one that has the initiative and may come in dreams as the Shadow or in apparitions as a female helper; or a soul that survives death and may return, or a string of healing ancestors (or "archetypes"?)—all of them persons. The Christian attempt to state the ambiguities in the "trinity" is a brave one, but fearfully limited in face of the wide-flung string of meanings that exists.

All these various phenomena make play or live in this world extending between people, that world of which we are collectively consciousness in a dim way, "the collective psyche," which appears to be operating at every turn, just as both sides of our brain operate at every turn. The thing seems to be an endowment with which we were born. And as such, it is very much the subject for serious ethnographic exploration. Human cultures in varying contexts have a strong idea that such thinking is true. Where Jung wins out is because he follows what he actually experiences, and does not posit some theological system with a supreme being who issues a list of rules. This "thing" is like the "urgrund" (the primal ground of being) of Berdiaev (much read by Victor Turner). But in Jung's notion there is a stronger sense of the power that anthropologists find so anomalous but which persistently turns up in their fieldwork.

So we may find something like the "collective unconscious" a useful concept, recognizable and palpable, and when we describe *around* it as I have been doing—and all I can do—it sets off affirmation. What has been missing up to now is a more general and working idea (rather than that of the now hackneyed "archetypes") of *what* we are collectively

unconscious of, and especially of the *we*, plural, who join in the experience. So an overview such as this is useful.

There are various forms in which such material has appeared, sometimes in pure narrative ethnography such as *In Sorcery's Shadow* (1989) by Paul Stoller. In my book, *The Hands Feel It: Healing and Spirit Presence Among a Northern Alaskan People*, spirit events, with which the people were quite familiar, came in flashes like the way the herds of caribou, shoals, and pods of whales seem to arrive at random. In Suchitra Samanta's article "The Powers of the Guru: Sakti, 'Mind,' and Miracles in Narratives of Bengali Religious Experience" (1998: 30–50) it appears in the stories of her informants, now obviously her friends. Favret-Saada was bewitched, Eleanor Smith Bowen in *Return to Laughter* saw witch spirits, Evans-Pritchard also—there were many. Among the Iñupiat I myself had to do some healing; I had an obligation, and I did know a little how to do it. I had never been so recognizably part of a healing occasion—this was anthropology face to face.

One live soul informed with the possibility of real connection is all it takes.

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“Foreign” or “Interregional” Elements in Siberian and Central Asian Shamanism

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BUDAPEST

If we wish to study the “original” or, conversely, the “artificial” expressions of shamanism—as Hultkrantz (2003) has suggested—we in fact find ourselves dealing frequently with “foreign” or, more formally, “interregional” elements. In my paper I stress the fact that the absorption of foreign elements is a very common phenomenon in all religions. I list first some cases of interpretatio externa concerning shamanism, and then of the use of foreign terms in shamanism. Drums and flying can be explained not only in shamanism, but also, for example, in medieval high music in Europe inspired by the Crusades by reference to Karl May’s enthusiasm for the Zeppelin balloon as a means of ecstatic flying. Early Central Asian sources (see Sukhareva 1940) show a wide variety of “foreign” terms in folk beliefs, which have been interpreted (e.g. Snesarev 1969) as “relics of shamanism.” Without presenting an exhaustive catalogue of such elements, the task of my paper is to call the attention of future scholars to the need to apply the methods of comparative religion to such phenomena in shamanism just as they are in other subject areas.

If we want to study the “original” or “artificial” expressions of shamanism, we have to make a distinction between genuine and loan phenomena. As Hultkrantz (2003: 14) has written, “As far as I can see the original form of shamanism is preserved in the shamanic structure of the Northern Eurasian and Siberian areas, with their faint expressions of artificial shamanism.” In my paper I wish only to stress the similar importance of making a distinction between “regional” and “foreign” features of shamanism.¹

¹ Because I shall speak on general topics, and about well-known scholars of shamanism, I will give but very few bibliographic references, and only when the quoted works are not very common in shamanistic studies.

Religions, in the broad sense of the word, often show foreign or interregional² elements. West African *fetish* figur(in)es, dating from the 16th century A.D. on, not only have made-in-Europe iron nails and glass mirrors, but also their name derives from the Latin adjective *factitius*. This is a clear case of “foreign” elements in the religions concerned. Recent “world religions” often preserve some of their roots from distant regions—Christianity from the Holy Land, Asian Islam from Arabia, and so on. Melanesian *cargo cults* concentrate on the “arrival” of ships from beyond, loaded with “magical” goods, and even the English word *cargo* originates from the Spanish *cargo, carga*, meaning ‘burden’ or ‘load.’ There is no doubt about the interregional character of early archaeological finds of *ocher* pigments, used to paint people’s bodies a reddish brown color. Even if today we are unable to say what was the exact meaning of *ocher* in the religion of prehistoric times, we can with confidence assert that *ocher* was transported over thousands of miles, and again this clearly shows the interregional character of early religions.

Another well-known fact of comparative religion is that referred to as *interpretatio externa*, whereby foreign or interregional terms are used to describe hitherto unknown or less known religious phenomena. Not only did Greek, Roman and Christian authors use their own vocabulary in this manner, as we can see in texts marked by *interpretatio Graeca, Romana, Christiana* etc., it is also a worldwide custom, timeless and limitless, evident even in the origins of the modern scientific methods of comparative religion.

Descriptions of Siberian shamanism are no exception to this rule. D. Banzarov (in a paper written as early as 1846, first republished together with his other papers in 1891) called Mongol shamanism a “black belief” (*chernaia vera*), and when Julius Krohn (1894: 85) gave a summary picture of the Uralic shamans he used terms such as *magus*

² In my present vocabulary the adjective “interregional” will be used when a phenomenon occurs in several regions that can easily be distinguished from one another. It will be used only as a technical term, and I am not going into any discussion on divergence *versus* convergence (nor on problems of diffusion in general).

and even *spiritist*. In contemporary press articles, "modern shamans" or "urban shamans" exemplify the other end of the same way of thinking: if through *interpretatio externa* shamans might be called "priests," "monks," "magicians," "yogis" etc., on the other hand all kinds of exorcists, healers, drug addicts, witches and witch-masters and even experimental artists could be labeled as "shamans."³

Centuries ago a resort to metaphor was the only possible way to set down the first understandable descriptions of the newly found cases of shamanism. But in our days such imprecise terminology, describing anyone as a shaman, popular and successful a terminology as it appears to be militates against scholarly treatment of the complex problem of classifying the forms of religious activity in comparative studies of shamanism.⁴ When in the course of several works the same scholar writing, for example, about "religious leaders" of the American Indians changes the terms he uses to describe the same person, referring to him alternately as "magician," "medicine-man," "shaman" etc., this is no way to cope with the regional or interregional features of shamanism.⁵ The "revival" of shamanism, as in the former Soviet Union, is an interesting phenomenon, also showing interregional features, but I do not propose to enter into discussion of it here.⁶

Foreign terms in a local religious vocabulary are not a rarity either. The English *devil* (which sounds so authentically Anglo-Saxon, cf. German *Teufel*) derives from the Latin *diabolus*, which in turn comes from the Greek *diabolos*, 'slanderer.' The first Sura of the *Koran* (probably written during the life of Mohammed) was first entitled [*as-Sab'*] *al-maṭānī*, which comes from the Hebrew *mišnā*, 'tradition,' and in its text too we can find other borrowings from *Old Testament* vocabulary.

It is a well-known fact that the Finnish *perkele*, 'devil' (and perhaps even *piru*, meaning the same, is a Baltic loan word.⁷ The Lappish

³ On the problem, see Hoppál 2000.

⁴ For recent criticism see Francfort and Hamayon (eds.) 2001.

⁵ In this respect the most confused area is the study of South American "shamanism," see Hultkrantz 2003.

⁶ See an excellent presentation by Johansen 2001, which has just the necessary further references.

⁷ Here and in the following I refer to generally accepted etymologies, so I am not giving exhaustive bibliographic references to the etymological dictionaries.

stallo, 'giant, ogre, malevolent spirit, devil,' may come from the Scandinavian *stole*, 'huge man.' The Nordic *seiðr*, 'magic, place of sorcery' (together or without Lappish *seita*, 'place for sacrifice') became a central issue in comparative studies of early shamanism in North Europe. The Nordic word *Finn* and the Finnic (as well as Russian) *Lap(p)* both soon acquired the meaning 'cunning person, magician, sorcerer.' All these words are "interregional" loans in the respective languages, reflecting also the ancient interregional beliefs involved.

The most important term, the word *shaman* itself, clearly follows the same principle in Siberian and Central Asian shamanism.⁸ *Saman/šaman* as a word/term is known in written documents only since the last third of the 17th century. It is usual to consider a Tunguz word, *šaman*, with the curious meaning 'Buddhist monk,' as the original form. (Some scholars, however, view this word as a "foreign" loan in Tunguz.) As early as the 19th century a Sanskrit (and Pali) etymology was suggested: *śramaṇa*, then *samaṇa*, and the later Pali/Buddhist word might have come to the Tunguz through the Chinese word *sha-men*. This etymology is still popularized in various handbooks, but it is questionable in every detail—the famous orientalist Schott was expressing his doubts as early as 1842. Altaic linguists attempted to reject it in favor of a Manchu–Tunguz etymology, which, unfortunately, is again a mere fantasy. Some scholars would like to have a far-away etymology for 'shaman,' related to an old "world religion," while others wish to have a Siberian, local background for the word. Foreign or "foreign" influences on the key term of "shamanism" are thus at stake.

On the other hand, it is another well-known fact that the major terms for "shaman" in Siberia clearly follow language family boundaries. Without going into detail, we could say that a complete (!) semasiological dictionary of Siberian and Central Asian shamanism would solve many problems in the distribution of special terms.

I want to stress that, from the point of view of comparative religion, the genuine and the foreign (or the "foreign") origin of the word "shaman" have the same value. Similar cases can be made for all three (or more) etymological solutions in many other religions too.

⁸ For more details see my summary (Voigt 1984). For some other considerations see Voigt 2000: 41–46 (originally written in 1990).

Not only words, but artifacts (tools or paraphernalia) too can be classified as genuine *versus* foreign elements in religions. For example, umbrellas and parasols occur similarly in European, African, Asian, Oceanian and American religious customs. The Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen wrote on “galoches of luck” in a semi-magical mood. The English writer Rudyard Kipling described the “Lord of the Dynamo” as adored by a pariah. We could compile an endless list of “foreign” artifacts that play a decisive role in religions.

For shamanism the drum is perhaps the most important instrument of this kind. The Central Asian or Siberian shaman’s drums are of a simple construction and, thanks to thorough ethnographic research, we know that there are several technical and formal sub-groups, from the Amur region to the Lapps. Because in Siberian shamanism drums have only been used in *séances* (and not for other purposes, such as for music, time-reckoning, or military signaling), their geographic and ethnic typology might well serve the regional characterization of Siberian shamanism. But as soon as we leave the Siberian area, “drums for religion” present us with a more complicated situation.

The bronze “drums” (often with “illustrations” depicting rituals that refer to the world view of a given culture) found in China, Vietnam, Korea, Japan and other regions have a considerable historical past and belong to a special cultural area.⁹ It is impossible to say whether or to what extent these traditions have influenced the use of drums in Siberian shamanism. As musical instruments, the drums of Central Asian shamans cross the border of shamanism proper to the south and the west, appearing quite regularly in the Ottoman Empire. The so-called “great drum” (a flat instrument covered with a single membrane on the upper side) came to Europe with the Ottoman Turks. The famous Venetian painter Vittore Carpaccio, in his painting *Scuola di S. Giorgio e Trifone* (1505), depicts such a Turkish musical instrument, which is about 60 cm across. Some years later a woodcut by the Flemish painter Pieter de Kock van Aelst shows a smaller Turkish drum. We know that the painter visited Constantinople, and so we can conclude that his drawing is that of an

⁹ I was able to consider only a few questions of bronze drum illustrations in my paper (Voigt 1984–85).

eyewitness.¹⁰ In Western Europe the drum was also used as a musical instrument by the military, mostly in England and France (where its name was *grosse caisse à une seule peau*). When Curt Sachs describes the history of the European cylinder drum, he too admits the early oriental influence: “Des römischen Reiches bunte Spielmanns- und Gauklervolk hatte sich ja der Trommeln asiatischer Kulte bemächtigt; als sich die Joculatores nach dem Untergang des Imperiums in breitem Strom über Gallien und Germanien, über Hispanien und Britannien ergossen, haben sie den Barbaren mit zahlreichen andern Relikten der antiken Kultur auch die Trommel übermittlelt” (Sachs 1930: 95). Even if we do not think that his general view of the history of the cylinder drum would stand up today without modification, it is obvious that drums have a very spectacular “foreign and interregional” cultural history, and, without further clarification, not all drums (or similar tools, like *sieves*) used in religions could immediately be connected with shamanism.

Not only the names and instruments of shamanism, but behavior patterns too can be traced beyond regional boundaries. The same observation is valid for most religions: the “phenomenology of religion” describes just those motivations. It would be very simple to demonstrate that ecstasy, the taking of hallucinogens, *glossolalia*, etc., are typical features in different religions of the world. If one accepts the interpretation of the *Soma* plant as *Amanita muscaria*,¹¹ one realizes only with some surprise that references to curious behavior like drinking the urine of someone who has eaten the *Amanita muscaria* mushroom occur in both Siberia and India. Some scholars (e.g. Wasson) tend to stress direct contacts, while others (e.g. Toporov 1985) are more cautious, giving only some worldwide parallels.

If we wished to give only one example to show how difficult it is to determine direct (genetical) or independent (typological) parallels/coincidences, we could mention the “flight of shamans.” Flying is a universal motif in human myth, religion and dreams. There is a deep inner desire to fly, and at the same time a fear of flying. It is characteristic of the

¹⁰ See Sachs 1930: 110.

¹¹ See e.g. the studies by R. Gordon Wasson (1969), Ivanov and Toporov or O’Flaherty (1973).

shaman's *séance* that, in trance, shamans fly away to obtain knowledge, fight enemies or meet the spirits. Shaman's songs mention quite frequently, and usually explicitly, the actual flight. But if we read, for example, the papers presented at an international conference¹² on "flight and faint," with their references to Pre-Columbian and colonial Peru, to Ancient Egypt, to the Azande in Africa, to flight metaphors in Japan—and, of course to witchcraft and shamanism—we see quite clearly the worldwide nature of the "flying" complex. But its universality goes still further. In his paper, Reinicke¹³ describes an interesting event. Just before his death (22 March 1912), the writer Karl May gave a lecture in Vienna entitled *Empor ins Reich der Edelmenschen*, in which, inspired by the success of the Zeppelin balloon, he envisions the flight into Paradise (!) as the solution to all mankind's problems. Some of his phrases are indeed characteristic, such as that Paradise is "oben, im herrlichen Dschinnistan" (i.e. in the land of the spirits), or "Die Zeit der auch geistigen Aeroplane ist da." The ideologies of the shamans, of Count Zeppelin and Karl May, would seem to be indistinguishable one from another, and thus, of course, in many respects they are "foreign" and "interreligious."

Recently it has become popular to connect European witch-flying with shamanism, speaking of something that is referred to as "Old European shamanism" and finding its traces in documents of witch trials. As is well known, Eliade (1975), to turn to his earlier assumptions, was the opinion-former of comparative religion who saw traces of shamanism in medieval European witchcraft. In his review he did not praise over much Ginzburg's famous book (1966) on the *benandati* in Friuli, but Ginzburg gave new life to Eliade's idea in several of his works. Personally I consider that connecting the survival of "Old European shamanism" to the witch-lore of Early Modern Europe is too glib, and it does not tell us much either about European witches or about Asian shamans.¹⁴ The Karl-May syndrome described earlier might help to cool down the adherents of that kind of comparison—if we want to

¹² See Bauer and Behringer (eds.) 1997.

¹³ See Bauer und Behringer 1997: 317–343.

¹⁴ See the proceedings of the 1988 Budapest conference on witches: Klaniczay and Pócs 1991–92.

use another well-known "term" of ecstasy and belief, the metaphor of "cool" and "coolness" as a form of religion.

If we wished to sum up the comparative aspects discussed above, the best way would be to refer to summary works on the original (i.e. Siberian) form of shamanism that contain observations on regional differences and similarities. Without going into an exhaustive account of research on Siberian and Central Asian shamanism, we can state that there are good regional sketches in handbooks and general monographs but that until now no monograph has been written that arranges its material on the basis of descriptions of the regional *versus* interregional elements of Central Asian or Siberian shamanism.¹⁵ An older research tradition, from Mikhailovski and Stadling to P. Wilhelm Schmidt, Nioradze, Ohlmarks and, finally, Eliade, was aware of the problem, but it did not attempt a definitive answer. It is also true that, up to the end of the 1960s, Soviet scholars tried to combine regional and areal aspects. Anisimov, S. V. Ivanov and others presented a general, stratified picture of shamanism, but they did not stress the importance of "foreign" elements.

The next generation of scholars chose two other ways in which to summarize the regional phenomena of shamanism. Mikhailov (1980) for the Buryat, and Alekseev (1980, 1984, 1987¹⁶) for the Siberian Turks, presented a detailed historical-stratificational picture, thus suggesting that the development of shamanism in Siberia could be described on an ethnic basis. Their method is valid, but the differences between the various local/historical monographs are significant and are likely to be bridged only by a next step in the research process: a comparative evaluation of regional monographs. This *desideratum* has not yet been achieved.

Another important trend was started by G. P. Snesev (and others) as early as the 1960s. Based first upon Khoresmian archeology and, to a lesser extent, on the results of ethnographic-folkloristic fieldwork, the participating scholars tried to identify the "Pre-Islamic strata" (*do-*

¹⁵ For the scholars mentioned here, see my old paper: Voigt 1976, which has further bibliographic references.

¹⁶ Alekseev 1987 is a German translation of Alekseev 1984 with an excellent index of the terms.

musulmanskie/doislamskie relikty) in the beliefs of the Uzbeks in Khorezm (Snesarev 1969), in Central Asia (Snesarev and Basilov [eds.] 1975), and in a similar way among the people of Daghestan (Gadzhiev 1991). One of the most important members of this school was V. N. Basilov (first in his early book: 1970), who tried to combine the methodology of Soviet scholars with those of Western researchers of comparative religion. The main idea of this trend was that local folk beliefs in the areas concerned were later superposed by Islam. "Pre-Islamic" phenomena were, thus, original and "Islamic" phenomena were later, interregional ones. From the outset this trend classified shamanism as belonging to the first and older stratum. The general framework appeared to be prolific, but some doubts remain as to its evaluation.¹⁷

As early as S. E. Malov (1918), A. E. Snesarev (1969) and others, the folk beliefs in spirits and souls of East Turkestan, Pamir and Samarkand were declared to have a shamanic origin. Uzbek and especially Tajik data were collected and interpreted in this way. Both the general framework of the terms and classifications used and the evolutionary nodes of the history of religion were borrowed from Frazer and Sternberg. Early excavations in Khorezm served the same purpose (as in the unpublished dissertation by O. A. Sukhareva 1940, followed by several of her later papers). The words *parxon/parixon* (from Iranian *pari* 'peri, fairy or elf descended from evil angels' and *xon-* 'to read, to sing, to cry') and *folbin* (from Iranian *fol* 'fortune telling, prediction, forecast' and *bin-* 'to see') were used in Khorezm, whereas the common Central Asian Turkic *bakšy* was not used there (Snesarev 1969: 44). It might perhaps be of interest to point out that the latter word has a very complicated history. According to Räsänen (1969: 59) it derives from the Chinese *po-shih* and has various meanings, such as 'Lehrer, buddh. Gelehrter' in Uighur, 'Sympathiedoktor' in Sart, 'Volkssänger, Musikant' in Turkmen, 'Schreiber' in Cumanian, 'Baksa, Schamane' in Kazakh, 'teacher' in Chaghatay, Eastern Turkic (= New Uighur), Taranchi and Soyot, and 'house-wife, mistress' in Yakut. The field for reconstructing the religious history of the term is also wide open. G. P.

¹⁷ I am proud to mention that the "father" of such investigations was the great Hungarian orientalist, Ignaz Goldziher, who stressed the importance of studying the early "cult of the saints" in Islam. See his first paper in 1880, followed later by further publications.

Snesarev (1969: 23–72) listed all kinds of spirits and ghosts, magic, and even prayers in his chapter on “Relics of shamanism.” To make matters still more complicated, he referred to Knorozov (1949) and others, who saw in Central Asian shamanism a later stratum, connected only with the later invasion of Turkic peoples in that region, thus being originally a “foreign” element there. Snesarev himself argued for an autochthonous origin, stressing the Iranian background of words and religious practice. This would apply, of course, also to earlier data. Knorozov, describing the mausoleum of Shamun-nabi in the Khorezm oasis, accepted the assumption of Mehmed Fuad Köprülüzade (1929) that went so far as to relate shamanism to mystical Muslim religious orders or sects, an assumption for which he offered no corroborating evidence of his own.

And not only have the traces of “pre-Islamic” beliefs in Central Asia or Siberia been connected with shamanism. Manzhigeev’s “dictionary” (1978) of “shamanistic and pre-shamanistic terms” used among the Buryat contains more than 1,000 (!) entries. Good explanations are given for each term, but the author provides no classification, etymologies or comparative notes. The dictionary even includes words like ‘nest,’ ‘rainbow,’ ‘nine,’ ‘dairy product’ and others that have only the most casual connection with shamanism.

If we consider such early forms of religion (shamanism included) as “local” and see the “interregional” or “foreign” elements only as later forms, we cannot understand the international background of shamanism. Soviet scholars, asserting their unique position as the only experts on local traditions (and controlling the primary archives, publications, etc.), often tended to neglect comparative studies, especially those that would have encompassed subject areas which lay beyond the borders of the Russian and later the Soviet Empire. But shamanism, like any religion, does not observe such restrictions. Lamaism and Buddhism, and of course Islam, have appeared in Siberia and Central Asia, and no time limit can be placed on the beginning of such early interregional contacts.

In the title of my paper I made a cautions bracketing, placing the terms “foreign” and “interregional” in quotation marks. When we have learned more about the early comparative history of Siberian and Central Asian shamanism, we will be able to make a more precise distinction between “foreign” and foreign (without quotation marks!) elements.

The same goes for the second label, "interregional." This is intended for clear cases of borrowing, whereas the first is for practical purposes—for those cases where we can allow that there has an external motivation but are unable to analyze it in an exact way.

The task of my paper has been to call attention to the need for further research along the lines drawn above.

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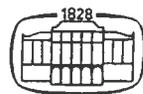
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An “Enic” Perspective on the Music of the Manchu–Tunguz Peoples of Siberia

MARILYN WALKER

SACKVILLE. N.B., CANADA

As with Indigenous Peoples everywhere, Siberians define their future in terms of their traditions. The Indigenous Peoples of Russia identify music as central to their identities as distinct nations and ethnic minorities within the new Russian Federation. Music asserts their collective identity as Native Peoples in relation to the dominant Russian ideology and culture and as minority peoples in the global context. The expression, preservation, and revitalization of a diverse but unifying musical heritage are seen as key to sustainable cultural, economic and political development in Sakha today. The traditional circle dance of the Manchu–Tunguz Peoples of Sakha as well as Sakha’s High Music School and Jew’s Harp Museum are discussed in relation to these themes. The theoretical and methodological implications are explored through definition of the concept “enic” to suggest new ways of researching indigenous music which can inform the social sciences generally.

Introduction

A rapidly expanding interest by academics in indigenous knowledge (IK) has not acknowledged music as a key means by which culture is preserved, expressed and passed on, yet music articulates the collective spirit of Indigenous Peoples more than any other carrier of culture. Through scholarly inquiry and the western gaze, the music of Indigenous Peoples has been secularized and historicized. Western science has marginalized indigenous music (IM) as an expressive art with few theoretical implications.

“Outsiders” are used to conceptualizing indigenous music, analyzing it and objectifying it. By doing so, we distance ourselves from it. It is difficult for us as westerners, scientists and academics, used to relying

on our powers of observation, to become engaged in its multisensory and holistic nature. We can teach ourselves to become so, however, not through study but through the experience of indigenous music. This deep experience of music is characteristic of indigenous cultures.

Emic and etic (common approaches in ethnography) are dualistic terms that ignore the underlying unity of existence which is at the basis of indigenous music. I suggest a new term "enic," meaning "entering into" which provides for an experiential and intuitive approach to understanding indigenous music.

In this paper, in which I explore the music of the Siberian Native Peoples of Sakha, I suggest new ways for conceptualizing and researching indigenous knowledge, and especially indigenous music, which can inform the social sciences generally. Sakha is home to a diverse and ancient musical heritage which is represented in the circle dance of the Manchu-Tunguz Peoples, Sakha's High Music School and its Jew's Harp Museum, as well as in family traditions and individual performances.

Shifting Research Paradigms

Since the 1960s I have been working in indigenous communities with a continuing interest in the epistemology of indigenous knowledge. More recently, my work as a medical anthropologist in the healing traditions of Eurasia and the Pacific Rim has merged with my "other" interests in playing music especially percussion, and in applying various shamanic techniques therapeutically. It was not until I made visits to Russia beginning in 1999 that I began to consider music *as* indigenous knowledge, however. From these and subsequent visits to Siberia (as well as India and Southeast Asia), I began to understand how music accesses and expresses the deepest levels of the indigenous experience. Music can help us to more fully understand this experience as well as benefit from it on many levels.

These visits incorporated conferences with work in Moscow and field trips to various regions of Siberia, and were a unique opportunity for foreign and Russian researchers to work with Indigenous Peoples and Russian officials (Siberian Native Peoples among them) of the

republics of the new Russian Federation. Together, we represented a broad range of perspectives on the study of the concepts and praxis of various genres of indigenous knowledge, of which music has become a focal one for me.

The 1999 International Congress on Shamanism and Other Indigenous Spiritual Beliefs and Practices brought in healers including shamans from Siberia into Moscow, inspiring my investigation, both scientific and experiential, into shamanic music. The 2000 conference, “Musical Ethnography of Manchu–Tunguz Peoples,” provided a rare opportunity to meet with indigenous performers, composers, linguists, elders, shamans, descendants of shamans (Walker 2004), historians and artists in their home territory, the newly established Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) now a sovereign state of Russia. Bokova Evdokia Nikolaevna (Kulun-Elbut, Momi Region) composed a healing song for me, changing forever my perception of music and healing. Among other things, I experienced the importance of the relationship between healer and client (Walker 2003). Bokova’s intent to heal was strong and I was able to “open” myself to the experience as we are told to do by traditional healers.

Nadjeda Duvan, Director of the Ulchi Folklife Group in which her daughter is a gifted performer, showed me how the traditional dances, rituals and melodies of the Ulchi Peoples of the Amur River Region keep the balance of nature and embody the soul of the Nanai People such that if people lose their traditions, they say, they lose their soul. I learned that the Ulchi nation now has only four shamans left and my research agenda changed irrevocably from documenting traditional knowledge to finding ways to support traditional healers, musicians and shamans to continue to practice. From participating in the circle dance of the Manchu–Tunguz Peoples at a sacred site, I learned how song and dance effect change on the individual and group levels. And I experienced the deep multilevel and multisensory changes that can come about from the simplest and most ancient of instruments—the jew’s harp.

At the 2001 Congress held in Kyzyl, Abakan and Moscow, I had a chance to learn directly from musicians such as the lead singer of the Tuvan throat-singing group Koshkendeï Igor, from shamans and performers of traditional songs, stories and folk tales. The renowned Tuvan

throat-singer Nicholaï Oorzhak is an accomplished musician as well as a shaman, using overtone singing to heal others and also to put himself into an altered state to carry out his healing work. His music removed the barriers between mind/body/spirit that are upheld in a western understanding of music. I had further opportunities to work with him at the 2004 Congress.

I was given a healing by, and recorded a healing song of Bair Rinchinov, a Buryat shaman who has since been designated a Foundation for Shamanic Studies Living Treasure of Shamanism. His powerful drumming and singing—in his native language—reminded me how much westerners rely on the “aurality” of music and on the meaning of a song rather than on our experience of it. And there were many more men and women, places and events which contributed to my expanding experience of the healing properties of the music of Indigenous Peoples.

These experiences led me to coin the term “indigenous music (IM),” coined from the term “indigenous knowledge,” and to explore further the theoretical and methodological implications of this new focus to my work. Through the unusual opportunities these gatherings offered to work directly with musicians and healers, including shamans, I came to understand the significance of music in Siberian cultures from what I term an “emic” perspective.

Emic, Etic and “Emic”

My studies of music generated the concept of emic, a term I introduced at the 2004 “Sacral Through the Eyes of the Lay and Initiated Congress” (Walker 2004). The terms ‘emic’ and ‘etic’ were coined by linguist-anthropologist Kenneth Pike in 1954 (Pike 1967). In anthropology, they distinguish an insider’s perspective from an outsider’s, the observer from the observed, and the subjective from the objective experience. Usually seen as exclusionary or contrasting viewpoints, they separate the beliefs and actions of a researcher studying a situation from those of the participants.

Whereas separation of ‘self’ from ‘other’ is a universal human process, western social science continues to embody the dualism embraced by Descartes. This dualism underlies the differentiation between emic and

etic maintained in research as well as the hegemonic separation western science makes between indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge, the arts (including music) music and science. Åke Hultkrantz points out the incompatibility between dualism and the indigenous world view:

The Western religious dichotomy between a world of spiritual plenitude and a world of material imperfection, a dualism pertaining to Christian and Gnostic doctrines, has no counterpart in American Indian thinking¹. Indians value highly life on earth, and their religion supports their existence in this world. The whole spirit of their religion is one of harmony, vitality, and appreciation of the world around them. (Hultkrantz 1987: 24)

Hultkrantz documented the connections amongst shamanism, healing and ritual drama in his study of Native North American religious traditions (1992), extending our understanding of indigenous remedies from simply empirical or profane to supernatural. His work inspired my focus on the need for new, experiential methodologies if we are to come close to understanding indigenous cultures, and the importance of music to the indigenous world view. Music transcends the duality of the empirical and supernatural, and of the human and natural worlds. By *enic*, I mean “entering into an experience.”

Indigenous and scientific ways of knowing have been compared extensively in the recent literature. Written by those with an indigenous ‘cast of mind’ (for example, Nelson 1983; Arundale 2003; Cruikshank 1990; Ridington 1990; Harner 1980; Brody 1981; Basso 1996; Davis 1992; Turner 1990) and by indigenous peoples themselves (such as Kawagley 1995; Smith 1999), more and more studies articulate an emic perspective. Few studies on scientific or indigenous knowledge by westerners or indigenous peoples provide an in-depth understanding of the value of music in indigenous epistemology. Few acknowledge music as a legitimate and, I would argue, primary form of knowledge (Walker 2003). In the indigenous cultures in which I have worked in Siberia, Southeast Asia, northern North America, and in northern India with Tibetans, music is given prominence for its way of knowing about the world and our place within it.

¹ The geographic focus of this book is Native America but his views also apply to Siberia and the common world view of indigenous cultures.

It is rare to find researchers who directly incorporate music as an expression of knowledge into their lives and work. Diamond et al. (1994) are exceptions. As they point out in their ground-breaking study of music amongst First Nations in Northeastern America,

Within academic work, we often discuss music as if it were separable from the events and experiences of our daily lives. In the teachings of Native consultants, on the other hand, music is integrated with dance, spirituality, and life; the discourse about all these things often focuses on personal experience; and the right way to begin more often involves celebration and thanks than rigorous explanation or analysis." (Diamond et al. 1994: 2)

By shifting towards an emic perspective, we can experience rather than theorize music and come to understand more closely how music is integrated within the indigenous world view. An emic approach can also suggest new ways of conceptualizing, documenting, and analyzing Indigenous Knowledge for the benefit of indigenous peoples and of researchers and scientists.

The ethnomusicology of the Manchu–Tunguz Peoples has primarily been researched and explicated by Europeans from an etic perspective. From an emic perspective, however, music cannot be "explained." Now, since *glasnost*, it is important that Native People are investigating their culture themselves but different tools and approaches are needed from those developed by outsiders; aims and purposes differ as will methods of inquiry. According to Robbek Vasiliĭ Ignatievich (who is Yakutsk and Director of the Institute of Northern Minorities) the most important topic to be studied is the consciousness of Native People. Science has avoided subjects such as spirituality and emic interpretations of culture; the music of Sakha needs to be studied from different perspectives. People spoke at the 2000 conference about how the music of Manchu–Tunguz Peoples can be fixed in written form but this written form cannot show the complexity of feelings that arise when you hear such music. Science tries to document the culture of a people but the Manchu–Tunguz people had little in the way of material goods—all their riches, their baggage, I was told, they carried in their soul. Music affects our subconscious, we respond intuitively; the music of the Manchu–Tunguz nation is said to join different nations at the level of the subconscious.

Indigenous Peoples of Siberia and the State

More than a hundred different ethnic groups of what used to be the Soviet Union populate Siberia² today. Russians, Ukrainians, Khanti and Mansi (Finno-Ugric Peoples) Georgians, Germans, Jews, Belorussians, Lithuanians, and many others are now represented here from earlier migrations into Siberia. Indigenous Peoples—Buryats, Yakuts, Siberian Tatars, Nenets, Enets, Nganasans, Selkups, Chukchis and others—are minority peoples in numbers, and also in terms of their relationship with the Russian state and the dominant Russian culture and ideology. Apart from the diversity of ethnic identification, other factors have affected the heterogeneity of the ethnic composition of the Siberian population.

The so-called indigenous small-numbered peoples of Siberia, the North and the Far East at present constitute 26 nations included in the official list such as the Evenks, Evens, Khanti, Mansi listed above). The indigenous peoples of Siberia are not included in this list because of official criteria (there are numbers are greater, that is exceeding a population of 50,000, better economic conditions). In this group are the Yakuts, Buryats and groups of Russian "old-timers." A third group that needs to be demarcated is the non-indigenous "newly arrived" population which has been migrating to Siberia since the mid 20th century, either as victims of Stalinist repression or as voluntary employees attracted by the benefits offered to participants in the state's large-scale building projects such as the Baikul Amur Railroad) This latter group includes newcomers from different parts of Russia or former Soviet republics who worked in camps or settled and formed their own diasporas in Siberia.³ Historically, Siberia was conceptualized by the Russian state as a hinterland. Russian authorities saw it as a prison for misfits, criminals and dissidents. From the 1930s on, to exploit Siberia's natural resources, millions of Soviet migrants were moved into the northern regions, adding their manpower to the forced labour of the notorious work camps under Dictator Joseph Stalin and to the economic opportunities

² Another name for northern Asia (approximately everything east of 60°E and north of 50°N).

³ Povorozniuk, personal communication, September 23, 2004.

made available to them under expansionist state policies. The eventual intermarriage amongst these peoples and with the Siberian Native Peoples led to the ethnic diversity of the Russian Far North and to Native Peoples being a minority in their homelands. According to the 1989 Soviet census, aboriginal people number about a million and a half of some 32 million inhabitants.

In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed. With the transition from communism to capitalism, people's citizenship, homelands and identities came into question amongst all of the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union. Although early predictions projected a rapid transition from a state-owned command economy and authorization state to market capitalism and democracy, the transition has been far slower, and more problematic and disruptive, than anticipated. Siberian Native Peoples are now dealing with the economic and political upheavals resulting from the break-up of the former Soviet Union. The ensuing economic effects have been severe but have not affected all members of society equally. Many of the new business elite have become fabulously rich whereas most peoples are struggling in Russia today and without the former safety net of the old regime's economic system.

Siberian Native Peoples have been especially hard hit by the economic crisis. Whereas Siberia has provided the raw materials and resources for the development of Russia—furs, fish, timber, and later, oil and gas, gold, coal and precious stones, Indigenous People have not benefited equally from the riches their homelands have produced. The Russian North, which takes up 65% of Russia, is home to 8% of the population of the Russian Federation but produces 20% of its national income. Russia extracts 92% of its gas and 50% of its timber from the North (Nikolaev⁴ 1994: 11). Processing of these materials is based in the south and central areas of Russia so the region has not benefited from employment opportunities associated with these industries.

The cost of living is higher here than in the urban areas, yet, the average salary exceeds the national average by only 1.4–1.8 times while the cost of food is 1.5–2.5 times that of the city (Nikolaev 1994: 20). Northerners represent one-sixth of the nation's registered unemployed. National policies of sedentarization begun in the 1920's, and

⁴ Mikhail Nikolaev is President of the Sakha Republic.

collectivization of food production that put limits on the size of large and small farms, allocated vast territories for state-owned farms, eroding indigenous land and resource management systems. Farming families' livestock was confiscated, taken over by the state and became the responsibility of large co-operatives. As in other countries with indigenous populations, educational levels attained are lower than those of the general population, housing is substandard, and language and cultural traditions are at risk.

Health problems are rampant. Ethnic peoples of Siberia have the lowest life expectancy in Russia—less than 50 years for men. Northerners, because of the high costs of travel, cannot access medical care and clinics which are centralized in the south. Traditional medicine, rooted in shamanism, is one of the many areas that have been in conflict with mainstream Russian medicine and health care. Shamanism and the music associated with it were persecuted under Russian domination especially during Stalin's times where persecution was especially severe; but generally Native Peoples' music has not measured up to mainstream Russian music supported and promoted by the state. That the Republic's largest scientific organization, the Russian Academy of Sciences Siberian Division, established in 1991 the unit "Institute of the Northern Minorities Problem," points to the continuing difficulties of state/Indigenous Peoples relations.

Ethnicity and Identity in Siberia

Whether viewed in terms of long-term resistance or cultural revival, Siberian traditions remain strong, marking a distinctive ethnic identity that is a source of pride and hope for the future. Ancestral traditions are foci around which ethnic identities are coalescing at the local, regional, national and international levels. In writing about the complexities of the transitions from communist rule to democracy, Dawson describes the viability of ethnic identity/ies:

One of the most enduring aspects of the communist legacy has been the fragmentation of these societies and lack of strong group identities on which to base mobilization appeals . . . When communism collapsed, there were few

preexisting group identities that could be counted on to provide the basis for effective mobilization.

Ironically, the one group identity that was reinforced by communist institutions was ethnicity. (Dawson 1999: 21)

Also addressing the issue of identity in post-Communist Russia, "The demise of the Soviet Union has produced, in addition to a strange and vast mixture of human opportunity and misery, a wonderful opportunity for social theorists to test a wide assortment of propositions about political and cultural change" (Kertzer 1999: 121). While scholars are looking at ethnic identity in some of the new states created out of former Soviet republics (for example, Laitin 1998; Kertzer 1999: 121), less attention is paid to Indigenous People who are generally left for anthropologists to comment on by social historians and political economists. Yet of all the peoples in the new Russian Federation, their identities as ethnic minorities and as Indigenous Peoples may help to mitigate the effects of Russia's current economic crisis.

While some historic and recent events have marginalized and sublimated Indigenous Peoples, others have precipitated new types of allegiance and identification. For example, under *perestroika*, introduced in 1985, the state began to encourage ethnic minorities to express their common concerns:

Since 1985, these small indigenous minorities in the North and Far East regions of Russian have begun to mobilize politically into regional and national associations to present their demands to the authorities. In March 1990, delegates and observers representing the small indigenous minorities of Siberia and the Far East met in Moscow and established what today is known as the Association of the Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia and the Far East of the Russian Federation—commonly known by its Russian acronym, AIPON⁵. On September 19, 1996, Finland and the other four Nordic countries, Canada, the United States and the Russian Federation established the Arctic Council—an intergovernmental organization that promotes co-operation on a wide range of issues in the Arctic region, including the environment. AIPON, the Sami

⁵ The Russian acronym of this organization is AKMHC which becomes RAIPON in common English usage, the "R" representing "Russian."

Council and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference are permanent participants of this intergovernmental process. (Funk and Sillanpää 1999: ix⁶)

Reasserting and sometimes reclaiming their ethnic identity on their own terms is important to Siberian Native Peoples as distinct ethnic groups and newly independent nations within the new Russian Federation, and as Northern Peoples with membership in international bodies representing Indigenous Peoples. Rehabilitation of ancestral practices, including folklore, arts and crafts, is being supported by RAIPON although the task is easier for the larger ethnic groups including the Yakuts and Buryats; with the largest numbers they benefit most economically.

Siberian Native Peoples are still being identified as such. Forsyth (1992: xvi) mentions "thirty or so indigenous communities of Siberia—the largest numbering only 350,000, the smallest 350 . . ." Funk and Sillanpää (1999) describe twenty-six northern indigenous peoples / small indigenous ethnic minorities. This number, they point out as an "arbitrary" selection for their volume, one of the first compilations on Indigenous People of the Russian Far North, but also as the number that has long been recognized by the state. The authors also point out that RAIPON claims that there may be more, and they their web site (www.raipon.org) which has expanded considerably since I began writing this article. There are now associated sites offering information about Indigenous Peoples in Siberia. The scope of work, complicated await "a more definitive listing shortly." RAIPON is compiling information about Indigenous Peoples on by the complex ethnic composition and history of this area is vast.

The sense of urgency associated with research amongst these groups is real. Pentikäinen notes twenty-six *narody severa* or peoples of the North in the Soviet Union, ten of whom are "undergoing the painful process of dying out" (Pentikäinen 1994: 375). Gorbatcheva and Federova (1999: 31) mention "about 30" groups although some of these are comprised of very few individuals and are sometimes linked together by anthropologists, inappropriately according to the authors. The 1989 Soviet census records most groups as "ultra-minorities" and thus

⁶ See also summary of this information in Gorbatcheva and Federova 1999: 54 and Pentikäinen 1994: 375.

“doomed to certain extinction” (Gorbatcheva and Federova n.d.: 45). Some ethnic groups number in the few hundreds.

It is commonly agreed amongst the few who are writing about these issues that the identity of many of these groups is at a crisis stage, especially with respect to language. Russian, the language of the state and the dominant culture, has replaced the ancestral languages in many if not most contexts. The wide expanses of territories and the influences of unrelated neighbouring groups have led to dialectical differentiation within language groups such that groups living at great distances apart do not understand one another. While the Soviet state launched a large-scale Northern educational program which resulted in the creation of alphabets and literature in the language of each indigenous group of the North⁷, a large number of people have partially or completely lost the ability to communicate in their aboriginal mother tongue. Many of these languages are on the brink of extinction.

Linguistic differences, however, are being superseded in the modern context by the shared struggle of Northern Peoples for economic, political, social, cultural and religious rights. Pentikäinen (1994), for example, in discussing the emerging identity of *narodny severa* or ‘peoples of the North,’ points out how, “Current trends among the Ob Ugrians⁸ [people of the Ob River in central Siberia belong to the Finno-Ugrian linguistic family and are related to the Finns] clearly indicate their northern identity is much more important to them than is an awareness of belonging to the Finno-Ugric linguistic family, for example” (Pentikäinen 1994: 399). Since I first began working there in the 1960s, this sense of “northernness” has expanded in the Canadian Arctic to include Alaskan Eskimo, Greenlandic Inuit and Siberian Eskimo. It is likely that other northern peoples, among them the Manchu–Tunguz Peoples, will find they share a converging future. Exploration of their shared histories is an important area for researchers to support.

Music transcends or coalesces differing—individual, family, clan, nation and international—levels of identity. Within a context that con-

⁷ Povoroziuk, personal communication, September 23, 2004.

⁸ Povoroziuk suggests that the term “Ob Ugrians,” currently used in linguistic classifications primarily, be replaced with the ethnonyms Khanti and Mansi (personal communication, September 23, 2004.)

tinues to pressure traditional land-based means of livelihood, shamanism, native languages, and culture, music offers the possibility for exploring and expressing this shared heritage. It is also instrumental in constructing this common identity in the modern context. Music is able to penetrate the many layers that distinguish people from one another to reach a common core.

The Manchu–Tunguz Peoples of the Sakha Republic

The newly designated Sakha Republic (Yakutia) lies fully within the Far North. The Sakha⁹ people are the most northward cattle and horse herders. They are now settled rather than nomadic although some groups follow their animals between winter and summer pasturages. Home to 116 nationalities and peoples, including about 25,000 people who represent 25 of the 26 national minorities of the Russian North (Soviet Census 1989), Sakha remains the largest subject of the Russian Federation, and one of the richest in mineral and raw materials. Numbering 380,242 peoples according to the Soviet Census, the Yakuts are the second largest ethnic group among the indigenous nations (next to the Buryats at 417,425). Compared to smaller ethnic minorities, the Yakuts are better organized. Their own organizations, due to their numbers, receive a proportional and significant share of financial benefits aimed at cultural heritage from RAIPON which supports the preservation of ethnic cultures, traditions and languages.

At the museum in Yakutsk, for example, early recordings of music made on wax cylinders are being restored and transferred to CD format. As with much ethnographic documentation of indigenous peoples, many of these recordings simply note "woman from . . ." or "shaman . . ." without names or locations. Restoration includes trying to locate descendants and identifying the recordings properly.

Northern peoples belong to eight linguistic groups, the largest of which (at a 55%) speak languages of the Manchu–Tunguz branch of the Altaic language "super" family. Manchu–Tunguz speakers include,

⁹ The Russians renamed many of the groups they came across, or they used neighbour's names for the people rather than the indigenous name. This is how the Yakuts were named. To themselves they are Sakha.

amongst other groups, the Evenks (as with the following terms, the final "s" indicates plural; sometimes written as Evenkis), Evens, Ulchis, Nanais, Udeghes, and the Amur regions people¹⁰. Representatives from each of these peoples attended the 2000 conference held in Yakutsk City.

Within the broader Russian context reviewed earlier, a few dates specific to the self-determination of Indigenous Peoples in Sakha are mentioned here. In 1990, five years after *perestroika*, state sovereignty was announced. In 1992, adoption of a new Constitution founded a new state. In the same year, a federal treaty was signed and the Sakha Republic assumed the status of a Subject of State in the new federal system of Russia. This guaranteed economic independence, addressed issues of land ownership and Indigenous Peoples' rights, language and culture including the (reintroduced) official recognition of the Sakha languages. All Yakut schools now teach in the Native language and children learn about their own national culture, including music.

Key components of Sakha's research and development agenda include the management of biological resources, environmental protection, and addressing how the Northern territories may be involved in the new market economy. Stable development of the Northern regions and their ecological and ethnic stability is linked with achieving a balance of the industrial development of natural resources and traditional resource management. Models of development emphasize revival, preservation and protection of the northern minorities of Sakha, and fostering a holistic development agenda. Mikhail Nikolaev, President of the Sakha Republic, links socio-economic development with spiritual development. Research initiatives of the Institute of Northern Minorities Problems of the Siberian Division of the Russian Academy of Sciences link language (dictionaries and grammars are being compiled), folklore, health, spirituality and ecology within its development agenda. Music is connected to all of these.

Northern traditions are oral, and remained unwritten at the beginning of the 20th century. Sakha's linguistic diversity encompasses more than thirty nomadic tribal communities whose cultures are distinct and

¹⁰ Their territories are not restricted to Sakha; others live in Northeastern Siberia, and in the Khabarovsk and other territories (Funk and Sillanpää 1999).

endemic. The languages of the Sakha Republic are Sakha and Russian. As the official state language, Russian was taught in the schools here as elsewhere and the teaching of native languages has been limited. Some of the ethnic minorities also speak their own languages; others do not. At times, native languages were forbidden and many of the younger generation do not speak their native languages. In some cases, native languages have ceased to be used altogether. In some places, liberalization policies begun in the 1980s have redeemed this amongst some groups but for others, this loss is irreversible. "The loss of native languages," writes Nikolaev about Sakha (1994: 71) is equal to ethnic catastrophe. "The language crises" led to the adoption in 1992 of the Law, About the Languages in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) which dealt with the revival, preservation, development and use of the Sakha, Evenk, Even, Yukaghir and Chukchi languages.

Indigenous communities here share common problems with other Native Peoples throughout the circumpolar world, including health problems and the need for a sustainable economic base. Yakutia was declared a nuclear-free zone in 1991 but health problems generated in the past are showing up today in the increasingly incidence of cancer and childhood leukaemia, as well as heart and stomach diseases well above the national average. In Sakha, under the Law on the Nomad Tribal Communities of Minorities of the North, lifestyle, cultural development, language and literature are being revived and long-term land use, traditional occupations and trades are being restored. The new government, however, emphasizes strengthening national or ethnic identities (which I indicated earlier have remained distinct and strong) not a unification of cultures within the new republics.

As in the other northern regions, the entry of peoples of differing, sometimes competing, cultural traditions at different times in history has contributed to the cultural diversity of the region. Buddhist influences are evident as well as Chinese and Mongolian elements which overlay traditional shamanism. These peoples brought their own musical traditions with them, some of which have blended with indigenous traditions; however, indigenous music has been able to resist assimilation more than other cultural spheres.

Sakha's musical heritage is given priority under its new government although financial considerations are limiting the support available.

Traditional music is being recorded with government support but publishing or otherwise making it accessible is limited because of lack of financing. And there are other difficulties. One man could not present at the 2000 conference because he was unable to find anyone to look after his dog. While this may seem frivolous to outsiders, this relationship between man and dog continues to hold great importance in his area, taking precedence over participation in the conference. I have had similar experiences in other northern communities where traditional “lived” ways, especially those associated with a land-based livelihood, are given priority. Strength and ultimately survival are dependent upon honouring these ancestral connections that define a people symbolically and essentially. Other considerations affecting the sharing and preservation of Sakha’s musical heritage involve restrictions against revealing traditions—some people are against allowing a stranger to enter their world. In this way, their culture was preserved but today it is very difficult for outsiders to overcome such a taboo, even where community interests are at heart.

Music as Indigenous Knowledge

Considerable attention has been paid in the last ten years to documenting and reviving indigenous knowledge and to legitimizing it in the view of mainstream culture and western science. Studies about climate change, land and resource management, and traditional plant knowledge, among many other topics, are generating culture-relevant methods of documenting indigenous knowledge and new research paradigms. Narrative, for example, recognizes stories as a legitimate source of data.

Only in the last ten or fifteen years do we see much scholarly attention paid to research that reflects Native perspectives on events and interactions. Fewer studies (among them Kawagley, Smith) have been carried out by Indigenous People themselves. Such approaches point out the need to reassess our ethnographic “data bank” to consider why music and the other so-called expressive arts did not receive the credence they are given in the indigenous experience. Perhaps, we can summarize the consequences in addressing a similar problem in shamanic studies. Mircea Eliade produced scholarly work on shamanism that

remains the standard in the field; however, he never met a shaman; nor did he ever participate in shamanic events.

Ethnographies by such scholars as Ridington, Turner, Cruikshank, Basso are culture-specific. But as importantly, they reflect on how we come to know about ourselves and the world around us as well as what we come to know. And they consider the shared outlook on the world and humans’ place within it of Indigenous Peoples. This world view Hultkrantz defines as “a people’s concept of existence and their view of the universe and its powers” (1987: 21). Basso articulates this kind of ethnography and epistemology in his study of Apache place naming:

As I conceive of it, the ethnographer’s task is to determine what these acts of expression purportedly involve (why they are performed, how they are accomplished, what they are intended to achieve) and to disclose their importance by relating them to larger ideas about the world and its inhabitants. In other words, naturally occurring depictions of places are treated as actualisation of the knowledge that informs them, as outward manifestations of underlying systems of thought, as native constructions wrought with native materials that embody and display a native cast of mind. And it is that cast of mind (or certain prominent aspects of it, anyway) that the ethnographer must work to grasp, intelligibly make out, and later set down in writing. Heaven, then, in a few grains of carefully inspected sand; instructive statements about places and their role in human affairs through conceptualization of a handful of telling events. (Basso 1996: 110)

Music, as a realization of individual and collective consciousness, reveals this “cast of mind” and these “larger ideas” in ways that the ethnographer may “grasp” (to use Basso’s terms) through experience of them. From his work with the Western Apache maps and place names, Basso came to understand what a sense of place *really* means in the indigenous world view—how it shapes morality, identity, and community.

Music likewise reveals this “real” meaning in ways that the spoken word may not. It connects people—to place, to one another, to the spirit or subtle world, to the past and to the future—in a profound and perhaps ultimately in an inexplicable way, at the conscious, subconscious and supraconscious levels, effecting complex integration of body, mind, emotions and spirit. Within Hultkrantz’s definition, music becomes a

way to examine the interaction and relationship among all parts of existence of which humans form a part and which need to be “in harmony” for the benefit of all forms of consciousness. It is noteworthy that the Evenks have no word for music, just the “sounds of life”¹¹. Povorozniuk shares her experience of the spontaneous, improvised words that accompanied Evenk music during her field experience as “coming from the soul”¹². For Manchu–Tunguz Peoples, I was told, all nature is music.

Western science, including social science, lacks understanding about the fundamental and pervasive role of music in indigenous cultures. As academia has marginalized indigenous knowledge as ethnoscience, the music of Indigenous People has been relegated to the margins of mainstream culture as “folk music” and to the margins of anthropology as an expressive art. Economic and political anthropology, other social sciences such as sociology, and the hard sciences are generally dismissive of music as a form of knowledge and of indigenous music as a legitimate field of scholarly inquiry. Consequently, little attention has been paid to its broader socio-political implications which are considerable amongst the Manchu–Tunguz Peoples as I have discussed here.

At the same time, many academic disciplines are contributing to emerging studies of indigenous knowledge. Such studies are often interdisciplinary, incorporate a broad range of perspectives, and merge scientific and indigenous perspectives and approaches. They point out the need for more holistic approaches in anthropology where we have fragmented our inquiry into the subdisciplines of economic, political, religious, and cultural anthropology. Indigenous knowledge also challenges the genres of writing that ethnography draws upon and produces, but we have not come very far in developing non-text based methods of knowledge documentation and dissemination.

Writings and collections embed the ideologies of the times, places and people who documented them. Generally, this historical and ethnographic body of work has been atheoretical; not has it questioned basic methodological assumptions about scholarly enquiry.¹³ Thus indigenous

¹¹ Mihály Hoppál, personal communication, 2000.

¹² Personal communication, September 23, 2004.

¹³ Theoretically innovative, Diamond et al.’s new work (1994) on First Nations

music generally has been an object of study rather than a subject of study. Hoppál suggests with respect to shamanism, “that we’re slowly coming to a point where we may need a new summary to be written about the history and phenomenology of Siberian shamanism” (Hoppál 1993: 267). The history and phenomenology of Siberian music also, are still to be explored and new approaches are required.

Townsend’s argument about shamanic studies can be applied to indigenous music. She argues that we need to “open up our study to approaches other than psychoanalytic, neuro-physiological, biochemical, and reductionist materialist” (Townsend 1999: 37) and expand the scientific materialist/positive epistemology (ibid.: 35) on which we have relied. The traditional epistemology she refers to predisposes scholarly inquiry to analysis rather than experience of music.

As it only in the last ten years or so¹⁴ that Western science has recognized oral history as knowledge, we have not yet come to accept indigenous music as a culture’s archive of traditions, values and practices or as a cognitive map for incorporating and generating new knowledge. Music carries the content of indigenous knowledge but it is also a process of knowledge, of teaching/learning and of experiencing. As Basso studies Apache stories to reveal the mind maps of Apache which instruct *how* to live in the world, music sounded actualizes the world view of the Manchu–Tunguz Peoples.

Music in Manchu–Tunguz Cultures

Music serves many functions in Manchu–Tunguz cultures and embodies a wide range of genres, expressing identity in an emotive way, celebrating and generating cultural vitality, and expressing long term resistance to dominant Russian ideology (Walker 2003). The pervasiveness of music

musical instruments in Northeastern America interprets instruments within a framework of meaning as “emergent.” It challenges our history of ethnographic description of aboriginal musical instruments and addresses themes which I explore in this paper, including the holistic role of music in indigenous cultures, the need for interdisciplinary approaches, and the hegemony implied in the study of indigenous music.

¹⁴ Thomas Berger’s hearings in northern Canada as part of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry established for the first time in the Canadian Court system the legitimacy of oral history as testimony.

in Manchu–Tunguz culture is related to the role of the musician who may also be a shaman, elder, story-teller, healer, linguist, composer, instrument-maker or historian or community leader. Likewise, a shaman who perhaps makes the most profound use of music may also serve more than one role.

Song is particularly important in Sakha. Many shamanic peoples, including the Sakha, speak about song as the sacral form of language and as preceding language in evolutionary terms (Walker 2001). Through song, the Sakha stay in touch with the supreme spirits because in their view, everything in nature has a spirit. The Sakha say that all thoughts and feelings are expressed in song. They even sing in their dreams. Song accompanies people from birth to death. It also entertains and cures. Music as medicine is both preventative and restorative.

Songs are commemorative, perhaps lamenting the passing of traditions, people and ways. They are celebratory. Song accompanies storytelling or stories may be told in song. There are people who never sing songs in real life but before they die, they sing their inheritable songs. There are songs of hunting, songs of courtship, love songs and healing songs—songs to cure people of illness and songs to mend a broken heart. Origin songs tell about how life began, how the earth appeared, how the first people arrived. The great epic songs of Siberia are legendary but in Sakha are distinct from the music associated with the shamanic traditions since the function of the minstrel or epic singer was generally distinct from that of the shaman “so that a combination of the two was the exception” (Hoppál 1993: 273 quoting V. Nikofova). Some songs, healing songs for example, are individual (Bokova’s original composition for my healing is one example). Others are typological¹⁵ and must be followed strictly. Still others can be altered in performance so that they incorporate improvisational elements.

The Manchu–Tunguz Peoples are proud of the richness and widespread influence of their culture and of its ancient roots. Music provides opportunities to celebrate both their shared heritage and their uniqueness within this commonality. Sem. Tatiana Iurievna spoke at the 2000 Conference about how the influence of the cosmic and outer world, astronomy and nature’s power connect the Manchu–Tunguz Peoples to

¹⁵ Vasilii Robbeck, personal communication.

one another. Their rhythmic perception of the world involves colour, rhythmical time, distance and the rhythms of nature including the changing seasons. Universal ideas are connected to everyday life through fairy tales and music—epic songs and chants among these.

Manchu–Tunguz music incorporates tonals, archaic sounds, and sonorics. The tone instruments—the drum and the voice—create a dialogue with other sounds. In all cultures, these are the instruments of relationship. Drums in many forms were made from animal skins and wood that was often taken from a living tree to form the rim. Taking a strip of wood from the tree can be done without killing the tree; also, in this way, the tree is given life in another form and the sound of the drum incorporates the 'voice' of the tree.

Manchu–Tunguz Peoples value their preservation of what they call "archaic" sounds. These are sounds made from "anything" found in nature—sticks, logs, and other things. Every grass, every plant, I was told, makes a sound if it is used properly. Many of these sounds are used to call animals in hunting, for example a cone-shaped moose call made from rolled bark. In the Udeghe nation, a piece of birchbark which makes a very "thin" sound is used for attracting lake birds in hunting. A long stick made out of a hollow grass is played using circular breathing, like the didgeridoo of Aboriginal Australia.

Manchu–Tunguz music is also sonoric, that is, imitative of the sounds of nature. The cry of the cuckoo is one of the most common sounds heard in musical compositions. The seagull and reindeer are also common. Through imitating these sounds, people learned about their environment but further, they were able to communicate with birds and animals (and in some cases plants) in their own "language." Enokhova Valentina Stepanovna¹⁶ (Even), the daughter of a shaman, spoke about how every melody is a call of the spirits of animals for a healing person. Such a person sang in a particular animal's voice depending on whom he was treating. If a baby had a sore throat, for example, he could be cured by a reindeer's breath and a reindeer would be brought to the child and made to breathe on him. Every reindeer in a herd has its own bell, its own unique sound like every person. So developed was

¹⁶ In Russian, the family name or "last" name is written first. The second name, in this case Valentina, is her "first" name. The third name indicates the father, that is, "of Stepan."

the art of listening that reindeer herding people could even tell when a reindeer moved up or down by the sound of its bell. She called sounds “the steps of the shaman” which I interpreted to mean that the shaman knew all the sounds of nature and his/her movements and actions were closely connected to these sounds. Enokhova also spoke about the staff used by reindeer herders which is wider at one end. It makes a whistling sound when thrown. A musical instrument that breaks down the barrier between the expressive and the utilitarian is a hide pouch on which reindeer hooves are hung. It makes a rattle of sorts that attracts the attention of the reindeer as well as allowing one to make the music of the reindeer traveling.

Traditional Even instruments included the bullroarer which is the sound of an owl “speaking.” Sometimes peoples added other sounds to the basic bullroarer sound, perhaps to produce the sound of a wood grouse. Semenova Zoia Federovna spoke of an instrument in northern Yakutia that sounds like the wind. The wind makes the grass move and the Evenks believe that the spirits make the grass move, thus making reference to the spiritual connection that sound represents and also creates.

Both spoke about the importance of sound as toys and in children’s games. Children’s rattles which hang over the crib are made in the shape of birds, animals and other things to produce sound as both toys and musical instruments (Semenova). Enokhova spoke about how children would listen to the bullroarer and guess whose “voice” was being produced. Children had to be able to recognize all these sounds and also to make the instruments to reproduce the sounds themselves. Being taught to sing, to improvise and to make these particular sounds of nature was a child’s musical education in Even families.

Both Bulgakova Tatiana Diomidovna and Sem. Tatiana Iurievna spoke about the male/female relationship in Manchu–Tunguz music. Tatiana described special places for males and females in nature with their images being realized in epic songs. Bulgakova spoke about the importance of intonation in Nanai music which is a means of communication with the spirit world and is important in the imitation of sounds and their repetition. The weeping voice was used by shamans to connect with the other world but because a man is not supposed to cry, the function of the voice in this regard was passed on to instruments.

Intonation is also crucial to meaning. The Nanai language, I was told, is very rich in multiple meanings for a single word and the meaning of a single word may change when it is given a different intonation. When a hunter goes skiing, for example, he imitates the sound of skis, of falling snow, of animals he meets and of the things he sees through his voice with different intonations.

The importance of this communication with animals exceeds mundane interests such as hunting success. Animal and human origins are connected on the cosmological level. For the Nanai, for example, the duck regulated day and night and formed the shape of the earth. People believed she drew pictographs about the formation of the earth, the foundations of nature, and the changes of the seasons. The reindeer to Nanai and to other Siberian peoples connected the sky and the earth with his horns and was thus the universe. Manchu–Tunguz shamans dress incorporates the horns in the headdress as a means for the shaman to draw upon this connection.

These themes are represented in the songs and dances of the Folklife performance group of which Nadjeda Duvan is the Director. (She is Ulchi from the Khabarovsk territory with an Ainu mother.) As do other Indigenous Peoples, Nadjeda interprets illness, as “having no balance.” Balance can come from playing the drum or the jew’s harp or from different rituals, all of which can reconnect and rebalance one in a right relationship with ourselves and our surroundings. In her group’s performances (which include her daughter who is studying in the United States), Nadjeda uses rattles made of salmon skin filled with rice and corn. Like the jew’s harp (which in Ulchi may be made of bamboo rather than metal), the rattle is spoken of as an early instrument preceding the drum in Ulchi culture.

Ulchi dances incorporate melodies such as those played on the wooden flute, an ancient instrument of the Amur River peoples. Flute melodies are played to the spirits of the Amur River and also express the spirits of the river. Flute melodies represent the song of the rain spirits, as well as the collective spirit of the Ulchi who call themselves “the people of the earth.” Songs about the legends of the full moon connect the earth to the larger cosmos. Dances incorporate land-based themes the beginning of the seal hunt—the seal spirits give fish to the fishermen and women—which celebrates the gift of animals to the Ulchi. The

Deer Dance has a similar connective theme. It comes to the Ulchi from the Yakut among whom the deer is considered to be the most powerful god on earth. Its dance is a sacred trance dance that propels the spirit of the Deer inside the body of the dancer. This technique of shapeshifting illustrates the common shamanic traditions amongst different ethnic groups.

Other Ulchi dances address the role of shaman as healer. In one such dance, the shaman calls upon his/her helping spirits to come and guide him/her into the invisible world of the gods and spirits where he can receive help and guidance. In another, a *khamlanie* or shaman's healing ceremony is enacted. The community is called to gather in the home of a client who asks for healing. The community then banishes the house of all evil spirits that may be residing in the home. To build up the psychic energy for the shaman's journey, the community begins to sing, dance and drum. The shaman comes forward, calls his/her spirits and drives away all illness from the client. (Among the instruments used by Ulchi shamans in healing ceremonies are the *mookenay* and *koonki* which are similar to the jew's harp discussed below but not called *khomus* by the Ulchi.)

Other songs celebrate the catch and preparation of fish from the river since fish is their main source of survival. Ulchi are unique in their sewing of fish skin into waterproof clothing items such as coats, pants and hats. Fish skin clothing is worn during the spring and fall as raingear and it is also worn when making a journey into the taiga forest for wild nettle which is gathered during the rainy season as a natural medicine. Another plant that is important to the Ulchi is hemp, the only natural fiber that grows in the harsh environment of the Ulchi which is just a few degrees south of the permafrost. Depended upon for fabric, rope, thread and fish nets, its gathering and preparation is celebrated in song and dance.

For the dance entitled *Natalka* I give the detailed description provided by Folklife:

This traditional dance comes from the ancient legend of the hunter and the flock of swans that are seen each year during their migration to the Amur River region. One of the swans flies to earth and disguises herself by taking off her feathers and turning into a human woman. She seduces the young hunter and they fall in love. The hunter finds out that she is really a swan but

does not wish that she leave him. The hunter hides her body of feathers thus making her retain her form as a human. She is content to stay upon the earth and marry this young man.

As I watched it, I was struck by its similarity to *The Wild Swans*, a Hans Christian Anderson story we call a "fairytale." Both address the pivotal and transformative role of the swan in their common themes of physical/metaphysical connections, migration and seasonality, shape-shifting, and the shared origins of humans and animals.

The Circle Dance

In an earlier paper (Walker 2003), I discussed the significance of the circle dance of the Manchu–Tunguz Peoples as a multilingual celebration of ethnic unity-in-diversity. A community's hosts and guests, men and women, adults and children, join hands to sing and dance together in this archetypal format which allows the "lead" to pass from one person to another. The lead introduces his or her song which is repeated by the group in a call and response format. Taking the lead also involves setting the consistent stepping rhythm for the circle which is synchronized with the song. After a few minutes it becomes time for the next person to pick up the lead and they can do so in their native language which may or may not be shared by other group members. An outsider like myself can participate by repeating the sounds without knowing the meaning and all participants can transcend the limitations of language.

Dugarov Dashinima Sanzhievich (Buryat and thus not Manchu–Tunguz) describes the circle dance as a dance of sacrifice. In his view, the Buryat nation was the first to create this dance although Manchu–Tunguz nations have similar dances, with each claiming to have the original. Perhaps, he suggests, it was created long ago before the nations separated, when people danced around a fire, tree or hill. Some dance today around the long pole, like a whip, used to make the reindeer run more quickly which can be said to represent the centrality of the reindeer to these communities.

Indigenous models of cosmology as circular and cyclical are represented in the circle dance which actualizes the iterative nature of Sakha cosmology. Western cosmology in contrast is linear and fragmented.

Each person in a circle sees and is seen by everyone else and all participants are equal; with each person sharing the responsibility for generating, circulating and also containing the energy produced. Individuality, ethnic identity and language are celebrated within the collective experience.

The Jew's Harp Museum in Sakha

The origins of the Sakha People are connected with the divine origin of their most famous musical instrument, the jew's harp or *khomus* as it is called in Sakha. In this poem, benign gods created the world in which they situated both humans and *khomus*, spoken of here as a dear friend and companion:

The day, when
 The kind Gods' tribe
 Created the World
 The day, when
 They blessed the two-legged race
 To live on the land,
 The day, when
 They settled the Uraankhay¹⁷ people
 In the Middle World¹⁸
 They created
 Dear magic *khomus*
 With a curved tongue,
 Jingling sound
 And peerless song...¹⁹

Born in Yakutia, Aleksey Eliseevich Kulakovskii (1877–1926), poet and folklorist, is remembered as one of the founders of Yakut literature. His poem, entitled *Khomus*, celebrates the shared divine origins of the *khomus* and his people. Archaeology/paleontology evidence shows that

¹⁷ Term of self-designation for Sakha, formerly Yakut, people who sometimes call themselves "Uraankhay Sakhalar."

¹⁸ Siberian Peoples' cosmology incorporates the upper, middle and lower worlds.

¹⁹ A. Kulakovskii (translated from Sakha) 1898 (in *Khomus* 1996: 8).

hunting tribes occupied the Yakutia area since Neolithic times. The *khomus* is also known to date back to the Neolithic. Although the jew's harp is widespread throughout the world, the Asian instruments are said to be the oldest forms.

Ancient traditions are living traditions in Siberia where art colleges and music schools teach the skills of jew's harp playing and making. Yakutia especially is renowned throughout the world not just for its *khomus* musicians but for its 'master makers' who are celebrated for producing instruments with the best sound. The passing on of these traditional skills is supported in the formal education system. The Namsty Pedagogical College in Sakha, for example, offers a Master Craftsman Program for male and female masters in folk art, sewing, ceramics, and *khomus*-making. Certificates of authenticity are issued with instruments made by masters. Masters preserve Sakha's musical heritage as well as keeping alive Sakha blacksmithing traditions. Blacksmithing skills are highly valued because they produce the necessities of a land-based life such as knives, flints and *khomus*. Tadagawa Leo points out that "blacksmiths were respected as people who have equal power with shamans" (1996: 37).

I asked Evenks if the *khomus* was ever associated with shamans and healing among them. "Perhaps in the past," I was told, "but now such things have been forgotten if the *khomus* ever was used this way." Other Evenks pointed out that they trust nature and use only natural things in their music but that the Yakuts used the *khomus* to cure people. Many Yakuts have forgotten about past use of the *khomus* for healing and by shamans yet a few people I spoke to remember it being used by shamans when they were on their own. In their homes or on the land, they played it as a way of connecting with their spirits. Thus in healing and shamanic ritual, the *khomus* seems to have been a more private tool for journeying compared to the drum whose sound carries a great distance and is thus more suitable in a public and group context.

N. Petrov (in Hoppál 1973: 275) describes the *hur-homus* in Buryat and Yakut traditions as having been,

a constant accessory of the shaman in the region of the Olkhon. Among the western Buryat, the *hur* was used for magic and for the invocation of spirits . . . *Hurs* were made only by smiths, who traced their lineage from the celestial smith, they were the so-called white smiths.

Leo mentions the use of the *khomus* in shamanic ritual in Tuva and in western Mongolia. He notes that among the Ul'ch, [*sic*] the Tunguz speaking people in the Amur region, the jew's harp predated the drum as the shaman's instrument and the imitation technique which produces the sounds of birds and animals symbolically indicates the arrival of the assistant spirits (1996: 44–5).

The Museum's guidebook notes that the *khomus* is, "a shaman's attribute used in rites" in Siberia, and although rarely played in Buryatia nowadays, "formerly the instrument was of great worship with the buryat [*sic*] people. The buryat shamans used it in their ceremonies of fortune-telling and spirits-calling" (Zhirkova 1997: 11). Petrov (in Hop-pál 1973: 275) noted the use of the shaman's *khomus* for prophesying and healing (particularly for headaches).

Sakha is home to the only specialized jew's harp museum in the world. The Khomus Museum of the World Peoples is a member of ICOM [The International Council of Museums of UNESCO].

Its Director, Semion Ivanov, allowed me to videotape him demonstrating a *khomus* from the collection and illustrated some of the sounds of nature that proficient players can imitate—the wind blowing or specific bird songs. The most famous of these is the cuckoo which indicates the beginning of spring to the Sakha people and is thus a sound of renewal and of people's sacred connection to the land and all of its gifts. Some players are adept at imitating the sound of horses galloping (the horse is sacred in Sakha). According to Sakha legend, God created the horse first, then humans so Yakuts worship the horse and use all parts of it.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the centrality of music in Manchu–Tunguz traditions, its importance as a marker of ethnic identity in today's tumultuous times and as a rallying point for configurations of an emerging future. For Siberians, their traditional music is as much about the incorporation of new experiences as it is about persistence and resilience.

I have addressed the importance of new approaches to the study of indigenous music and the need for expanding paradigms in western

science's approach to the study of indigenous knowledge. Through music, we can find more holistic, interdisciplinary and multidimensional ways of understanding indigenous ways of knowing. Further, we have a responsibility to sensitize ourselves to such potential.

Meaning in indigenous music is physical, symbolic and subtle and we respond on many levels, even when we do not understand the language of a song or the specifics of a dance. Music in all its expressions, from a cuckoo's call to a shaman's song, resonates within our minds and bodies, reaching deep and sometimes forgotten emotions and touching our spirit in ways that we do not yet fully comprehend. There is no more direct way to approach the elusive soul of a culture that is at the heart of ethnography.

Music underscores how process is as important as content in indigenous ways of knowing by considering how we come to know as well as what we come to know about the world and humans' place within it. It provides a new methodology, one that is culture-emergent and culture-generative, for understanding indigenous cosmology. It facilitates interactions within and between cultures that were viewed as separated and discrete in traditional ethnography. And it broadens our understanding of knowledge—what it is, how it is acquired and shaped, and how it is passed on between cultures and generations, between the natural and human worlds, and between the metaphysical and physical realms.

The musical experience in indigenous contexts is formulated through *praxis*, that is, the actions that people make on and through their environment in their daily lives and the knowledge required to support those actions. Indigenous music is experiential knowledge and can only remain vital from the performance and experience of it. There is an acute need to document the indigenous knowledge of Siberian Native Peoples, especially that of elders, shamans and other healers. Within this broad field, indigenous music is especially important although it has been largely ignored by western science as a form of indigenous knowledge. Much needs to be done in terms of documentation; also, much needs to be done in terms of generating opportunities for passing on these traditions. Research into indigenous music articulates the emerging dialogue between theory and practice in the social sciences.

We must look for ways to sustain the carriers of traditional knowledge in the form of indigenous music—the songs, the texts and scores; the

musicians, performers, shamans, the instrument makers and the rituals in which it is shared and its meanings renewed. Indigenous musical traditions are sustained through the expression of this music and the sharing of that experience in contexts in which Indigenous Peoples maintain control over its expression.

Western scholarship has homogenized the indigenous experience whether we have studied material culture, decision-making, or music. Through indigenization, “folk” or “ethnic” songs are presented as anonymous and ahistorical. Certainly, we have not acknowledged the diversity of themes, expressions and styles in indigenous music. This study of Manchu–Tunguz music points out the far-reaching influences of indigenous music and its integration into all areas of the indigenous experience. Because we have also depersonalized it, the paper has addressed the importance of the individual composer, instrument player and maker, singer, songwriter, dancer, choreographer, and shaman whose personal experiences, struggles, gifts and exploits are recorded and celebrated in music by and about them. The ICOM Jew’s Harp Museum includes biographies of players and instrument makers, the maker’s name is stamped on his *khomus* and a shaman’s drum is made for him or her by a specialist who is known by name. Songs remind people of their composer. Individual exploits, accomplishments and disappointments are all commemorated in songs in which people are mentioned by name.

Non-indigenous researchers working with Indigenous People can do a lot of acknowledge and legitimize indigenous music as a field of inquiry. And while we must continue to look for ways to integrate indigenous knowledge and scientific knowledge in addressing problems of common concern, we must also value indigenous music as a body of knowledge in its own right. It is valuable for us to study it in an academic sense. It is also important that we enter fully into the experience of it, and if we can, that we do so within the ecological and spiritual context that generates it. An enic perspective offers the possibility of blurring the boundaries between insider and outsider. By entering into the circle of the dance, the rhythm of the jew’s harp, the melody of the song, we enter into that experience and it enters us. The instrument and its maker, a dance and a song, the musician and the audience, become one.

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The Last Kazakh *Baksī* to Play the *Kobīz*

DÁVID SOMFAI KARA and JÓZSEF TORMA

BUDAPEST

Two of us, both Hungarian researchers, undertook a one-month expedition to the Chimkent (Kazakh Shymkent) region of southern Kazakhstan in April 1994. We were visiting a famous healer and fortune-teller (*balger*), a Kazakh woman called Gawhar, in the city of Chimkent. A friend of ours, Salamat Ötemis, had introduced us to her, for which we owe him gratitude. During our talks with the lady healer she mentioned a *baksī* called Zamanbek who lived not far from Chimkent in the sacred town of Sayram. She described him as a dangerous healer who was assisted by evil spirits (*jin-šaytan*). Gawhar, who worshipped only the good spirits of the ancestors (*arwakh*), was firm in her rejection of any relationship with the shaman (*baksī*) and advised us not to make contact. But our friend Salamat, who had met the famous *baksī*, told us that he was probably the last shaman in Kazakhstan to use the *kobīz* to fall into trance.

The *kobīz* is a two-stringed musical instrument used by the Kazakhs and has some resemblance to a fiddle played by a bow. Its body is open, and the strings and the bow are made of horse-tail hair. The *kobīz* almost disappeared among the Kazakhs during Soviet times. At one time the Kazakh shamans (*baksī*) used it as a device for achieving a state of trance (*zikir salīw*) and to call the spirits. The difference between an ordinary *kobīz* and the shaman's instrument is that the latter had a magic mirror (*ayna*) behind the strings that "could see the spirits," and usually it was bigger than a normal instrument. In the scholarly literature (Basilov 1992: 68) it is stated that the Kazakh shamans no longer use the *kobīz*, so we were excited when we learned about a *baksī* who still used one to call up the spirits. It seemed that

here was an opportunity to meet the last Kazakh shaman to play the *kobiz*.

The conflict between Gawhar, the fortune-teller (*balger*), and Zamanbek the shaman (*baksi*) was very similar to a situation that can be observed between the white and black shamans (*ak kam* and *kara kam*) of the southern Siberian Turks. The white shamans do not enter a trance state, they only contact the good spirits of the land (*ee*) and of the ancestors (*baatir*, *maadir*), they conduct their rituals during the daytime and they always avoid the black shamans. The black shamans have relations with the evil forces of the Lower World and its master, Erlik. The black shaman falls into a trance and can talk with the evil spirits who cause illness. This division of the Kazakh shamans must have occurred after the acceptance of Islam among the nomads of Central Asia during the 16th and 17th centuries, since in South Siberia the same process happened under the influence of Buddhism.

The morning after our visit to Gawhar we arrived in Sayram, a famous pilgrimage site along the ancient Silk Road. There, Zamanbek's relatives told us that he was performing a ritual in a small house nearby. As we had little time to spare, we asked one of the relatives to get us permission to enter the house. When we went in we found the old *baksi* with many people sitting around him. We greeted the shaman and quickly took seats close to him. He was about to perform his spirit-calling ritual (*zikir saliw*). The people around him belonged to three groups: his students, patients receiving treatment, and spectators and relatives who were interested in seeing the séance.

Zamanbek wore a little fur hat (*timak*) on his head, and his instrument was lying next to him wrapped in a piece of cloth. József Torma started to take pictures, while I readied the tape-recorder for the shaman's song (*zikir*). When Zamanbek had arranged everything he recited a short prayer from the *Koran*, then unwrapped his instrument and started to tune it. It was quite a small *kobiz*, but it did have the shaman's mirror behind the strings. Kazakh shamans never used shamanic drums (*tüngür*) like the Siberian Turks, and the *kobiz* replaced it as the main device for inducing trance and healing. The whole shamanic song lasted for about six minutes. At first Zamanbek simply played on his instrument (pl. 13 a), but after about a minute he chanted a short blessing (Kazakh *bata*, from Arabic *fātiḥa*), which he ended with the Arabic expression

“*Allaahu akbar*” (Allah is great). After this he continued to play, then suddenly shouted, calling his main helping spirit (Kazakh *pir*, from Persian *pīr*). The song began with some Arabic phrases from the *Koran*. Then, basically, the shaman kept emphasizing that he was a good Muslim, that he believed only in Allah and that he observed the last prophet Mohammed’s laws (Kazakh *šariyat*, from Arabic *šarī‘at*). He also mentioned the names of other Muslim saints and said that he wanted to call their spirits (*arwakh*). After about three minutes, making a strange bubbling noise, he started to fall into a trance. The song appeared to be having an effect on the people around him too.

Then the *baksi* mentioned the name of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi, a famous Muslim scholar born in the town of ancient Yasi by the Sir-darya River in the 11th century. Later, at the end of the 14th century, Timur (Temür) Emir conquered the region and built a huge mosque by the ruins of Yasi, and it was here that the famous Khoja was buried. Khoja Ahmed is also associated with Edige’s legendary ancestor Baba Tükli-Saçlı Aziz. Edige was the head of the Nogay Horde, and he is respected by the Kazakhs not only as a great hero but also as the one who introduced them to Islam. The place where Khoja Ahmed’s mosque stands was named Turkistan, and it is a famous pilgrimage site in Central Asia, just like Sayram and Otrar along the ancient Silk Road. In his *zikir*, Zamanbek chanted the famous Kazakh proverb about the saints (called *bap* in that case¹) of these cities, averring that Arstan-bap was the greatest of them:

Otırarda otız bap
Türkistanda tümen bap
Sayramda sansız bap
Eng ülkeni Aristan-bap

There are thirty saints in Otrar,
 There are ten thousand (plenty of) saints in Turkistan,
 There are numberless saints in Sayram,
 The greatest of all is Arstan-bap.²

¹ For Kazakh *bap*, cf. *Uzbek and Persian bāb, bābā* ‘father, forefather; saint.’

² A very similar text of a Kazakh *baksi*’s song was published by Divaev 1899: 309–310, (Kazakh text) and 313 (Russian translation), lines 10–14; and 332, (Kazakh

Arstan-bap³ was Khoja Ahmed's teacher and was buried near the ruins of Otrar. It is noteworthy how these Central Asian Muslim saints became the focus of religious activity among the nomadic Kazakhs, so that even shamans mentioned them while singing their *zikir*.

After about five minutes Zamanbek fell completely into trance, his bubbling voice became ever stronger, and he even began to shake his head and whistle. At the same time a sick lady, evidently in pain, was crying loudly (pl. 13 *b*). Then, after about six minutes, the *baksi* stopped singing and said *Dak salma*, meaning something like "Do not destroy them," or "Do not harm them." Those present had to repeat this sentence a couple of times. Later Zamanbek explained to us that he had asked the evil spirits to leave the ill people's bodies and to stop harming them. At the end the participants repeated a sentence from the Koran after the *baksi*.

The shaman's song ended, but the ritual continued. Zamanbek was still in a trance, as were some of the others in the room. His students (Kazakh *šakirt*, from Persian *šāgird*) assisted him during the ritual. The ill lady, who was apparently suffering from some kind of epileptic disease, went on shouting and crying. The students gave the *baksi* a long knife, which he put inside his throat (pl. 14 *a*). Then he took off his fur hat and donned a white turban (*šalma*) (pl. 14 *b*). At the end of the ritual the *baksi*—who was in his seventies—stood up and, to our great surprise, lifted a heavy millstone (*diyirmen tas*) quite a few times (pl. 15). Later he told us that this show of strength was necessary to impress the evil spirits so as to induce them to leave the sick woman's body, and that the strength to accomplish this feat was granted to him by his helping spirits. The lady had been receiving treatment from him for the past month. He said that after each ritual the evil spirits inside her body became weaker, so he had decided to frighten them away by displaying his power.

Later, when we returned to see Gawhar, we had to submit ourselves to a purifying ritual. She chased away the bad spirits using the smoke given off by burning the leaves of a sacred tree (*arša*) (pl. 16).

text) and 332–333 (Russian translation), lines 4–9.

³ Arstan-bap is the Kazakh form of Uzbek Arslān-bāb, lit. 'Lion Father.'

Zamanbek was the only shaman who managed to survive the Soviet era, when many were arrested or killed for undertaking healing activities. Zamanbek himself was arrested a couple of times in the 1960s when he started to perform his rituals, but, as the local people told us, he always managed to escape from prison. This he did in miraculous ways, such as by opening locked doors or walking through thick walls. Whatever the truth may be, he survived those hard times and, in the 1980s, when a Caucasian (Abkhaz) healer cured the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, the authorities began to take a different attitude towards these medicine people. Our friend Salamat, for example, took Gawhar to Moscow, where an official commission granted her a certificate stating that she did indeed possess healing powers (in Russian, *ekstrasens*). The time had come when Zamanbek could conduct shamanic rituals openly, and he continued to do so until his death in 1998.

As for Zamanbek's *zikir*, I have made some comparisons with another Kazakh shamanic song. With László Kunkovács we collected a beautiful example from the Kazakhs of the Altai Region of Mongolia, which I plan to publish soon with text and musical transcription. In that song the *baksī* turns to his helping spirits (*peri*), who appear in the form of animals, such as camel or snake. He, too, worships his ancestors, and he mentions the name of Allah just a couple of times as proof of his faith in Islam. In contrast, however, in Zamanbek's case the whole *zikir* was centred around Allah and Islam. Uzbek religious practice strongly influenced the faith of the nomadic Kazakhs in the Chimkent Region of southern Kazakhstan because Uzbeks were the former inhabitants of the towns along the ancient Silk Road and the Syr-darya River, and this is also reflected in Zamanbek's song. In addition to further emphasizing his faith in Islam by using an abundance of Arabic expressions from the *Koran*, Zamanbek, instead of calling the spirits of the ancestors or the helping spirits in the form of animals, mentions the names of famous Muslim saints of the region—for example, Khoja Ahmed and Arslan-bāb. It is quite obvious that Islam and Central Asian religious activities had a much stronger impact on the faith of the Kazakhs of the southern region than on that of the northern and eastern Kazakhs.

I would like to dedicate this field report to the late József Torma⁴, who after his numerous expeditions to the Bashkirs (*baškort*) in the Ural Mountains wrote a book on their popular beliefs. Later he became the first ambassador of Hungary to Kazakhstan, in Almaty (Russian Alma-Ata). During his first year I had the opportunity to work with him as he vigorously continued his research among the Kazakhs. Unfortunately, he fell ill in 1996 and had to cease his fieldwork in Kazakhstan. He died in the year 2000 at the age of 57, and most of his material collected in Kazakhstan has remained unpublished. Ten years after the visit described in this article I have been able to publish this material with the help of his son, Tamás Torma, who has been taking care of his father's manuscripts, pictures and tapes. I am very grateful for his assistance.

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JÓZSEF TORMA (1943–2000) was a Turkologist and an ethnographer. He graduated from Attila József University in Szeged, Hungary, in Slavic and German philology. He worked as a teacher of foreign languages, and also graduated in Altaic linguistics at Szeged University in 1978. In 1979 he studied the Bashkir language in Ufa, Bashkortostan (Russia), and wrote his thesis on that topic. Between 1986 and 1991 he made several expeditions to Bashkortostan and turned his attention to ethnography, notably to shamanism. During his trips he was accompanied by Firdaus Khisamitdinova, a Bashkir ethnographer. He published his materials in several articles and in a book written in Hungarian (1997). In 1991 he became a diplomat, working first in Turkey before being appointed as the first Hungarian ambassador to Kazakhstan in 1994. Between

⁴ For the bibliography of József Torma, see Khisamitdinova (ed.) 2004.

1994 and 1996 he undertook a considerable amount of fieldwork among the Kazakhs. On some of these field trips he was accompanied by Salamat Ötemis and Dávid Somfai Kara.

DÁVID SOMFAI KARA is a Turkologist and Mongolist. He is currently a Ph.D. student at the Department of Inner Asian Studies, Roland Eötvös University, Budapest, and he also works at the Institute of Ethnology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In 1993–94 he spent a year in Kazakhstan studying the Kazakh and Kirghiz languages. Between 1994 and 2002 he did fieldwork in Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia and Siberia. He collected oral literature (folksongs and epics) and data on Central Asian Shamanism among Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Tuvas, Tofas, Altay Turks, Abakan Tatars (Khakas), Sakhas (Yakuts) and Sart-Kalmaks.

Book Reviews

Representing Tuurngait. Edited by FRÉDÉRIC LAUGRAND, JARICH OOSTEN and FRANÇOIS TRUDEL and participating elders and students. *Memory and History in Nunavut. Volume 1*. Igaluit: Nunavut Arctic College. 2000. ISBN 1-896-204-449. 224 p. \$40.00

This book is the first volume of a series (*Memory and History in Nunavut*) which juxtaposes valuable data from old notes and memoirs with the knowledge held by old people who are still alive and retain their local folklore. This excellently structured book is a complement to the skills of its editors. Its first chapter introduces the source of the book, the life and written legacy of the Anglican missionary Edmund James Peck, whose memoirs are preserved in the General Synod Archives of the Anglican Church of Canada, Toronto. The ethnological notes contained therein were made by the vicar between 1897 and 1924. In the early years of his posting he showed no interest in the local "heathen customs," but, influenced by Franz Boas, he began to collect material and even translated some songs. These were probably shamans' songs, which Boas later repeatedly quoted in his works.

The *tuurngait* was the most important power-holder in the spiritual domain (12), so anyone who wishes to attain a deeper understanding of Inuit folk beliefs has to become familiar with these spiritual beings and the folklore that is related to them. It is necessary to understand clearly that the shaman (*angakkuit*) was the central figure of the entire belief system. These persons were believed to possess special powers and abilities.

The second chapter of the volume (16–50) is the most important section for international research as it offers the reader a wealth of interesting detail. Material collected by Boas and Knud Rasmussen is also often quoted here, and added to it is the knowledge of elders who are still alive today. Thus they talk about the special language used by shamans and about the shaman's activities (e.g. healing the sick, mod-

ifying the weather, procuring game, protecting the community against evil spirits, performing divination and visiting other realms, especially that of the deceased). A very important ethical element or law of the Inuit shamanic institution was that the shaman always helped the individual and served the interests of the community.

Towards the end of the volume (136–188) we find a list, compiled by Peck, of 347 different *tuurngait*-spirits. The names of these spirits are provided both in the archaic and in modern orthography, while the adjacent column shows where they reside (e.g. in the sea, deep under water or on dry land), and finally we are given a description of their exterior—precisely what shape and size the frightening creature in question is.

The volume includes three sections of illustrations. The first (51–66) presents reproductions of Inuit drawings of *tuurngait* collected by Rasmussen in eastern and central Canada during the fifth Thule expedition (1921–1924). The second section (118–133) contains drawings made by Inuit elders in 1999. The third collection of illustrations, offered at the very end of the volume (190–205), contains representations of *tuurngait* in etchings by students of the Fine Arts program of Nunavut Arctic College, Igaluit (1999).

The volume concludes with a bibliography of over fifty items. Last but not least, we must note that the volume is bilingual as the entire text is printed first in the syllabic writing developed for Canadian Inuits while the English text comes only after this part. The volume is exemplary both for this feature and also on account of the remarkable co-operation it called on between researchers and local residents, old and young.

News and Notes

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE 7TH CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR SHAMANISTIC RESEARCH

The meeting was called to order by the chairman and director of the ISSR, Mihály Hoppál.

Chairman Hoppál offered congratulations and thanks to the organizing committee and hosts of the conference. He then announced that the main business of this meeting was to elect a president and vice president for the next term as well as to choose the location for the next meeting of the Society. Ulla Johansen (Germany) was suggested by the chairman to serve as chair-person during selection and voting for president of the society. She was selected by unanimous vote.

Hoppál then reported on the society activity since the last meeting.

The previous conferences and their venues were recounted, and it was noted that although the conference occurs every second year, this China conference was postponed one year due to the SARS epidemic in China in 2003.

The Society's journal, *Shaman*, is published every year, with twelve volumes now published.

The book series *Bibliotheca Shamanistica* presently has twelve releases available. This series is published under the aegis of the ISSR with the Hungary Academic Press of Budapest as co-publisher.

Members of the Society participated in exhibitions in Finland.

The Society participated in the UNESCO Project to Save the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind.

The program of awarding a medal or prize for scholarship in shamanistic research to individuals whose work has created a legacy has been continued. Past medals have been awarded to Åke Hulkrantz (Sweden), Roberte Hamayon (*Paris conference*), Juha Pentikäinen (Fin-

land), and Ulla Johansen. This year's medals have been awarded to Fu Yuguan (China), Suritai (China), Song Heping (China), Daniel Kister (USA) and Peter Knecht (Japan).

No deaths occurred in the Society since the last meeting.

The report of the president was accepted unanimously.

Ulla Johansen now assumed the chair of the meeting in order to elect a new president/chairman. Johansen nominates Mihály Hoppál. A show-of-hands vote elected him unanimously, with no dissenters.

Discussion regarding the selection of vice president followed. Bai Gensheng (China) suggested that there be several individuals selected for vice president, and that one selection be from the East. Johansen reminded the meeting that existing statutes must be changed to accomplish this proposal, and recommended that the proposal be submitted to the next conference where the by-laws could be changed. M. Balzer (USA) supported this proposal. Gensheng was nominated by Hoppál to serve as vice president for the next term and Johansen calls the vote which was unanimous.

Hoppál then resumed the chair of the meeting.

Discussion continued on the number and role of vice presidents and the possibility of expanding the role of vice president(s) to advisors. L. Kendall (USA) questioned the advisability of this idea, and Hoppál suggested holding off on this discussion until the next meeting.

Hoppál nominated Budapest as the venue for the next conference in 2006. By vote Budapest was unanimously accepted.

The meeting adjourned at 5:32 P.M.

R. Paul Firnhaber (USA/Estonia)

South Lake Hotel
Changchun, CHINA
25 August 2004 4:30 P.M.

THE 8TH CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR SHAMANISTIC
RESEARCH (ISSR), BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, 2006

The 8th Conference of the International Society for Shamanistic Research will be held in Budapest, Hungary, on June 2–7, 2006. The central themes of the conference will be:

- (1) The Revival or Continuation of Shamanism
- (2) Visual Presentation of Shamanic Rituals
- (3) Shamanhood as Means of Identity of Minorities

The attendance fee for the conference will be approximately EUR 200–250. Titles of papers and abstracts of max. 200 words should be sent to the Organizing Committee by October 31, 2005. Authors can email these to *shamanarch@etnologia.mta.hu*

The presentation time for papers will be limited to 20 minutes. The working language of the conference will be English.

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1 From a *nat pwe* in Pegu. The "Buffalo Goddess."
Photo: Margareta Berglie.



(a)



(b)

2 (a) From a *nat pwe* in Pegu. The “Buffalo Goddess” (to the right) revives a fainting woman. Photo: Margareta Berglie.

(b) From a *nat pwe* in Mandalay. A Bo Min Gaung-inspired woman is supported by a *nat kadaw* (left). From a video recording, Margareta Berglie 2003.



3 Bo Bo Aung (right) and Bo Min Gaung (left).



(a)



(b)

4 (a) *Bodaws*. Bo Min Gaung and Bo Bo Gaung in the front row.

(b) From a *nat pwe* at Mt Popa. Bodaw Pye as Popa Medaw, the Flower-Eating Ogress. From a video recording, Margareta Berglie 2003.



5 (a) Sichingua drums over a young Daur girl.



5 (b) Sacrificial altar in the house of the patient. Photos: Mihály Hoppál, 2003.



6 (a) Batu gives drink to the horse-headed sticks.



6 (b) Two shamanesses call the spirits by drumming. Photos: Mihály Hoppál, 2003.



7 (a) The two shamanesses start the ritual by singing.



7 (b) Sichingua in trance. Photos: Mihály Hoppál, 2003.



8 An Evenki shamaness coming out her trance by shaking bells of her costume. Photo: Mihály Hoppál, 2003.



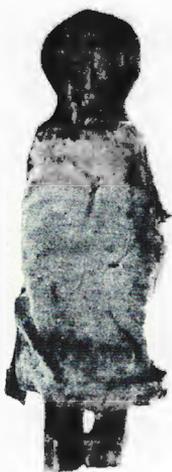
(a)



(d)



(b)



(c)

9 (a, b, c) Navajo shaman dolls. Photograph from Kelly et al. 1972.
(d) Dena'ina shaman doll. Photograph from Osgood 1966.



(a)

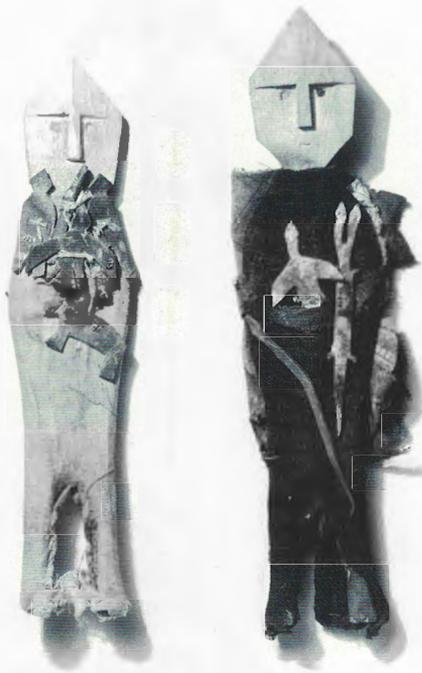


(b)

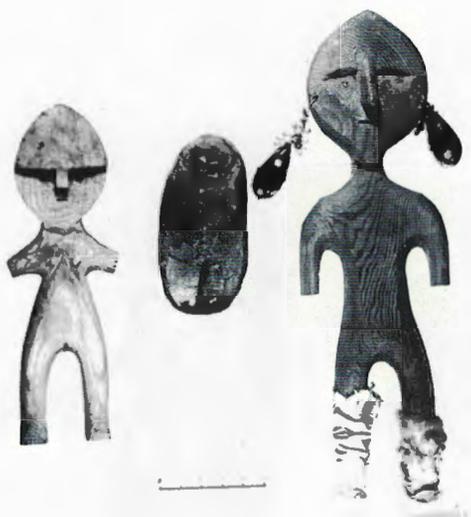


(c)

10 (a, b, c) Ket *alels*. Photograph by courtesy of Dr. Edward Vajda.



11 Selkup *loosys*. Photograph by courtesy of Svetlana Innokentievna Osipova, widow of the Tomsk ethnographer, Rafail Uraiev. The picture shows two Selkup *tym loosys*.



12 Vasiugan Khanty *yunkhs*. Photographs by courtesy of Svetlana Innokentievna Osipova, widow of the Tomsk ethnographer, Rafail Uraiev.



13 (a) Zamanbek playing the *kobiz* at the beginning of the séance. After this he summoned his helping spirits by singing the *zikir*, the spirit-calling song.



13 (b) Some participants at the séance. The woman on the right is crying and making strange movements as she falls into trance.

Photos: József Torma, 1994.



14 (a) At the beginning of his trance the baksī inserts a knife down his throat to frighten away the evil spirits (*jīndar*).



14 (b) Zamanbek after exchanging his fur hat (*tīmak*) for a white turban (*šalma*). He put this on while in trance and before lifting the millstone (*diyirmen tas*) to chase off the evil spirits. Photos: József Torma, 1994.



15 Still in trance, the seventy-year-old Zamanbek lifts the heavy millstone, while the author (at left) watches intently.
Photo: József Torma, 1994.



16 After our return from visiting the “black shaman” (*baksi*), Gawhar, the “white shaman” (*balger*), performs a purification ritual by burning the leaves of juniper tree (*arša*). Photo: József Torma, 1994.