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International Society for Trans~Oceanic Research

SHAMANS and CULTURES

**Edited by
MIHÁLY HOPPÁL and KEITH D. HOWARD**



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Edited by

MIHÁLY HOPPÁL and KEITH D. HOWARD

with the assistance of

OTTO von SADOVSZKY and TAEGON KIM

MTAK



Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest

International Society for Trans-Oceanic Research, Los Angeles

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INTRODUCTION

Kaith D. Howard

REGIONAL ASPECTS OF SHAMANISM

Selected papers of the First Conference
of the International Society for Shamanistic Research

27-28 July, 1991
Seoul, Korea

INTRODUCTION

By

Keith D. Howard

Just when we thought we had got rid of shamanism from academic discourse an International Society for Shamanistic Research emerged. The society had its roots in a symposium on the topic "Shamanism: Past and Present" organized at the July 1988 International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences held in Zagreb. The papers from that event formed the basis for the first two books in the ISTOR series (Hoppál and Sadovszky eds. 1989). The society grew through a "Northern Religions" conference held in Helsinki in May 1990. The first ISSR International Conference took place in Seoul in July 1991; the current volume assembles 30 papers from the 80 presented there by participants from more than 20 countries.

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Practices which can be labelled shamanic, which in some way involve the ecstasy of trance, the "non-ordinary realities" which Ruth-Inge Heinze describes here and elsewhere (Heinze 1991), have proved remarkably resilient. They have not died, even if they are declining, as the vitality and sheer coverage of the articles in this volume ably demonstrates.



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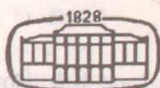
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Practices which can be labelled shamanic, which in some way involve the ecstasy of trance, the "non-ordinary realities" which Ruth-Inge Heinze describes here and elsewhere (Heinze 1991), have proved remarkably resilient. They have not died, even if they are declining, as the vitality and sheer coverage of the articles in this volume ably demonstrates.

We could paint a broad canvas, taking in African tribal practices, Southeast, South and East Asian communities, as well as the better known Eurasian and North American examples. Such breadth introduces some doubt as to whether shamanism is a distinct religion or can validly be studied cross-culturally, not least because since Eliade appeared too easily to discard the widespread parallel activities of non-ecstatic practitioners in any given area (see Campbell 1976). Are we talking about shamanism or shamanisms? Is a journey to the other world essential, or can a practitioner simply receive the spirits where she stands?

Most of the authors who have contributed to this volume are concerned with local practices more than global theorizing. The area division we have followed – Korea, Japan and South-East Asia, North America, and Eurasia – reflects the interests of those who took part in the 1991 conference, and makes no claims to being exhaustive. Several authors treat shamanism as discourse, using Hultkrantz' "dismembered concept of religion" as a basis for describing processes which are more oriented towards philosophical or performance concerns. Despite the wide geographical distances between areas which we chose to study, and our undeniably heterogeneous approach dependent on analytical methods and diverse cultural and academic backgrounds, there remain many points of contact. Papers typically have a locus prescribed through distinct culturally-defined boundaries which, if nothing else, suggest that common themes need not be attributed primarily to historical diffusion. Even though considerable intercultural exchange cannot be denied, it still appears as if shamanism is intractably resistant to attempts to universalize.

Anthropologists have good reason to distrust any unitary theory. Can we any longer accept Eliade's superior dismissal of so many ritual specialists, whom he believed offered "only a plagiaristic aping of the ecstatic technique of the professional shaman"? Following from Crapanzano (1979), Obeyesekere (1981) and Lévi-Strauss' earlier description of Quesalid, we must accept trance as a social idiom. So we can suggest no more specific definition of the shamanic complex than Hultkrantz: a shaman is an intermediary, exhibiting behaviour which supports the belief that he or she is inspired by spirits (1978).

In this respect the emphasis on Korea, the venue of the 1991 conference, is not inappropriate. Rapid modernization over the last 30 years has led to the abandonment of much within the indigenous heritage, yet Korea retains a shamanic tradition through the machinations of a national organization claiming a membership of 50,000 shamans. There is widespread retention of a large pantheistic canon. Surely this belittles the single paragraph the country merits in Eliade's text? Korea provides a microcosm of shamanic diversity, amply demonstrating that the distinction between ecstatic "shamans" and hereditary "priests" is problematic. Korean practice illustrates that vast chasms exist between contemporary local practice and supposed Siberian roots. Korea, at

least in the focus of papers by Kendall, Guillemoz, and Kister, urges us to take more note of performance, perhaps at the expense of studying the identity of spirits.

You will notice that the papers which follow rarely reflect the contemporary, inter-disciplinary studies that have emerged from our new-found (or revived) interest in altered states of consciousness. This is not surprising, for psychological approaches, together with their more populist abstractions, have tended to marginalize ethnographic studies of local practices. The concentration on the periphery of vision which such approaches entail leads to short-sightedness. For the actualization of self, reawakened almost by default through Don Juan's merging of fact and fiction, then expounded by Michael Harner in a series of masterful works, seems little concerned with a shaman as Lewis' controller of spirits (Lewis 1971).

In this volume we have tended to find links with that amorphous category of "tradition" and, through investigations of local shamanism, to explore the dustbin. The papers suggest that, despite the disclaimers of Taussig and others, shamanism is not "a made-up, modern, Western category, an artful reification of disparate practices, snatches of folklore and overarching folklorizations, residues of long-established myths intermingled with the politics of academic departments, curricula, conferences ..." (Taussig 1989, cited in Atkinson 1992). Rather, shamanism can now take its rightful place as a fascinating and enlightening phenomenon.

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Without Ecstasy, Is there Shamanism in South-West Korea?

By

Keith D. Howard

"I have tried to see the spirits, but I have never managed to. I am not able to see them."

(Kim Taerye)¹

Introduction

My topic may suggest I have something of a mania for self-destruction in the present company, but here I offer less an authoritative account than a working paper. I am concerned with *tan'gol*, the shamanistic practitioners of South-West Korea, and how they fit into the shaman canon of the Korean peninsula. *Tan'gol* know no ecstasy and trance is not utilized in their rituals. Rather, their authority is based on heredity proved through an immense knowledge and a skillful manipulation of texts, music, drama and local data. Eliade would presumably state *tan'gol* represent 'family shamanism' which is "only a plagiaristic aping of the ecstatic technique of the professional shaman" (1964:253).

The implication of inferiority – or of derivation from an ecstatic archetype – is, I believe, unproved in this case. Indeed, Im Sökchae [Yim Suk-jay] (1969, 1971, 1972) claims *tan'gol* represent a unique Korean branch of 'mu-ism', *mu* being the Sino-Korean character contemporarily used for anything shaman.² In a similar vein, the related and largely non-ecstatic Cheju *shimbang* practitioners are often said to offer the most 'authentic' Korean shamanism (e.g. Chang 1988:30).

Here, I first consider why hereditary priests – *tan'gol* and *shimbang* – are grouped together with ecstatic shamans – *mudang* and *myöngdu*. The grouping is followed by most Korean scholars, even those who avoid the term 'shaman'.³ I then look more closely at the *tan'gol* of Chindo, an island county with a population of 65,000 in the extreme South-West of the Korean peninsula.⁴

Shamanism in Korea

Early visitors to Korea such as Isabella Bird Bishop found the very air infested with animistic and 'shamanistic' (*mu*, *musok*) noxious spirits. Early missionary descriptions were not surprisingly dismissive, C.A. Clark typically stating that

shamanism was, "far too superstitious and baseless a cult to endure in the light of a modern scientific world" (Clark 1961 [1932]:218; Clark cites the Canadian presbyterian James Scarth Gale [1863-1937] for support).

Government statistics on religion obligingly concur with this negative image: they still omit mention of shamanism. A 1978 survey found a total 27,367,978 followers – from a population of under 40 million – of Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, and their syncretic offshoots, but mentioned 'indigenous beliefs' in only the vaguest terms. Chang Chu-Keun (1982:60) finds the omission understandable because Koreans consider shamanism not a religion but superstition. The omission however, equally reflects history. Confucian texts written during the Chōson dynasty (1392-1910) denigrated shaman rituals as *ūmsa*, a term that implied the obscene. Court women were banned from visiting the corrupting houses of shamans in 1431. The *Kyōngguk taejōn*, a legal code adopted in 1474, prohibited 'calling down heretical gods' and ordered shamans to live outside the city walls (Yi Nūnghwa 1976, Deuchler 1977:22, Young 1980:78, Choi 1987:46).

Yet, the consensus amongst Korean scholars is that some indigenous beliefs do constitute a shamanistic religion. Such beliefs are widespread. Many Koreans believe non-agnatic spirits ensure peace in the world beyond. Many people call on direct ancestors for help both there and in this world. There is a corpus of practitioners – a national organization in December 1975 claimed a membership of 50,000 shamans (Kim T'aegon 1988:119) – and a large pantheistic canon (described in, for example, Kendall 1985, Ha Hyogil 1982:401-446, Kim T'aegon 1988:124-125, Seong Nae Kim 1989:256-258).

The exact components of Korean shamanism remain a matter of debate: the distinction between *musok* (shamanism) and *mishin* (lit. 'false belief' but used to imply superstition), is dubious (e.g., compare Lee 1981:25-26 with Janelli and Janelli 1982:148-153); in Chindo, I noted any claimed difference between fortune tellers (as *chōmjaengi*) and shamans proper appeared recent and had possibly been initiated by the elevation of the local ritual, *Ssikkim kut*, to national prominence as a government-sponsored Intangible Cultural Asset (*Muhyōng munhwajae*); Kendall notes that shamanism is 'broadly, indeed sloppily applied' to all manner of religious activity not explicitly Buddhist or inspired by Confucianism (Kendall 1985:27-28).⁵

The practitioners of Korean shamanism may be classified into four types:

(1) *Mudang* (or *manshin* – 'one who governs 10,000 spirits' –, *paksu* when male, *son mudang* when taking the name of a possessive spirit, *halmöm/halmōni* when an old woman [Kim T'aegon 1988:121]) are found in central and northern Korea. *Mudang* become shamans after the descent of a spirit (*kangshin ch'ehom*). The descent is often experienced as an illness (*shinbyōng*; Kim Kwang-iel 1972:233).

(2) *Myōngdu*, found most commonly in the southern provinces, but

occasionally encountered as *t'aeju* in Ch'ungch'öng and Kyönggi and *saet'ani* further north, claim to be possessed by a dead child who usually has some claim to kinship.

(3) *Tan'gol* (*tanggol* and *tangshin* in Cheju [Chin Song-gi 1977:26], *tanggollae*, *tan'gollae*, *tanggoremi*, or *tan'goremi* [Park Mikyung 1985:64]) inherit their authority (terms such as *sajegwön* and *sesüp mu* apply) and are found in the southeast (Yöngnam) and southwest (Honam). *Tan'gol* are said to 'lack any conscious faith' in spirits (Kim T'aegon 1988:121).

(4) *Shimbang* are hereditary specialists who preside over affairs in Cheju. Typically, they do not experience trance states (e.g., Seong Nae Kim 1989:280), but some consider they were originally ecstatic (e.g., Hyön Yongjun 1980).

Clearly, these represent two basic types, ecstatic *mudang* and *myöngdu* (together with cognates) who experience the descent of the gods, and hereditary *tan'gol* and *shimbang* who typically do not. The two match the shaman/priest distinction made by Lebra in respect to Okinawa (1966:74-83), and the similarity has been noted by Koreans (e.g., Im Sökchae 1971:213-217, Ch'oe Kilsöng 1978:13).

Korean scholars tend to see both types descending from a common source. Partly this reflects overlaps in ritual practice and in the spirit pantheon. Partly, though, it has grown from historical, primarily nationalistic concerns. Parallels with Siberian shamanism were noted in early missionary studies by Hulbert (1903), Underwood (1908), and Clark (1961 [1932]). In the 1920s, Yi Nünghwa and Ch'oe Namsön, members of the loose affiliation generally known as the *munhwa undong* (cultural nationalists; Robinson 1988), argued that shamanism in Korea came directly from Siberia.⁶ In essence, this served an urgent political cause to fight increasing attempts at cultural assimilation by the colonial power, Japan, for it helped develop cultural connections with mainstream Asia that would distance Korea from its eastern neighbour. Not surprisingly, then, the archetype Korean shaman was and is seen as ecstatic (e.g., Kim T'aegon 1982). This, if I accept that the *tan'gol/shinbang* type evolved at a later date, appeases the Weberian idea of habitualizing charisma, which Mary Douglas suggests will be seen as a move in religious practise from ecstasy to control as the organization of society increases (1973:19-39).

History, incidentally, hardly helps establish any archetype. To my knowledge, in his *Tongguk Yi Sangguk Chip* the poet Yi Kyubo (1168-1241) refers for the first time to a shaman to whom the gods had descended. Other snippets of information which have survived hardly predate this.⁷

Definitions of Shamanism

At least in respect to the pantheon and ecstatic practitioners, the Korean belief system is indeed akin to Siberian and North American shamanism. Similarities extend well beyond Asia. But painting such a broad canvas surely allows for

doubt as to whether shamanism is a distinct religion or can be validly studied cross-culturally, not least because we have too easily discarded the widespread parallel activities of non-ecstatic practitioners in any given area (see Campbell 1976).

The argument has effectively already run its course, for many have demonstrated that the ecstasy of trance is merely the expression of a social idiom (e.g., Crapanzano 1980, Obeyesekere 1981). Thus, Hultkrantz defines a shaman as an intermediary who exhibits behaviour which supports the belief that he or she is inspired by spirits (1978:30). Moving from here, Boudewijn Walraven boldly states a Korean shaman does not know ecstasy (1983:243), and never loses consciousness (1983:258). Koreans may disagree, but these definitions allow ecstatic *mudang* to be considered alongside hereditary *tan'gol*.

Mary Douglas' consideration of religion is based on the premise that religion is a fair representation of social reality (1966: particularly 74 and 80). This is particularly attractive in contemporary Korea, where shaman ritual is increasingly seen as the culture of the down-trodden masses (*minjung munhwa*). Yet, in respect to trance as the antithesis of organized society, the mechanics must be more complex, for *tan'gol* in Korea's southern provinces are today – just as priests are in Okinawa – declining at the expense of ecstatic shamans (Ch'oe 1989:217, 231). *Tan'gol* in Chindo discount their competition as *chŏmjaengi* (fortune tellers) who lack authority with the spirit world and offer only laughable imitations of trance.⁸

"*Chŏmjaengi* should only practice what they are good at – fortune telling – but to make a good living they perform rituals stolen from *tan'gol*. Their versions aren't real or orthodox. They merely practise trickery of a low standard" (Kim Kwibong).

In effect, the distinction between 'shaman' and 'priest' seems to become less tenable as the boundary between the two types blurs. Both control spirits, and the clients of both may alone be controlled by spirits (Lewis 1971:54). Both function as priests, medicine men, and seers – Banzaroff's threefold role cited by Chang Chu-kun (1988:30). There is, consequently, nothing that I have found which proves *tan'gol* are inferior to, or derive from, ecstatic *mudang*, either within the Korean context or in more global literature.

Tan'gol

The term *tan'gol* specifically applies to a ritual practitioner. Local usage on Chindo of *tan'gol* describes both the practitioner, almost always female, and her male *koin* (ritual accompanists/musicians).

Ch'oe Namsŏn (1927) suggested *tan'gol* was originally a mispronunciation of *Tan'gul/Tan'gun*, the mythical founder of Korea (Yi Nŭnghwa [1922, 1927] had already sought to show that the origins of shamanism could be found in the *Tan'gun* myth). The Japanese scholars, Akamatsu and Akiba (1938),

considered *tan'gol* to be derived from a Buddhist term, *tanwöl*. Today, Chindo islanders ascribe a more everyday meaning to the term:

In the old days every family held a ritual whenever bad things happened. A shaman would say, "When bad things happen, call us and hire us." Each family promised to hire one shaman... So the term used for a relationship people build with a shopkeeper from whom they often buy goods was adopted. This term is *tan'gol* (Ho Ogin)

Kim T'aegon considers *tan'gol* are identified through territory, the *tan'gol p'an*, rather than family allegiance:

"*Tan'gol* areas consist, at the basic unit, of a physical village or extended household. Very often, each *tan'gol* owns five or six villages... this means they can be linked to between 500 and 1,000 households" (1982:224).

A recent report on Chindo shamanism extends this description, though the *tan'gol p'an* system is clearly waning. Once, each village unit was typically allied to a single *tan'gol* family (Pak and Chöng 1988:138). And *tan'gol* houses (*tan'gol chip* or, more respectfully, *tan'gol t'aek*) are usually still found at the edge of a village or near a market place. For example, during my early fieldwork in 1983, one *tan'gol* lived in a house separated from the nuclear settlement of Söngjong by a few fields; others lived 200 yards beyond Yöndong on the port road and 200 yards before Yuktong on the nearby island of Chodo; yet others lived beyond their villages on mountain paths in Sangman and Sangbojön; fortune tellers were isolated in Maejön and Sop'o; one celebrated *tan'gol* family lived behind Inji market. This is not always the case, however, and I note Kim Taerye recently moved from the centre of Paektong to the centre of Söngnae.

A single *tan'gol* once had exclusive rights to perform rituals in their *tan'gol p'an*. A shaman association, the *shinch'öng*, oversaw ritual interests. Infringements by other *tan'gol* were punishable by fines, though rights could be bought and sold. While similar *shinch'öng* associations elsewhere appear to have been closed by the Japanese colonial administration, that in Chindo continued until the mid 1960s; the *shinch'öng* meeting house was in Söngnae (Son [ed.] 1980:9 includes a photograph). It was the 'place of spirits,' to which *tan'gol* paid regular dues, where non-ritual music was taught almost as a precursor to today's urban music clubs (Naegojang chönt'ong kakkugi 1982:154-155), and where a record was kept of previous members (normatively, in the *sönsaeng-an*). An anecdote I was given in Sop'o suggests that members took the *shinch'öng* association seriously. This related how a *tan'gol* became distraught because his client, dissatisfied with a ritual, refused to pay the prearranged amount. The *tan'gol* was in arrears with his *shinch'öng* dues, so needed payment desperately.

The size of an island *tan'gol p'an* in 1950 is indicated in a notebook which survives in the care of Ch'ae Tun'gul, a *tan'gol* living in Köje, a village to Chindo's northwest. This is a register of clients, called the *Tanggolgi*. It was compiled by Pak Myöngjae and lists 297 clients (that is, household heads) within 14 Chindo hamlets (*purak*,⁹ and 7 additional clients living outside the island (in

Mokp'o, Kwangju, and Seoul). The register indicates that by this time *tan'gol p'an* on Chindo were not strictly geographical areas, for other *tan'gol* served families in Kaltu and Koya where Pak indicates 11 and 7 clients respectively. Ch'ae moved to the area around 1960, by which time the *tan'gol p'an* had significantly declined to less than 200 families. Ch'ae gives a simple reason: Pak's son had wanted to escape the ritual profession, so neglected the *tan'gol p'an* (Pak and Chŏng 1988:142-145).

The maintenance of the *tan'gol p'an* system required intermarriage between a small group of families, in Chindo sub-lineages of Pak, Yi, Song, Han, Ch'ae, Kim and Kang (several Ham's are also evident whose roots I have been unable to check). It was helped by rigid social stratification, where shamans were until recently grouped as virtual outcasts together with musicians and butchers as *ch'ŏnmin*.

Tan'gol typically owned no land, a factor which strengthened their social stigma. Even today, many rent their houses.

The *tan'gol p'an* system had the potential to work only so long as *tan'gol* held a monopoly on rituals to the spirit world. This is no longer the case. At one time clients offered a retainer twice annually in the form of barley in Spring (*pom tobu*) and rice kernels in Autumn (*kaül tobu*). As Christianity began to gain footholds in the countryside and the inroads of mechanization and modernization opened new avenues for ensuring health, wealth, and successful harvests, so the Spring retainer was dropped. Still, such a payment enabled Pak to keep his *Tanggolgi*. More recently, even the Autumn retainer has become less viable with the increase in fortune tellers and incoming ecstatic *mudang*. These latter specifically charge only for rituals and consultations.

Tan'gol have traditionally charged fees known as *maryŏng* in addition to retainers. By the late 1970s Pak Pyŏngch'ŏn remembers these had reached around 100,000 *wŏn*. My own data from 1982-1984 suggests each performer at a ritual earned between 20,000 and 40,000 *wŏn*. In addition, a client was expected to pay tips, provide a sheaf of paper for props and a *mal* (18.039 litres) of rice. After use at the altar, the rice became an additional payment to the *tan'gol*. By the early 1980s, the average *tan'gol* income was comparable to, or in excess of, that of a farming family.

Several comments need to be added about recent finance. First, as the *tan'gol* system has declined, so old women and fortune tellers have tended to become local advisers. The latter may invite a more skilled *tan'gol* to conduct a ritual for a client, splitting whatever fee is charged. Second, national promotion of Chindo's main ritual, *Ssikkim kut*, led to its 1980 appointment as an Intangible Cultural Asset. Those involved increased their skill, 'restoring' the ritual to an 'authentic' form. The three *tan'gol* and musicians nominated as *poyuja* (holders) within this government-controlled preservation system each receive monthly

stipends (in 1991, 450,000 *wŏn*) in addition to fees for local rituals. This has led to increases in the fees which those involved can charge, for:

If someone dies after a long and full life, their descendants aren't sad. Their Ssikkim kut will be a propitious mourning, and their descendants will hire the most excellent *tan'gol* and *koin* so that they can enjoy the best possible ritual¹⁰ (Kwanmae villagers).

Inheritance

Choi Chungmoo (1987: ch. 1) and Kim T'aegon (1982:228-237) note that in the southwest of Korea *tan'gol* inheritance passed from mother to daughter-in-law and in the southeast from father to son. Korea, however, is a strongly patriarchal society. In the southwest, at least in Chindo, the choice of a *tan'gol* spouse is said to ensure a male heir's future financial prosperity. Normally, the eldest son and his spouse inherited a *tan'gol p'an* (assuming that the wife came from a suitable family), but there were unofficial rules to ensure that no daughter would live in penury. However, if a woman divorced she lost all rights to practice in the inherited *tan'gol p'an* and was usually forced to move away from the area. The argument of Choi and Kim appears to be weak. Again, *tan'gol* genealogical trees typically show male lineages. Pak Pyŏngch'ŏn's is the most elaborate, going back more than 10 generations and thus over 200 years (see Howard 1990:194 [simplified] or Pak and Chŏng 1988:154).¹¹

Further, daughters may learn basic ritual knowledge from *tan'gol* parents, but they hone their skills from a husband's family after marriage, and after they have left the natal village. A few examples demonstrate:¹² The daughter of the Sangbojŏn *tan'gol* married into a mainland *tan'gol* family. From her mother-in-law she learnt rituals appropriate to the new locality, but she divorced and returned to Chindo. She now lives as a *tan'gol* in O-ilshi and is married to Kim Kwibong, a *koin* from a *tan'gol* family in Sŏngjong. Yi T'aehong, her father, has continued to work as the main *koin* to his wife, the *tan'gol* Han Midal, in Sangbojŏn and Habojŏn. The Inji *koin*, Pak Pyŏngch'ŏn, has been married twice. Villagers reported that his first wife had refused to practice as a *tan'gol* and so was sent packing. His second wife, the dancer Chŏng Sukcha, learnt directly from Pak's mother, Kim Soshim. Ch'ae Kyeman, now the oldest appointee in the Intangible Cultural Asset team, traces male *koin* amongst his father's generation – e.g., the siblings Chŏngin, Kyŏngin and Tuin – and several female *tan'gol* relatives – e.g., Channe and Tun'gul, daughters of a relative, and Ch'ae Paekchu. Channe married into the Ham *tan'gol* family, and practised on the mainland. She too divorced and for eleven years lived in poverty in Mokp'o and Kwangju. Finally she returned to Chindo to marry again, this time to Kim Wŏnsŏn. She took over Kim's family *tan'gol p'an* in Tonji.

Sons of *tan'gol* who learn ritual skills typically do so outside the family. This does not discount the large amount absorbed from listening and watching the performances of parents. And, regardless of past practice, *tan'gol* I have interviewed suggest individual desire more than peer group pressure influences a parental decision to provide training. Ch'ae Kyeman thus claimed to have learnt from his uncle, Tuin; Kang in Yöndong and Pak Manjun in Sangman from Ch'ae Kyöngin; Kim Kwibong studied outside Chindo and with both Pak and Kang; Pak's son, Pyöngwön, studied latterly with Ch'ae Kyeman; Yi T'aehong studied from Pak Pömjün, and this Pak's son, Pyöngch'ön, learnt much from two relatives, Sönnæ (an aunt) and Manjun (father's generation, common grandfather).

Many who were born into shaman families have utilized learned skills to become professional musicians or dancers. Akamatsu and Akiba back in the 1930s noted a link. They reported 6 out of 21 trainee *kisaeng* (entertainment girls) in Kwangju came from shaman backgrounds, and 4 out of 10 trainees at Namwön (cited in Kim Woo-ok 1980:51-53). The late Kim Tüksu (1917-1989), a *poyuja* for his accompaniment to the Intangible Cultural Asset epic song repertory, *p'ansori*, came from a Chindo *tan'gol* family. So did Yang Hüngdo (b.1900), the first *poyuja* for the woman's song and dance genre, *Kanggangsullae*. Ch'ae Kyeman worked for many years as a theatre musician, Pak Pyöngch'ön remains active as a musician, dancer and choreographer in Seoul, and his son Hwanyöng is now a flute player at the Korean Traditional Performing Arts Centre (*Kungnip kugagwön*).

Even though inheritance seems patrilineal, an exchange of labour has been expected between spouses. While a wife conducts rituals, her husband has often performed as the main ritual accompanist. He has been responsible for props – in Chindo the preparation of paper spirits (*nökchön*), paper money (*chijön*), paper hats (*kokkal*), and spirit houses – and the correct set up of a ritual space. A common complaint I heard, in several cases resulting in divorce, was that husbands did not support *tan'gol* wives.

The whole issue of skill and inheritance was summed up by Pak Pyöngch'ön, himself a *poyuja* for *Ssikkim kut*:

You would be proud if you were the third generation in a musical family, or the third generation of artist. But my family have been *tan'gol* for more than 10 generations. I was born into a family where my grandfather was really famous, both as a *tan'gol* and as musician. We controlled the largest Chindo *tan'gol p'an*. We alone were allowed to give rituals for all the families who lived in our area... In my house, people knew shamanism really well. When I was young, and supposedly sleeping, I heard all the *tan'gol* songs. When I ate, I ate food left over from rituals. When I played, my toys were drums and gongs, the musical instruments of *koin*.

Our family followed the rules set out and controlled by the *shinch'öng*, the shaman association. My father was influential in the association, and I learnt much from him. I learnt much from my mother, and from many others. So, I got to know so many words and so many rituals. And I knew my inheritance.

Conclusion

Clearly, in this paper I haven't answered the question of my title. This is deliberate, for my argument is incomplete (I have no space to include data on common *mudang/tan'gol* spirit pantheons and rituals) and much discussion is needed.

On the basis of what I have said, however, I believe that skill – in Chindo measured by *tan'gol* clients both i) in relation to the outward experience of music, dance, and recitation of set texts and local data in a ritual, and ii) in the ritual's perceived efficacy – provides the key to *tan'gol* identity. Both elements are carefully managed by practitioners. In the first, *tan'gol* and *koin* accompanists undergo careful training in music, song and dance, coupled to a long period of socialization that gives insights into local problems and peculiarities. In the latter, rituals have clearly prescribed elements which offer divination (e.g., the lifting of paper spirits, the burning of paper, uncovering the footprints of birds, see Howard (forthcoming)), besides which *tan'gol* operate in a social environment where the successful manipulation of spiritual forces is expected.

The *tan'gol p'an* itself, the control by the *shinch'öng*, and the systems of marriage, training and inheritance, all suggest a well organized society. *Communitas* here has no need of trance. Indeed, if trance is a social idiom, it can have no validity within the *tan'gol* system. In this respect, it is of note that spirits do speak in Chindo rituals, yet they do so not through the mouths of *tan'gol*, but through members of the audience, typically old women. The comment of Kim which I opened with is by no means atypical.

Further, the integration of the *tan'gol* system, at least as it existed one generation ago before the widespread introduction of Christianity, before increasing Westernization, and before the spread of ecstatic shamans, suggests a long history. Because of all this, *tan'gol* surely deserve a fair hearing.

Notes

1. Kim has, since 1980, been nominated a *poyuja* (holder) of Chindo's all-night shamanistic ritual, the Intangible Cultural Asset *Ssikkim kut*. She began to perform rituals in 1959 and is today probably the most respected local *tan'gol*.
2. Hence, Yi Nünghwa's *Chosön musok ko* (1927), Kim T'aegon's *Han'guk mugajip* series (1971a/b, 1978, 1980), Ch'oe Kilsöng's *Han'guk musok üi yön'gu* (1978), Cho Hüngyun's *Han'guk üi mu* (1983), and so on. I have considered the term more fully elsewhere (Howard 1990:161-162).
3. Im Söckchae avoids the term 'shaman' through his use of 'mu-ism'. Alexandre Guillemoz' *Les Algues, Les Anciens, Les Dieux* is similarly circumspect, and the

author notes a 'complex problem of terminology' (1983:56; personal communication, 1991).

4. I have conducted fieldwork in Chindo since 1982. Howard (1990:1-25) gives background information on the area.
5. Even here the distinction is not clear. Throughout the Korean peninsula, old women – shamans or fortune-tellers – can frequently be found tending small Buddhist temples. They are sometimes known as *posal*, 'Bodhissatva'. Then again, I note how one month after a senior Chindo shaman died in 1983, her son Pak Pyŏngch'ŏn organized two memorial rites at a Buddhist temple – one given by Buddhist monks followed by an abbreviated shaman *Ssikkim kut*. And the ancient *P'alghanhoe* may have started as a Buddhist ceremony of abstinence, but by the Koryŏ dynasty (918-1392) shaman influence is clear, for it had become a rite to celebrate the spirits of heaven and earth (see Yi Nŭnghwa 1959:98-100).
6. Others such as Shin Ch'aeho, Song Sŏkha and Sŏn Chint'ae soon took up the idea.
7. The *Samguk sagi* (History of the Three Kingdoms; 12th century) comments that the second Shilla king was known as *ch'ach'a ung*; citing the 8th century Kim Taemun, this is said to indicate a shaman. The *Koryŏsa* (History of the Koryŏ Dynasty; 1452) tells how in 1021 many shamans participated in a national ceremony and, according to Kim Yŏlgyu (1975:83), describes founder figures as 'King of X mountain', as if they were shamans. Huy Dong Shin (1982:98-99), using the study of Kim T'aekkyu (1980:59-62), argues on the basis of founding myths that *tan'gol* predated the fourth century introduction of Buddhism to Korea.
8. A prize-winning 1989 KBS documentary on Chindo folk belief, however, avoided the *Ssikkim kut* of island *tan'gol* and concentrated instead on the descent of gods to a *mudang* and her initiation ceremony (see also Tosa Masaki [1989]).
9. There is no necessary contradiction between this *Tan'golgi* and Kim's *tan'gol p'an* definition, because of the difficulty in defining a Korean village: government-regulated administrative units, *ri*, do not necessarily correspond to local units, *purak*, *maül*, etc.
10. The term *kut*, normally used for 'ritual', could here equally be interpreted as 'performance'.
11. The revival of Confucianism in Korea has in the last few decades led to a rise in family genealogy charts. I would not like to assess the reliability of island claims, but note that *tan'gol* are to a significant extent the keepers of oral history.
12. I have found it difficult to prove teaching claims.

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Chini's Ambiguous Initiation¹

By

Laurel Kendall

Prologue

The three shamans meet again in Chini's² dank little rented room on the day before her *kut*, filling her cramped quarters with drum and cymbals, cheap vinyl suitcases bulging with the god's costumes, and the flurry of their preparations. Chini's pitiful accommodations, like her emaciated figure, index the hardship of one who is destined to serve the spirits. The three shamans claim to know this well; the tribulations of the calling are their common history. Still, one must stretch the imagination to find in these robust and forthright matrons any trace of a woman like Chini, thin and timid, pale at the prospect of performing a *kut* and claiming the god's authority as her own.

They had taken Chini, in the late spring, to the public shrine on K'amak Mountain to hold her initiation ritual (*naerim kut*),³ but the initiate was reticent and the gods stubborn. The shamans, as they tell me now, months later, hit the drum throughout the night while the initiate stood mute. They hit the drum until four o'clock in the morning before Chini began to shout out the names of her gods, the eleven gods whose painted images she has since installed in a narrow shrine against the far wall of her tiny room.⁴ That she had managed this much was the final proof: the gods have chosen Chini, caused her the past ten years of bitter suffering, and now offer resolution in her initiation as a shaman. But Chini's words on the mountain had not been enough. Her 'gates of speech' (*malmun*) had not opened to pour out inspired oracles (*kongsu*). She lacks sufficient inspiration to prognosticate for her clients over a divination tray⁵ or while performing at a *kut*. The gods have not yet empowered her to earn her living as a shaman. The first *kut* cleansed Chini of unclean ghosts and ominous forces. Now in the fall, this second *kut* would call in the gods and urge them to make Chini into a successful shaman.⁶ To become a shaman, she must find it in herself to perform as one.

Introduction

In the 1960s and 1970s, avant-garde theatre attempted to reenchant performance by dipping into ethnography. The actor's experience was described as analogous to possession rituals and shamanic journeys which evoke imagined truths in the experienced immediacy of performance, thereby making them 'real'. Actors were encouraged to see themselves as shamans (Cole 1975, Kirby 1983

[1975]). Ironically, performance is precisely what Chini, a destined shaman by the classic standards of her own society, found to be so difficult. This is the story of Chini's second *kut*, held in the fall of 1989 to open her gates of speech in the presence of three members of her family, an anthropologist (myself), and an ethnographic filmmaker (Diana Lee) with crew (Kim Asch).⁷ Through Chini's story, it is also an exploration of the delicate balance between theatricality and inspiration as shamans work with the initiate and her family to construct compelling idioms of past misfortune and future power, and to perform them into being. Finally, because Chini's second initiation was again judged insufficient, her story confounds the near-certainty of formulaic passage rites, the near-inevitability of ritual processes which by their own internal dynamic transform mere mortals into shamans and healers.

There is irony in western theatre having sought its reflection in ethnography before anthropology was prepared to confront the subjects of its own musings in theatre. The recognition that ritual is essentially performance is not new to anthropology. Waldermar Bogoras's turn-of-the-century account of a Chukchi shaman seance, a masterpiece of ethnographic description, is attuned to the beats of the drum, to how the shaman modifies his voice as he chants, to the spectators' shouts and then the cries and whispers of the spirits as they enter the room (Bogoras 1907). Eliade's (1970) opus is riddled with dramatic portrayals of shamanic soul quests and netherworldly journeys. Michel Leiris ([1958] cited in Cole 1975), Raymond Firth (1967) and John Beattie (1977) have spoken of 'theatricality' in spirit possession.

Still, the shaman as actor has been an uncomfortable notion for a relativistic social science. Our students inevitably ask us if we 'believe' in the powers of the shamans we have studied, or if the spirits were 'really' there. The question discomfits insofar as it implies, on the one hand, that the ethnographer follows Castaneda's (1968) leap beyond the pale of professional credulity, or on the other, that acknowledgements of simulation make charlatans of one's informants. We bear the burden of Euro-American conventions in which, as Richard Schechner reminds us,

"'acting' means make-believe, illusion, lying... In America we say someone is 'only acting' when we detect the seams between the performance and the nonacting surround" (Schechner 1982:63).

Lévi-Strauss (1963) gave us the parable of Quesalid, the Kwakiutl shaman who was not so much a great shaman because he was able to cure, as able to cure because he was a great shaman, a fine performer. The story highlights our (and initially Quesalid's) equation of theatricality with falsehood, and then subverts it. Quesalid, the cynic who apprenticed himself as a shaman to expose the tricks of the trade, discovers that his sleight-of-hand cures more effectively than the tricks of a rival shaman. In that realization, conveyed from the Kwakiutl

shaman to the discipline of anthropology, lies knowledge of the power of performance, but the parable of Quesalid still brackets artful illusion from the truth claims of the ritual text.

It remained for avant-garde theatre to insist that elemental drama was something more than the imitation of a reality that existed elsewhere (Brecht 1964 [1957], Brook 1968, Cole 1975), and to seek in ritual and in ritual dramas a revitalized knowledge of compelling performance (Artaud 1958, Kirby 1983 [1975], Schechner 1982, 1985, Schechner and Schuman 1977). It remained for anthropology to view ritual as more than the sum of its structure and symbols, as an enacted realization of personal and collective knowledge (Atkinson 1989, Crapanzano 1977, Schieffelin 1985, Tambiah 1977, 1979, Turner 1982, and for Korea Choi 1989; Kendall 1985, Ch. 1; Kim 1989).⁸ In the influential work of Bruce Kapferer (1983), recent studies trace the realization of efficacious enactments through the complex and varied media of performance (Boddy 1989, Roseman 1988, 1990). And if music, song, dance, drama, and mime are inextricable from the texts of ritual, it follows that the skilled performances of shamans, mediums, and accompanying musicians are also intrinsic to the efficacy of the event, however 'efficacy' might be emically rendered (Atkinson 1989:93, 218; Briggs n.d.; Boddy 1989:134; Golomb 1985:81; Laderman n.d.; Lambek 1988). We begin to find, here and there, accounts of those who are poor performers and consequently failed shamans (Choi 1987:164; Schieffelin n.d.; Obeyesekere 1977:289). Artistry is an attribute of healing power. Acknowledging this, we return to the apprentice Chini, feeling neither skilled nor yet sufficiently empowered. Her three shaman teachers would construct for her a world in which the promise and burden of her calling might at last be made manifest.

In Korea, shamans (*mudang*, *mansin*) are both born and made: fated from birth to suffer until they acknowledge and accept their destiny, initiated, and then trained by a senior shaman or 'spirit mother' (*sin ōmōni*). If Korean shamans draw legitimacy from personal histories of affliction, constructed as evidence of a calling (Kendall 1988), they become great shamans through their command of ritual knowledge and performance skills acquired during an onerous apprenticeship (Choi 1987). The two autobiographical motifs, calling and training, intersect during a shaman's initiation when she must perform with appropriate chants, dancing, and above all, divine oracles to conjure and convey the inspiration sent by the gods. When her ability to do this is proven, she may begin to receive clients for divinations, build a following, and earn an income as a shaman. The promise of work was a desperate necessity for Chini who had gone deep into debt to finance one and now a second initiation *kut*.

Let me summarize what transpired during the first day of Chini's *kut*, then give you a more full-blooded account of its dramatic conclusion. In the very first segment, Chini is expected to balance atop an earthen water jar,

summon the Buddhist Sage, and in the spirit's name, deliver an oracle. The oracle is discouraging, the spirits will not grant her the power of inspired speech without another year of devotion. They announce that something, some intrusive spirit, is blocking her. When Chini descends from the jar, she speaks no more. The sequence is incomplete; other spirits have not appeared to give their oracles. The shamans first cajole the spirits, then coach the apprentice, then scold her in mounting desparation. A vexed spirit mother removes the costume from a downcast Chini.

For the shamans, Chini's emotional resistance prevents her from clearing her mind and opening herself to the spirits' inspiration. She does not heed the impulse to draw down a particular spirit's costume and take it to herself as a vehicle of that spirit's presence and power. She neither weeps nor shouts insults, thus resisting the very acts of emotional-release and surrender that would bring on the force of the spirits.⁹ Above all, she has failed to act like a shaman. The shamans tell her that the spirits will not move her tongue for her, that performing inspired speech 'whether or not the spirits have made you into a shaman' is more constructive than her clinch of stage fright and stone silence. Their metaphor, that Chini's gates of inspired speech are 'blocked' (*makhida*), works on two nearly indistinguishable levels: she is blocked because an obstreperous spirit stands in her path and she is blocked because she cannot clear her mind and open herself to feelings, impulses, and spirits by losing herself in performance.

When Kim Pongsun, the spirit mother, performs the Special Messenger, she seeks the spirit that is blocking Chini. The culprit is Chini's dead sister, a pockmarked maiden who took her own life at age 19. She appears dressed in the crown and rainbow-sleeved jacket of a princess or a bride, the costume of a pantheon spirit, Princess Hogu. The dead sister claims pride of place, not merely as the ghost of a maiden suicide but as a destined shaman who, through the force of her calling, asserts herself as a guardian spirit (*taesin*) who assists the shaman in her practice. As guardian, the sister is to become a permanent symbol of Chini's destiny, indeed a partner in it.

With a telephone call to the shaman supply shop, a robe and crown are purchased for the dead sister as Princess Hogu. Chini is costumed and dances to the encouragement of pounding drum and cymbals, but again, inspiration eludes her. In near-desparation, the shamans clothe Chini in the gold satin robe of the Heavenly King (Ch'onha Taewang),¹⁰ since no intrusive spirit could block the high King.

Swaying on her feet, eyes vacant, a smile on her lips, Chini proclaims the presence of the Heavenly King, then lapses into silence. The spirit mother begins to berate the spirits whose painted images hang above Chini's altar, calling them heartless for insisting on a *kut* and then failing to uphold their part of the bargain, threatening to tear them off the wall and burn them up. At last,

Chini speaks, proclaiming that her dead sister, as Princess Hogu, bears her family no grudge, that she has become a disciple of the Heavenly King. She delivers oracles, formulaic and predictable, to her sister-in-law, mother, and elder sister. The spirit mother continues to urge Chini on, using a now-familiar formula:

"If there's a costume the spirit wants to wear, then put it on! Jump and keep shouting out the spirits' commands. That's what we mean by the true words of the spirits, shout out what the spirits have to tell us. That's what it's all about."

The shamans pound cymbals, drum, and gong with great enthusiasm as Chini reaches again for Princess Hogu's robe. The spirit mother shouts, 'Cry your heart out. Then everything will burst out.'

Chini sobs convulsively, covering her tear-streaked face with princess Hogu's fan and in the person of the dead girl calls for her mother, begs her mother to acknowledge her good will toward Chini, and mourns Chini's pitiful situation, forced to become a shaman. She provides another round of oracles, staggers drunkenly through her performance of Princess Hogu's praise song, and collapses in a bow on the floor in front of her altar where she receives the experienced shaman's praise.

The story of a successful ritual process might have ended here. Chini's triumphant unblocking came after the appropriate personal and familial symbols, drawn from a larger cultural lexicon, had been identified and set at play (cf. Kessler 1977; Obeyesekere 1977; Turner 1967, 1968 [1981]). Performance theory would lead us to an appreciation of how drum beats, costumes, dance, and the recognizable theatrical business of particular spirits – the fan over Princess Hogu's face, for example – are implicated in the construction of a successful *kut* (cf. Kapferer 1983). Chini's *kut* 'worked' in the sense that ordinary *kut* work, as a collective mustering of family, gods, and ancestors, conjoined in the performance of their common history of pain (Kendall 1977, 1985: Ch. 1.). But the stakes are different in an initiation *kut* and a moment of catharsis (cf. Scheff 1979) is insufficient to the expectations of a fully realized shaman.

Chini has made progress. The shamans confirm this later that night, when the spirit mother has stayed behind to instruct Chini on the next day's performance. 'After all, she did manage to give us some words from the spirits,' she says, contrasting Chini's performance today with her recalcitrance on the mountain last spring. Yet in their guarded comments, the shamans recognize that Chini is not yet empowered to pour out compelling oracles on command and minister to clients. Except for the brief encounter with her dead sister, come back as Princess Hogu, her words have been formulaic and limited. The outcome of her *kut* remains uncertain.

The Knife-Riding General

The next day, Chini faces a final ordeal. She must summon the fearless Knife-Riding General (Chaktu Changgün) and through the force of his power, balance on blades used to chop fodder. The blades are set high atop the earthen water jar. As the shamans dress her in the general's robes, Chini is optimistic:

"I feel it today... the Heavenly King and the Jade Immortal [his consort] are taking me away. It's good, your star pupil is going to be fine."

Chini dances, then announces the presence of the Heavenly King, and then the Generals and declares that she is going to ride the blades. But then Chini just continues to dance. The shamans clothe her in Princess Hogu's robe. When this fails, they dress her in the robe for Kim Pongsun's own Knife-Riding Guardian God (Chaktu Taesin). Chini struggles to keep dancing, then gives up and mops her brow. The shamans scold her. Again, Chini's spirit mother offers an explanation.

[**Kim Pongsun**]: When the Heavenly King kept coming up in your visions, maybe you didn't know enough to say I'm the Heavenly King, I need a crown, but couldn't you at least have made the right gestures for a crown? Couldn't you have done that much with the King coming up in your visions like that?...

The senior apprentice: When you see the vision you should say, You're insolent. Why didn't you give me a hat?

Chini: How would I know?

[**Kim Pongsun**]: He was telling you, in the vision.

[**Kwan Myöngnyo**]: You can't ignore that when you're divining. Speak up about each and every vision...

[**The spirit mother**]: If the spirits come up right before your eyes and you don't announce them, then what's the point?

Chini: [*surprisingly feisty*] The vision was really clear. The Heavenly King appeared. I thought it was the Heavenly King, but how could I know what to do?

And the senior apprentice tells her: You say I've arrived. You say, I've come down from heaven wearing my hat. Couldn't you even say that? [*She gives Chini a playful punch.*]

Now the spirit mother instructs her: When the Heavenly King dances, you show his hat like so. [*She mimes the appropriate posture and gesture for the Heavenly King, thrusting her hands up into the air to indicate his crown.*] When you've gotten the message, when you see what he wants, you say, I'm the Heavenly King, why haven't you done this for me? You've got to have confidence, you're the one who says it. Or someone with pock marks takes shape in your eye, a woman, she's Princess Hogu, isn't it?... And all the Generals from long ago look like so. [*She places her hands on her hips and thrusts her chest forward, imperiously, her characteristic pose when manifesting a divine General during kut.*] When you see those gentlemen, say I'm this General, I'm that general. Then right when you take up the blades – didn't

I teach you that this morning? – take the blades in hand like this and test them like this [*she pantomimes striking her cheek*], and here too [*she strikes her forearms*], and then when you've done that, and you're ready to go up, wash your feet and climb on up, that's how it's done.

Chini tries again, takes up the blades, dances with them, and tests them as she has been instructed. The women wash Chini's feet. She approaches the jar, climbs up, and gingerly rests her feet on the blades, turning and bowing to the four directions. She pivots toward the wall and steadies herself against it, sobbing.

Chini gasps out her words: It's the Knife-Riding General!

[An Hosun]: Help her succeed!

[Chini]: They're all coming. All the spirits are here.

The spirit mother almost laughs with relief: Well of course they're all here now. If you had gone all the way up there and they hadn't come, then that really would have been a disaster.

Aftermath

We thought that we had just filmed our happy ending: that Chini, coached by her spirit mother, encouraged by her sister shamans, and supported by the women of her family, had finally called in the spirits. The results were, alas, more ambiguous. Even after standing on the knives, Chini did not deliver oracles. When she descended from the jar, she did not speak again, and the senior shamans finished the *kut*. While the shamans praised Chini for ascending the blades, she was still not ready to perform as a shaman; her 'gates of speech' were not yet fully open. She must spend the next year cultivating the source of her inspiration through devotions to the spirits and prayers on sacred mountains as the Buddhist Sages required.

A month after her *kut*, on the eve of my departure from Korea, we saw Chini again, assisting at a *kut* at her spirit mother's shrine. The small store of confidence that she had mustered for her *kut* seemed to have withered. When she hit the gong or the cymbals, she was immediately corrected and sometimes summarily relieved of this charge by a more experienced shaman. Like an overly disciplined piano student, her mistakes increased. When I dressed to dance *mugam*, the interval at a *kut* when clients dance in shaman's costumes,¹¹ I noticed Chini watching me intently. I recalled her having told me that shamans chided her with unfavourable comparisons to my dancing. 'Damn', I thought as the drumming started, 'She's taking their teasing seriously'. So it seemed. Chini was clothed to dance *mugam*, but after a few desultory jumps, she gave it up and retreated to a distant part of the house.

Conclusion

The spirit mother attributed Chini's difficulties to temperament:

If the spirits are strong, if the initiate is strong then the spirits come on strong, but if the initiate is a weakling, like Chini, a spirit wanders in, you sit around for a while waiting, and then another spirit wanders in. It's frustrating! [She chuckles at the memory.]

Even as she states that there are 'people like Chini' to whom the spirits come slowly, the spirit mother affirms a cultural ideal wherein destined shamans burst forth with spontaneous oracles from the spirits.

The visions take shape in their eye, and then even without their realizing it, they're shouting out 'I'm so-and-so, I'm such-and-such,' even though they have no idea who the Spirit Warrior is, or the Generals, or Princess Hogu, or the Special Messenger... Would [an ordinary housewife] know anything about the Special Messenger?

The Korean shaman world's own myths fit tidily with an international scholarly tradition that celebrates shamanic initiation as an experience of profound psychological and spiritual transformation (Eliade 1970:Ch2, Lewis 1971:188-190; Peters 1982, and for Korea Hwang 1988:31, 41-49; Kim 1981:245, 417). But if the spontaneous metamorphosis of a haunted young woman into an inspired shaman is the cultural ideal, ethnographic accounts of Korean shaman practice contain a tacit acknowledgement that becoming a shaman is a slow and by no means certain process. Pyong-yang Mansin, Youngsook Kim Harvey's informant, claimed that a spirit mother would be lucky if three out of ten spirit daughters she initiated become successful shamans (Harvey 1979:126-127), and many women have described disjunctive careers (Ch'oe 1981:66-67; Choi 1987:117, 129-130; Harvey 1979:37-83). And while Korean ethnography does contain firsthand descriptions of initiation rituals which match classic expectations (Guillemoz 1988-1989; Hwang 1988: Ch. 1; Kim 1981:357-372; Kim and Ch'oe 1983),¹² more discursive accounts by Chung-moo Choi (1987:136), Soonhwa Sun (n.d.:14-29) and myself (Kendall 1985:65-66) describe initiations that were far less compelling than even Chini's *kut*. Chini's experience, and the expectations and instructions the shamans placed upon her, allow us to bridge our own dichotomization of 'true inspiration' and 'pure performance'. Throughout her *kut* the shamans chided Chini for naively assuming that the spirits would move her tongue for her. She was repeatedly prompted in performative business that would transform the passive stuff of visions, inference, and intuition into an active spiritual presence. It was the ability to perform that Chini lacked. She failed, the shamans acknowledged, because she was too self-conscious and inhibited. By their logic, she was unable to perform because she could not give herself over to the flow of inspiration

conjured by drum beats, dancing, costumes, and their own suggestive comments. In the discouraged apprentice, we find the mirror image of the successful avant-garde actor.

Notes

1. The ritual described in this paper was observed and recorded during the filming, in September 1989, of an ethnographic video produced by Diana Lee and Laurel Kendall. My own notes have been supplemented by fifteen hours of tape filmed by Diana Lee with sound work by Kim Asch. Kim Söngja, Pak Hyönsuk, and Yi Sujöng provided written transcripts in Korean script. Dr. Chungmoo Choi saved me from many embarrassing errors of translation and generously shared her insights during my work with this material. Tom Miller offered helpful suggestions during his careful editing of this manuscript. Alexandre Guillemoz gave it a kind and careful reading. The project was supported by the Department of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History Belo-Tanenbaum Fund; The Center for Visual Anthropology, University of Southern California; and the Committee on Korean Studies of the Northeast Asia Area Council, Association for Asian Studies. I alone am responsible for the shrotcomings of this effort. A more detailed account of this same ritual will appear in *The Performance of Healing*, edited by Carol Laderman and Marina Roseman.
2. To keep consistency with the ethnographic video of Chini's *kut*, I have violated my usual practices both of using pseudonyms and of replicating the sorts of tecnonymous names (e.g. "Yönsu's Mother") that Korean women would use in direct address or common reference. The three shamans decided, in consultation with me, that their work should be acknowledged under their names of record. For clarity, I have consistently used the names "An Hosun", "Kwan Myöngnyö", and "Kim Pongsun" when the shamans refer to each other in direct quotations although the usage is, to my ear and theirs, artificial.
3. Because the process of a *naerim kut* does not require a period of isolation and secrecy, Alexandre Guillemoz suggests that it be called a "passage rite" rather than an "initiation" (Guillemoz 1987-1988). Hwang Ru-si (1988: 41-49) also characterizes this ritual as a "passage rite" (*t'onggwa cheüi*) to underscore the total transformation of the shaman's identity and world view. Because notions of isolation and secrecy are not implicit in the English term 'initiation', and because the term is usually associated with admission to more exclusive statuses or associations than those implied by 'passage rites', I have retained this usage here.
4. These were the Five Direction Generals (Obang sinjang), The Heavenly Guardian God (Ch'onha Taesin), the Knife-riding Guardian God (Chaktu Taesin), Hogu Special Messenger (Hogu Pyölsang), The Heavenly King (Ch'onha Taewang), the Mountain God (San Silling), the Healing Sage (Yaksa Tosa), the Seven Stars (Ch'ölsöng), Sambul Chesök (birth and fertility - 'the Birth Grandmother' in my gloss), and the Buddhist Sage (Pulsa).
5. Shamans divine (*mugöri*) through the visions and sensations that come to them as they cast rice and coins on the slick surface of a varnished tray. Such a divination may provide the diagnosis that

leads a client to sponsor a *kut* or less elaborate ritual. Some women routinely seek out a shaman and acquire a divination before the first full moon of the new year, others come at a time of ciris, and still others come to satisfy their curiosity in an idle moment (Kendall 1985:71-79).

6. The shaman An Hosun distinguished between a *hōt'ūn* (or *hōch'in*) *kut*, to drive out malevolent forces so that the purified can receive her spirits, and a *sosul kut* to call in the spirits. She thus presented Chini's second *kut* as a logical stage in the process of becoming a shaman. Hwang Russi (1988) glosses *hōt'ūn kut* and *sosul kut* as variant names for a *naerim kut*. As we shall see, there is a cultural expectation that an initiate gain the power of inspired speech during one successful initiation *kut*. As we shall also see, some initiates sponsor several *kut* before being recognized, by human and spirit, as proper shamans.
7. The video, "An Initiation *Kut* for a Korean Shaman," is tentatively scheduled for distribution by the University Press of Hawaii in the fall of 1991.
8. The convergence of anthropologist Victor Turner's and avant-garde director Richard

Schechner's interests is reflected in the near-parallel titles of *From Ritual to Theater* (Turner 1982) and *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Schechner 1985).

9. Dancing itself carries the potential of release and abandon; as such it is a vehicle both of possession and the expression of strong emotions. Thus dancing is both an instrument of therapy and a potentially dangerous, slightly disreputable activity (Kendall 1983, in press).
10. The Heavenly King sometimes appears in the pantheons of illustrious lineages (Kendall 1985:133-134).
11. For descriptions of *mugam*, see Kendall 1983, 1985:10-12, 16-17).
12. Note that two of these sources (Hwang 1988, Kim and Ch'oe 1983) describe what was undoubtedly the most remarked upon and best-documented initiation *kut* of the 1980s. The initiate was a graduate student in dance ethnography at UCLA and, in contrast to Chini, already a skilled performer. Since her initiation, she has evolved her own synthesis of the tradition for presentation outside Korea, rather than following the expected career path of an initiated shaman, receiving clients for divination and performing rituals with senior shamans on a regular basis.

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The *Naerim Kut* of Mister Kim

By

Alexandre Guillemoz

The initiation ceremony of Korean shamans (*mudang*) is called *naerim kut*, which means 'seance (*kut*) of descent' (*naerim*). Specialists speak in general of *kangsins*, 'descent of the spirit', a term used by the Confucians for their ritual offering (*chesa*), in which the spirit of an ancestor is thought to come consume the food offerings. The *mudang* do not use this term spontaneously, but usually speak of *naerim kut*. What comes down? What is the role of the *naerim kut* in the birth of a vocation? How does one become a *mudang*?

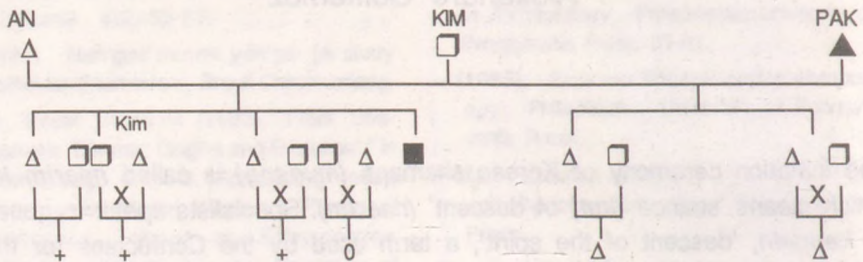
In order to understand how and why one becomes a *mudang*, we propose to present the most important elements occurring before, during and after the *naerim kut* of Kim S-O (KSO), 30 years old. This took place in August 1986. This is the first time, to our knowledge, that materials have been collected before a *naerim kut*. The mother of Kim was 'sold' to the family of an elderly man (An), by whom she had four children before he died. She then married Pak (died in 1973), by whom she had two sons that she raised herself. Born in 1956 Kim, the fifth child, bears like his brothers and sisters the name of his mother. She was a *mudang* for several years, but stopped practising in order to raise her children and converted to Protestantism.

The wife of the elder brother of Kim attended the Protestant church regularly, where she was a deaconess (*chipsa*), but the elder brother had pain in his leg. The name of his illness was not known. Kim thought that something was 'stuck', implying that there was a 'stuck' spirit causing the illness.

Kim's brother-in-law, husband of his elder sister, was in the final stages of tuberculosis, and the couple divorced. The child lived first with the mother, then with the father. They were advised to live together again, but things went badly. The brother-in-law was in such a bad state that he was sent home from hospital to die (it is the tradition in Korea to die at home, not in the hospital). In the family of the brother-in-law there was a pastor, and the family attended the Protestant church regularly. The brother-in-law was brought to a retirement home, where he recovered.

The younger of his elder brothers was divorced, and the child lived with its mother. The younger of his elder sisters also had problems. She married, but then separated from her husband. Pregnant, she had a miscarriage. The

couple got back together, then separated again. Her work also went badly. Even though the family gave them money, they separated. And so it went, on and on.



(Males represented by triangles, women by squares. Filled in, these represent someone who has died. Children bear the mother's, not the father's name. X indicates separated or divorced couples. + indicates the presence of grandchild(ren), zero lack of grandchildren.)

Kim's mother lived with his younger brother, who was separated from his wife. They had a boy who was now 8 years old. The younger brother had married before Kim and was a taxi driver.

Kim finished junior high school and then worked as a lathe-worker in a factory for 15 years. He married, had a son, and was one of the few members of his family to have managed to form a stable couple. He had just been promoted when, in 1985, he fell ill. It was finally diagnosed as kidney failure. He was treated, and the doctors proposed dialyses and a kidney transplant. Two weeks before our interview, he was hospitalised for the insertion of a probe in his left vein. He was told to come back the following Monday (4 August) to begin a biweekly dialyses.

1. Preliminaries

As soon as he returned from hospital, the wife of Kim's matrilineal cousin in the fourth degree said to him: "Since this has happened to you, why not try a *kut*?" He replied that he too wished to have a *kut* and that he had already gone to visit a new *mudang* (41 years old) who said, upon seeing him, that a paksu (male *mudang*) had 'descended'. She added that she had been told, just the evening before, that her spiritual brother (*sin tongaseng*) was going to come.

After a year of suffering and unsuccessful treatment at the hospital, and after surgery which caused no end of anxiety and which was accepted badly because it meant the permanent medicalization of his life and the intrusion of a foreign - and noisy - element into his body (the probe), Kim refused further dialyses and, completely at a loose end, decided to see whether a *kut* would work. He inquired and was told that he must become a *paksu*, which was the last thing he had expected to hear. Added to his desire for a *kut* in the hope of being healed, there was now the desire of the announcer to find a spiritual brother.

2. The *kut* on the First Day of the Seventh Month

The spiritual sister chose the first day of the seventh moon (6 August) for the *kut*. During this séance for an illness (*pyŏng kut*) Kim danced, wore various spirit gowns, took up the bells (*pangŭl*) and the fan (*puch'ae*) and uttered words (*kongsu*). He acted in every way like a *mudang*. His mother acted in the same manner, and with violence she threw on her son the gowns offered to the ancestors, signifying that he should take responsibility for them.

3. After the *kut*

Five days later Kim noted an improvement in his health. He no longer vomited when he ate slightly salty food, his headaches disappeared, and the anxiety which oppressed his chest calmed considerably. The day after the *kut*, as though on a television screen, four people appeared to him. He recalled afterwards that the fourth, who had black hair and a white face, wished him welcome. His spiritual sister declared that it was Grandmother Taesin (the patron saint of diviners and shamans) and that he would henceforth serve the spirits.

A complete restructuring of Kim's life had thus occurred since the announcement of his vocation as a *paksu* and the holding of a *kut* for his illness. He mulled over the causes of the descent. He associated his return to the Protestant church with the beginning of his illness: "After my marriage I went once to the Protestant church, and the next day I began to feel ill." At the time he had thought it was because he lacked faith, and so he had begun to go to morning prayer, but thereafter he had begun to have headaches. It was the deterioration of his condition that had led him to try a *kut*.

This immediate cause hid other causes attributed to his ascendants, amongst whom was his father: "The fact that I did not go to my father's burial was a source of frustration (*han*) for him, and so he did this" (these words were accompanied by a gesture showing the father grabbing his arm at the very place where the probe had been put). His mother likewise: "My mother repressed (*nurŭda*) the descent because her children were against it. If my

mother had continued, this would not have happened to me." And, finally, his ancestors: "Because nothing was going right in the family, my mother went for a consultation. She was told that the difficulties were because of the ancestor(s) (*chosang t'asi*) and that that was practised in certain branches of the Pak family." Kim recognized that he did not understand, that he must have a *naerim kut*, and that when the door of speech (*mal mun*) was broken open he would serve all spirits, and would understand. He was told that he would receive clients after his *naerim kut*.

4. The Process of Shamanization

Kim was an individual, free of his father and free of lineage, who had succeeded in life – especially when compared with his brothers and sisters – and who, because he fell ill, was led to feel guilty towards his father, whose name he had never borne, and to recognize the weight of a lineage which would never recognize him. Do we not see here the heart of what we could call one of the knots of Korean identity requiring, regardless of religion, that an individual exist socially by virtue of belonging to a patriline? Was the illness not the means, in the end, of revealing in an individual his failure to fulfil the 'duty' of every Korean toward his parents, namely, to mourn? Did not the improvement and the persistence of the symptoms of his illness after the *kut* have a double advantage: to show, on the one hand, that the causes had been identified and, on the other hand, to prove that the sick person belonged to his father's lineage? Was not the 'signature' in the body of the sick person proof every bit as valid as that in a lineage register, the basis of the civil state in Korea?

Up to this point, the process of shamanization implies nothing but what Korean society itself says. It is not a religious attitude which distinguishes itself from social norms, but which on the contrary is wrapped up in society and hence inseparable from Korean identity itself.

5. The *Kut* of Descent

The *naerim kut* took place in the Temple of the National Masters on the 9th day of the 7th moon (14 August), with the participation of four shamans, one musician, and eight women related on either the paternal or maternal side to Kim. We will limit ourselves to outlining here the most significant moments of the seance, which lasted an entire day.

a) *The Silence of the Spirits*

After the rites of purification, Kim was invited to dance. Ch'ilkkongju, a confirmed *paksu* of about 60 years of age, acted as guide and interlocutor. Politely, he encouraged Kim to speak. We might think that Ch'ilkkongju was speaking to

the spirit that Kim was supposed to incarnate, but it was not so. He was in fact speaking to the shaman who was being born in Kim and suggested to him the names of the spirits (Taesin, Palsa, an ancestor) who might manifest themselves.

b) The Choice of the Bowls

Because Kim said that no one was speaking, Ch'ilkkongju advised him to dance and to touch one of seven bowls covered with paper that hid its contents. Kim touched with his finger the first bowl, which contained uncooked grains of rice (*ssal*), then the second bowl, with grains of millet (*chopssal*), and finally the third, which had white beans (*k'ong*). Someone said: "The beans mean that the denouement (*p'ullida*) will be major." After the *kut* Ch'ilkkongju explained that the bowls contained uncooked rice, millet, white beans, red beans, water, straw, and ashes. If water or rice is uncovered, the denouement will be pure. If it is the white beans, the denouement will be major. If it is millet, there will be many little jobs but few big ones. If it is ashes or straw, the denouement is still far off. The meanings attributed by Ch'ilkkongju and other shamans show that all possible responses are positive. Caught up in the dynamics of the *naerim kut*, the candidate can only become a shaman. His degree of excellence will be small or great, according to the bowl chosen, but he has no way out.

c) The Coming of the Spirits

Kim began to dance again. Ch'ilkkongju asked him politely who had come, and Kim spoke to him of the successive arrival of five spirits: the spirit of Mount Samgak, Palsa, Grandmother Taesin, the generals of the five directions, and the General. During the break Kim explained: "It was not me who spoke, but the thought came and words came out, [indicating the spirit] who had arrived. Because I danced, [words] came into my head even though I am a man who knows nothing." It is through the dancing body of the shaman that everything comes to pass. The candidate is an empty body. It is no longer his ordinary mental faculties which direct him. His body is open to other thoughts, to other words. It is as though the spirits had been waiting to manifest themselves until the candidate had proven his divinatory capacity by choosing the bowls. Ch'ilkkongju asked Kim to utter oracles (*kongsu*), to say whether things were going well or not in the family. Again Kim dance and delivered oracles to all present.

6. The Modalities of the Movements of Spirits

Before and during the *naerim kut* the terms describing the mode of relationship with the spirits were as follows: 'enter' (*türö osida*), used once by Kim, and 'come' (*osida*) used six times by Ch'ilkkongju, once by the musician, and once by Kim. Inasmuch as 'enter' and 'come' describe a horizontal dimension in the relationship between spirits and men, what comes down? Apart from the expression *naerim kut*, the idea of a descent occurred three times in the expression, 'a *paksu* has come down,' used by Kim, who was reporting the words of his spiritual sister, and by Ch'ilkkongju and Yi Myöngok, both of whom are accomplished shamans. According to the documents we gathered, we are obliged to conclude that the spirits move horizontally and that the *naerim kut* is characterized by the descent of a shaman, that is, by the descent of the capacity to be a shaman. The usual understanding, which has the spirits descending, does not fit the data. My data, moreover, is supported by that gathered from the *mansin* Hong Insun (Guillemoz 1988:91). The *naerim kut* is a seance of initiation in the sense that the candidate, in the presence of his peers, demonstrates his capacity to divine and to speak and thereby creates the nucleus of his future clientele.

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Shamanistic Elements of Korean Folk Theatre, *Kamyŏn'gŭk*

By

Meewon Lee

The relationship between theatre and ritual has received wide attention since the end of the 19th century in anthropological studies of so-called 'primitive' peoples. Because theatre is a collaborative art, combining various cultural elements including music, dance, literature and plastic arts, it often shares basic elements with ritual. Both are enactments limited by time and space, both employ live performers playing to an audience and both often employ music, song, and dance in an overall structure of conflict. Thus, specific ritualistic parallels to, for instance, 'shamanistic ceremonies' and the 'fertility rites' are noted particularly in non-western and the ancient Greek theatre (Kirby 1975).

Kamyŏn'gŭk, the traditional folk theatre of Korea, is also closely connected with an origin in folk rituals, especially shamanistic ceremonies. The basic Korean folk religion is essentially shamanistic, and has prevailed in Korea since prehistorical times. My study pursues the shamanistic elements in *kamyŏn'gŭk*. There are two kinds of extant *kamyŏn'gŭk* representing different periods: *Pyŏlsin kutnori* of Hahoe (from the 13th century) and *Pongsan t'alch'um* (from the 18th century). Although ritual and theatre share many basic elements, scholars have noted the importance of determining a differentiating norm between ritual and theatre. As a basic distinction, most scholars stress the function of performance. They believe that rituals are always functional, practical and aim to have future effects, that is, they are efficacious. In theatre, on the other hand, the audience appreciates and criticizes a performance as entertainment. This norm of efficacy is applied to the discussion of shamanistic elements in *kamyŏn'gŭk*. The earliest extant *kamyŏn'gŭk*, *Pyŏlsin kutnori* is a distinctive and inseparable part of the shamanistic village ritual, whereas later town-type *kamyŏn'gŭk* such as *Ponggan t'alch'um* are performed independently of rituals. The following examines the relationship of shamanistic to dramatic elements in the two types.

Pyölsin kutnori

Performing Context

Pyölsin kutnori of Hahoe is the earliest extant *kamyön'gūk*. Hahoe village held a village ritual called *tongje* for the well-being of the village annually until the early 20th century. This did not include mask-theatre but was instead a simple ritual ceremony comprising the reading of charms and prayers. *Pyölsin kutnori* literally means 'special ritual-drama to gods'. It was distinguished from the annual rites as a big festival performed every three, five or ten years when requested by the village deity. It was a special offering to the deity. It was believed throughout the area that the dead could not go to the 'good place in the other world' if they had not seen this ritual-drama, so once performance began, hordes of people would gather. The mere attendance at *Pyölsin kutnori* was thought to bring people happiness in the next world. It consequently had magical overtones.

On the day of the last full moon of the years, *Sanju*, the master of ceremonies, went to the Sonang (village guardian deity) temple and divined whether *Tongje* or *Pyölsinkut* should be performed. *Sanju* announced the will of the goddess to villagers and summoned a carpenter who was not ritually 'unclean' to make a *sonangdae* spirit pole at the shrine.

Actors were chosen by *Sanju* and villagers' representatives. They could not refuse the call since it was believed to be the goddess' will. The actors, *Sanju* and shamans were billeted together at the village temple and forced to live restricted private lives for 15 days. Every taboo was strictly kept, supervised by *Sanju* and shamans. There was even a special arrangement of the actors' beds within the temple. Villagers brought meals in turn, since it was believed preparing meals for the actors would bring villages luck.

On the morning of the second day of the lunar first month, after setting up the *sonangdae* measuring seven or eight meters in length and preparing various foods to serve as an offering to the goddess, *Sanju*, the shamans, and actors assembled at the temple to make supplication to the village goddess to. The top of the spirit pole bore the bell of the Sonang temple, which rang as the pole shook. This signified the presence of the goddess, and the pole was led in procession through the shrine sites in the village. The actors played music and danced, while villagers dedicated clothes before the pole. Hanging clothes on the pole was believed to bring much happiness; when a new bride hung her skirt on the pole, she was supposed to later bear a son.

When the parade returned to the square in front of the village temple, *Pyölsin kutnori* began. While actors prepared to perform, some of them received donations from villagers. Shamans played music and sometimes participated in the acting.

After the *Pyölsin* performance, actors were not released from their confinement until the entire ritual had ended on the 15th of January. During the remaining time, actors and shamans gave private performances and purifying rituals for individual families. After the last ceremony, *Hötchon kut* (road ceremony), all returned.

The mask which were used provide an illustration of *Pyölsin's* evolution towards theatre from ritual. Hahoe people sanctified the masks, even though they used them for a purely theatrical purpose. The masks represented incarnations of spirits to villagers' shamanism-oriented mind. The masks were kept in the *Sadang* after the performance and it was believed that opening the mask temple without a ceremony would bring great disaster to the village. These masks support this hypothesis, because they were not only used in *Pyölsin* performance but were also sanctified by villagers. The title of the drama also directly expresses a close relationship with folk ritual. *Pyöl* can be translated as 'special' *sin* as 'god', *kut* as 'ritual', and *nori* as play, or drama.

In short, the theatrical events of *Pyölsin kutnori* all happened within the folk/shamanistic context: 1) *Sanju* in trance received an oracle concerning *Pyölsin* performance and nominated actors; 2) the camp training of actors was governed by *sanju* and shamans with strict taboos; 3) the performance of *Pyölsin* was confined to a ritual; 4) shamans supervised the overall process of the performance, played music, and sometimes participated in acting; 5) Hahoe villagers sanctified the masks as incarnation of spirits; 6) the performance aimed at magical efficacy the prosperity of the village and a good harvest rather than entertainment.

Dramatic Content

The dramatic content of *Pyölsin kutnori* is hard to separate precisely from the ritual, because various forms of dance, music and acrobatics were performed throughout. A large part of the drama was composed of dances of exorcism. But I define *Pyölsin* as an enactment confined to the performance by actors with masks, which conveys some dramatic story. The content of *Pyölsin* in this analysis consists of eight episodes.

The first and last two episodes are least dramatic, being composed of ritualistic dances to create a ritualistic frame. The first *Chuji* (an imaginary animal) episode and the second *Samsuk* episode are opening exorcism dances. The *Chuji* episode involves a pair of animals, each two dancers who jump, fight, and imitate sexual intercourse. Similarly the *Samsuk* episode, even though it is not remembered in detail, seems deeply rooted in shamanistic trance and exorcism, judging from the dominant role shamans take. The last two episodes, the wedding and *Sinbang* are also ritualistic: they represent a 'sacred marriage'.

The other episodes – *Paekchöng* (Butcher), *Sallim sari* (Everyday life or Old Woman), *Yangbang* and *Sönbi* (Nobleman and Scholar) and *P'agaesüng* (Apostate Buddhist Priest) employ dramatic elaboration, but still retain

shamanistic elements. In *Paetchǒng* a butcher imitates the slaughter of a bull then sarcastically asks the audience to buy the bulls heart and testicles. His speech includes satire of the nobility and, at the end, the butcher dances in a trance-like state. This parallels a shaman's *Salsaeng* ritual, where a real killing of a bull takes place.

In *sallim sari* a poor old woman sings sadly about her miserable life while weaving fabric on imaginary loom. The audience tries to get rid of her by appeasing her with donations. The shamanistic technique of avoiding disaster by appeasing evil spirits is applied to the handling here.

Only two episodes – *Yangban* and *Sǒnbi* and *P'agaesǔng* – show dramatic elaboration. The overall structure of the play is also compartmentalized just like other shaman rituals.

Pongsan t'alch'um

Like other 'town-type' *kamyǒn'gŭk*, the *Pongsan* drama was developed in a commercial city. The change in patronage, from farmer to rich merchant, seems to have further affected the course of the dramatic elaboration in Korean theatrical forms. By the 19th century, in order to attract a large group of buyers, rich merchants became the most powerful supporters of theatre and entertainment became important. Thus, *Pongsan t'alch'um* rapidly separated from seasonal rituals.

Performing Context

The performance occasions testify to *kamyǒn'gŭk's* shift in function from ritual efficacy to entertainment. Initially, *Pongsan t'alch'um* was performed annually on Buddha's birthday. Gradually, special performances were presented on auspicious occasions relating to official matters such as the appointment of a new governor. The final shift occurred after the mid 19th century, when performances began to be held in market places and occasionally at homes of the wealthy. Towards the end of the 19th century, the annual performance was held on *T'ano* a seasonal national holiday. No ritual was attached, but *Pongsan t'alch'um* was performed as one of many celebratory entertainments.

In the drama, actors were not nominated by the village gods but were mainly low-ranking officials who liked to perform. Commoners were welcomed to join if they donated money. Actors were all male, but courtesans took women's roles from the 1920s onwards. This flexibility in the status and sex of actors is significant proof that *kamyǒn'gŭk* developed into secular entertainment.

Though the performing context of *Pongsan t'alch'um* definitely suggests folk theatre, it still has ritualistic remnants. The entire process of a performance parallels old village ritual. Before the start, performers stage a formal parade in full costume on the way to the performance area called *Kilnori*. Structurally,

this parallels the pilgrimage of the *Sanju* shamans and actors of *Pyölsin*. Further, after this parade, it was customary to perform a brief ritual, *kōsa*, for either the guardian deity of the performance or Chömok An, the founder of *Pongsan t'alch'um*. Moreover, performers usually burn the masks instead of keeping them after the performance. This tells us that the masks themselves have lost sacred significance. However, burning implies another ritualistic purpose – shamanistic exorcism for fire has purificatory properties and serves to consume evil and noxious influences.

Some costumes in the *Pongsan* drama have been borrowed from shamanism. Similarly, some rhythms and even musical instruments, are the same as those used in shaman rituals. Coupled to the development of the dramatic action the repetitive beats on drum and gong at times become highly accentuated, the audience even experiences an ecstasy similar to the trance state of shamans. Fire also plays a big role in the performance effect. The *Pongsan* drama was usually performed at night around a bonfire. Under the flames glaring in the dark, a monk's dance was famous as actors jumped over the fire. This recalls Kirby's observation about connections between shamanism and theatrical performance:

"Another paratheatrical performance originating in shamanism is represented by fire-walking, fire-handling and fire-eating, typical of the act once practiced on street corners, in fairs, carnivals, and circuses in the Western world... One fundamental cross-cultural source for these phenomena is a shamanistic trance ritual of exorcism held at night about a glowing fire" (Kirby 1975:14).

In short, the performing context of *Pongsan t'alch'um* eventually shifted from ritual to folk theatre, but still preserved some ritualistic remnants.

Dramatic Content

The content of the *Pongsan* drama, although it shows dramatic elaboration, also has shamanistic elements. It can be divided into two sets: dance episodes and dramatized episodes. Similar to the *Pyölsin* drama, the *Pongsan* drama begins and ends with ritualistic dances. It begins with a ceremonial dance in which four young monks appear to greet the deities of the four directions by bowing reverently in the four directions. The play ends with a shaman's ritual for the dead when, Miyal having died, a shaman performs in their person. After this, the shaman along with actors performs a ritual offering of wine which includes the burning of the masks. However, this is integrated into the plot instead of forming a separate ritual.

The second episode, the Eight Monk-Dance, can be considered a dance of exorcism. The performed wear grotesque demon or ghost masks and enter one by one. When a monk appears, he strikes a fallen monk and drives him away. The expulsion is thought to be a symbol of driving out evil. The dance also employs fire-acrobatics, involving superhuman power in a way reminiscent

of shamanistic delirium. As Kirby has noticed, this kind of 'paratheatrical fire-acrobatics' is often found in shamanistic rituals (Kirby 1975:24).

Parallel to the *Chuji* dance in *Pyölsin*, there is a lion dance. The lion is known in Korea as Buddha's messenger and is considered an auspicious animal which expels evil spirits. So, this dance has an exorcistic significance, and again Kirby considers the lion dance as rooted in shamanism (Kirby 1975:23).

A *Sadang* episode is again dance and song more than drama. A dancing girl, *Sadang*, appears followed by seven *kōsa* complete it. Even though it lacks much dramatic plot, this episode has little ritualistic meaning: the audience simply enjoys the episode. But, the episode is a good example of the decrease in religious significance and increase in entertainment. One could hypothesize that this sort of new and entertaining episode was inserted in later *kamyōn'gūk* as ritualistic episodes such as *Pyölsin's Paekchōng*, wedding and *Sinbang* disappeared.

Obviously, the plot development is clearer and more elaborate in dramatic than dance episodes. The former include The Old Buddhist Priest Episode, The Noblemen and their Servant Malttugi, and The Old Couple and Concubine. In the first of these an old priest comes to the secular world and falls in love with Somu, a female shaman. Their flirtation employs only dance, body movement and gesture. Then a shoe-seller enters with a monkey. The priest buys a pair of shoes for Samu, and amusing tricks result as the shoe money is collected. Then Ch'wibari, the prodigal of the town, appears and challenges the old priest for the favours of Somu. He is successful; the priest is forced to leave, and Somu bears the prodigal's son. Even though this episode is reasonably well developed as a dramatic story, it still preserves ritualistic motifs such as the contest between old and new and a sacred marriage. Furthermore, the heroine's name, Somu, literally means a small shaman. Also, the use of Ch'wibari's ventriloquism relates this episode to shamanism since shamanism is the actual, as well as metaphorical or archetypal, origin of ventriloquism.

The second of these episodes has the most elaborate dialogue in the Pongsan drama. Malttugi, the servant of three aristocratic brothers, continuously makes fun of his masters through audacious remarks and clever double-entendres, exposing their absurdity and greed. The physical deformity of the noble brothers represents commoners' satire towards the noble class. From the first sight of them the noble brothers are far from respectable, decent men. However, deformity itself suggests a shamanistic origin in relation to demonic representation of disease and abnormality (Kirby 1975:97). The episode has a well-developed plot and the satire gives a kind of catharsis for the common people to vent complaints. This can be compared with the shaman who, as community doctor, evolves from "treatment of physical ills caused by disease spirits, to a broader social application" (Kirby 1975:30-31). Social protest has gradually replaced the magical function of performance.

The last episode, The Old Couple, reflects everyday life and again reveals the remnants of ritual. When we compare this with *Sallim sari* in the *Pyölsin*

drama, the dramatic elaboration is evident. Both deal with the miserable life of a common woman. While in the *Pyölsin* drama an old woman merely narrates her unfortunate life, in the *Pongsan* case multiple characters appear and enact a story built around an old woman, Miyal. When Miyal is killed by a young concubine, a shaman enters and performs a ritual for the dead. Since this is the last episode of the play, the funeral ceremony is more than a simple prayer: then solemn shamanistic ritual enhances the atmosphere of the entire play.

The overall structure of the *Pongsan* drama is compartmentalized like *Pyölsin* and this reminds us of shaman rituals. There is another shamanistic remnant as well the concept of journey. One main characteristic of shamanic rituals is the journey of the shaman's spirit to the other world, which Shirokogoroff describes as follows:

"The shaman must go down a mountain range (in a north-eastern direction), where he may meet with difficulties caused by the spirits of other shamans and other spirits which are in conflict with his own spirits. On his way he has to go through a small hole, near which the spirits and other shamans may capture his soul... This journey is reported by the shaman, who sings all 'les peropeties' of his traveling (Shirokogoroff 1935:307).

Similarly, most characters in the *Pongsan* drama enter the stage as strangers. The old priest comes timidly from the mountain; the noblemen are travelling and order Malttugi to find a lodging place, Miyal arrives from a long search for her husband. Even the lion comes from the world of Buddha in order to punish apostate monks. All of those characters appear on the stage during their journey to another place. This can be considered a remnant that indicates *Pongsan's* close relationship with shamanism, even though the journeys are all part of the plot, not distinct in themselves.

In conclusion, *kamyön'gūk*, a traditional folk theatre form of Korea, was once closely associated with Korean shamanistic/folk rituals. The shamanistic elements in two representative *kamyön'gūk*, *Pyölsin kutnori* and *Pongsan t'alch'um*, have been examined. As *kamyön'gūk* developed, drama increased as ritualistic elements decrease. Though *kamyön'gūk* lost its efficacious ritual purpose it never separated itself from its ritualistic origins in the psychological healer tradition of shamanism. The increasing dramatic interest in secular life gradually developed into social criticism. Through this *kamyön'gūk* gave cathartic release to the common people – an opportunity to vent frustrations in a strict class-ordered society.

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Comic Play in a Korean Shaman Rite

By

Daniel A. Kister

Religious ritual commonly arouses wonder and awe, not laughter. In the case of a Korean shaman ritual (*kut*), however, religious awe is seldom far removed from humour; exorcistic healing achieves much of its effect through the catharsis of ribald, side-splitting laughter; and fertility ritual reveals itself as a well-spring of comedy. Laughter abounds in the comic skits at the end of a village *Pyölsin kut*, where the humour embodies a Korean vision of life at odds with the ordered world of Confucianism. The humour does so as it first reinforces ritual aims of cathartic release and fertility and then puts these aims in an ironic light.

A two or three day seasonal festival of communal prayer and entertainment, the *Pyölsin kut* seeks the aid of the Village Spirit, the Spirit of Childbirth, the Dragon King of the Four Seas, and other major spirits to ward off disease and ensure fruitfulness in the year's fishing and farming. Though less frequent than formerly, it is still performed in a number of fishing villages by a family of hereditary shamans (*mudang*). As a coda to the main rites of the *Pyölsin kut*, male members of the *mudang* troupe perform a comic medley called the *Köri kut* on the final morning after the tables of offerings have been dismantled. The major spirits have all received their due; but as one *mudang* has explained, the ritual job is not yet complete. For along with the major spirits

"come numerous attendant spirits (*subi*), a motley crowd of hungry ghosts ... We have given proper due to the major spirits for three days; but afterwards if we don't provide good food to satisfy and feed this motley wayside (*köri*) crew, the effective (*körihan*) results are nil" (Ch'oe - So eds. 1982; hereafter this will be referred to as *Songs*).

As Sö Tae-sök says in *Han'guk muga üi yon'gu* (*Studies in Korean Mudang Song*, 1980:255), "the *subi* are the spirits of men who have died; and they are depicted in the living guise precisely of men". The dozen or so skits of the *Köri kut* take shape in accord with very human tragic-comic trials and tribulations. At the end of each *köri*, what takes place in the episode is related to a ritual purpose of exorcising, controlling, or invoking various spirits; but what vitalizes and unifies the world of the skits is to a great extent a very human spirit of comedy.

The first skit, the "*Hunjang* (Schoolmaster) *kori*," is a one-man display of vaudeville farce on the part a male *mudang* who plays the roles of both teacher and students. Formerly a protégé of the heavenly Emperor Spirit, the Schoolmaster has been sent down to earth for his sins and is now reduced to giving lessons to a handful of unruly youngsters of the village. Towards the beginning of the skit, he has us picture the room where he teaches through a song that evokes reverence for the Confucian scholar's study as a world of ordered beauty beyond the reach of village commoners. It has

"a coral desk, glass pen box, fine black ink, with all sorts of ink wells on the desk, a shapely ink stone, pure hair brushes in the brush stand, and a full assortment of books" (*Songs*, 286).

The witty village students, however, make playful havoc with the order of the Confucian classroom; and the skit as a whole evokes the amused disdain that the uneducated commonly have for the boxed-in sophistication of a scholar's learning as useless baggage ill-suited to the realities of life and life's instinctual drives.

The students persistently twist the traditional pedagogical paradigms to fit their bold fancy and playful logic. In the most outlandish example, one of the students is going through the paradigm customarily used to teach Chinese characters. When he gets to the mnemonic pair of characters meaning 'choice' (*koro cho*) and 'sun' (*pet' yang*), he twists the paradigm into a similarly sounding pair that mean 'whale's penis' (*korae choji*) and '100 nyang' (*paek nyang*), an old form of Korean currency. Willing to grant some sense to the student's version, the Schoolmaster gullibly says that if a whale's penis is worth so much, he would like to know how much his own, as teacher, is worth. To this, the student replies that the teacher's penis is worth 10,000 *nyang*, but immediately adds that his father's is worth ten times as much:

"Your teaching and guidance are a single benefit, and I set their worth at exactly 10,000 *nyang*; but my father went to a lot of trouble in the pitch-black dark of a moonless night to bring me into being... This I value at 100,000 *nyang*" (*Songs*, 288).

In terms of the traditional paradigm, the student's reply is anarchic nonsense. But in terms of values that characterize the world horizon of the village spectators, it makes eminent sense: life given in the chaos of night has more value than boxed-in patterns of learning handed down in the order of the classroom.

As recorded in the source I am using, this first *kori* of the *Kōri kut* has no stated ritual aim. But the dynamics of laughter that activates the episode accords with the basic ritual dynamics of a *kut* as a mechanism of cathartic release. Laughter frees the participants of the ritual, not from unwanted spirits, but from unwanted emotions. It transmutes feelings of inadequacy and restriction in the face of the Confucian scholarly class into a sense of superiority.

The '*Hunjang kori*' and subsequent skits satirize the upper class, but satire does not explain the dynamics of their humour. The skits exemplify rather what the French author Charles Baudelaire has called in his essay *On the Essence of Laughter* the 'absolute comic'. Baudelaire maintains that laughter and tears 'are both equally the children of woe,' the woe of the disharmonious state depicted in myths of the loss of paradise (Baudelaire 1981:313; hereafter this will be referred to as *Essence*). But the 'absolute comic' employs playful grotesquerie to assert man's superiority over the woes of life by fancifully transmuting them into a source of primal, almost paradisaical joy (see *Essence*, 318). The laughter of the *Hunjang kori* has its roots in woe, in a feeling for the limitations of life that in Korean is termed *han*. It is rooted in the frustration that the Schoolmaster finds in teaching his unruly charges, at the inadequacies which the students find in the paradigms, and at the chaos that their fanciful twisting of the paradigms makes of the traditional pedagogy. But the free, mirthful laughter playfully transmutes the woe into a joyous theatrical event that allows the villagers to stand momentarily above life's limits and absurdities.

The comic world expands as we move to the second skit, the '*Kwago*' (Civil Service Exam) *kori*. The Schoolmaster has now given up teaching and seeks to improve his lot by heading for Seoul in hopes of passing the traditional *Kwago* Exam for a more solid position in the Confucian officialdom. Taking over the trickster's role from his former students, he challenges the established order by making nonsense of the exam process and of the official positions which the exam gives access to. He passes the exam with a bit of verse that is perfect nonsense (*Songs*, 294-295); but he refuses the position of *Ch'ambong*, saying it is the job of a blind man; and he rejects the position of Chwasu because it amounts to just sitting sleepily on a chamber pot (*Songs*, 295-296). The officials toss him out with the admonition that "the likes of you won't even be able to take charge of a heap of dog dung" (*Songs*, 296).

Our hapless hero then turns to suicide. He takes poison, but, as chance has it, not enough actually to kill himself. Instead, in a dreamy state of unconsciousness induced by the poison, he meets the Great Kings of the Other World, who give him a chance to take the *Kwago* Exam in their realm. He passes and accepts the position they offer him, that of feeding and chasing away unsettled spirits as officiant of the *Kori kut*.

The spirits whom he tries to control, however, are just as playful and unruly as the students of the first *kori*. It is rather they who control him, grabbing him by the ear and dragging him this way and that in a farcical finale that is pure turmoil (*Songs*, 303-305). His new status in life is just as unsatisfying as the old; and the skit as a whole ends in ironic comic chaos as both a parody of man's efforts to control his destiny and a travesty of the *mudang's* ritual attempts to deal with the spirits. The burlesque of the *mudang's* ritual activity in no way lessens the awe of more serious moments of dealing with the spirits

in the *Pyölsin kut*. It merely gives evidence that the world of the attached *Kori kut* embodies an ironic vision that encompasses both naive religious awe in the presence of supernatural forces and shrewd skepticism.

In *Shamanism: The Beginnings of Art*, Andreas Lommel maintains that a shaman is an artist who

"moulds the spiritual world of his group into impressive images, and who gives ever-renewed shape and fresh life to the images that live in his group's imagination" (Lommel 1967:140).

The Korean *mudang* fulfils this artistic role through a mastery not only of the language of the theatre and of comedy, but also of irony.

The third *kori* is a travesty of the solemn Confucian upper class rite of initiation of a young man into adulthood. But with the fourth episode, the *Kolmaegi* Grandmother-*kori*, the upper class is forgotten; and for the rest of the *kut*, the comic focus shifts to the arena of the common man's life.

The mirth achieves its climax in the miniature comic masterpiece of the sixth episode, the *Pongsa* (Blind Man) *kori*. Though blind, the plucky central figure of this *kori* is much more a master of his fate than the hapless Schoolmaster. As he goes along his way to "watch the moon rise" (*Songs*, 331-332), he makes a joke of his plight and puts down a group of women milling grain who mock him. He chants an imaginative catalogue of ways in which he claims the milling women have served the sexual needs of everybody and anybody who comes along; and he ribaldly boasts that he will make them "the mortar of the mill for his pestle to pound" (*Songs*, 334-335).

Continuing on his way, he happens upon the place where the present *kut* is being performed. With faith in the power of the spirits, he washes his eyes in medicinal spring water and has his sight miraculously restored (*Songs*, 336). The antics of unruly spirits ended the *Kwago kori* in ironic, comic chaos; but the intervention of the spirits here brings about a climax of pure comic joy that is neither darkened by irony nor rooted in woe. The comic vision is brightened by wonder in face of life's ability to transform the human situation in a moment of happy surprise, and the comic joy is rooted in religious faith in the power of the spirits. The Blind Man reminds those attending the *kut* that "if we faithfully call the attendant spirits, they give clarity of sight to every man, woman, youth, and old person in the village without exception" (*Songs*, 336).

Mircea Eliade, in *Cosmos and History*, notes that shamanist and other rituals celebrated in the spring embody the endeavour of a community to start the year off right by returning to a state of harmony with self, nature, and the gods. He maintains that this endeavour springs from an existential desire to return periodically to a lost paradisaical state "uncontaminated by time and becoming" (Eliade 1954:89; see also Eliade 1964:508-511). Though not a new-year ritual, the seasonal village *Pyölsin kut* establishes a harmony with nature,

other men, and the spirits that can be interpreted in the light of Eliade's theory as at least quasi-paradisaical. Certainly the miraculous regaining of sight by the Blind Man in the *Pongsa-kori* and a similar occurrence narrated in the *Shimch'ong Chon* of the *Pyölsin-kut* proper takes us out of the ordinary world of change and becoming into a world of paradisaical joy and wonder.

If we also accept Baudelaire's theory that the fanciful laughter of the 'absolute comic' amounts to an expression of paradisaical joy, the playful, mirthful laughter that abounds in a *Pyölsin kut* corroborates Eliade's interpretation of such ritual. But an application of Baudelaire's theory at the same time belies Eliade's theory; for it calls attention to the fact that much of the joyous laughter of the *Pyölsin kut* ironically has its wellsprings in the woe of a lost-paradise state. Charged with a humour that draws us both toward and away from paradise, the Korean shaman *kut* is more sophisticated, ambiguous, and paradoxical than Eliade's theory of myth and ritual allows for. As applied to the *Pyölsin kut*, his theory is illuminating, but rather simplistic.

In the present version, the final six *kōri* are shorter and less imaginative than the first six; and on the level of both comic theatre and religious ritual, they project a much more sombre and much less cocksure vision of life. In the first of the final six skits, the *Paennori* (Boat Play) *kōri*, the humour turns black; and the climactic surprise springs not from an unexpected gift of fuller life, but from the sudden intrusion of death.

The *Paennori* ushers in a series of four *kōri* that deal with what the fishing villagers know best, occupations in which one seeks one's livelihood in contest with the sea. Dramatically very simple, it mimics a boatman fishing with his helpers. Other boats are taking in huge hauls, but the boatman has scant success. When a storm unexpectedly arises, the other boats have no problem getting to safety; but his frail craft gets swamped. Sinking with his fellow crewmen, the boatman cries, "Oh! I'm dying. Oh! My God in heaven! Oh! Somebody save us!" (*Songs*, 339). In one version I have seen, the *mu-dang* added to the anxiety of the village spectators by reminding them that many fishermen actually drowned a year before in just such a sudden squall. At the end of the present version, the *mudang* notes that there are many such "wretched and miserable spirits" of persons who have drowned at sea. As he goes to the shore to toss an offering of food to such spirits, he explains that if we hope to "keep down their anger and earnestly beg them for prosperous good fortune, we must first dutifully call them and give them something" (*Songs*, 340).

The next three *kōri* reiterate the dangers of sea occupations; and the eleventh episode, the *Pyöngjōng* (Soldier) *kōri* makes a farce of the training of young recruits and invites participants to pray that the two Koreas be quickly reunited (*Songs*, 346). The final *Haesan* (Childbirth) *kōri* then makes a comedy of the

trials of childbirth, reaching its comic high point in a poetic lullaby expressive of a mother's love and the wonder of birth:

"Lulla, lulla, lullaby, my love,

Where have you come from, where have you been?

Did you fall from heaven? Did you sprout up from the earth?

Have you come wrapped in the summer clouds that hide steep peaks?

Lulla, lulla, lullaby."

(Songs, 350)

Another version ends on this note of the wonder of new life that comes from the pain of birth; but in the present version, the baby abruptly gets sick and dies.

Now, at the end of the *Kōri kut*, we stand poles apart from where we were at the beginning. We started in the upper-class, male, intellectually ordered domain of the Confucian schoolroom. We have now come to rest in a realm of commonplace female activity charged with instinctive feeling and focused on the mystery of birth and death. In accord with the *kut*'s ritual purpose of cathartic release and fertility, we have followed the overall dramatic movement of release from the earlier restraints of intellectually and order to more instinctual, life-centered concerns.

In accord with what we expect of both traditional comic drama and fertility ritual, the movement of the *kut* should find its climax in a harmonious, joyful celebration of life. But from the episode of the boatman, a cloud has been cast over the action by the danger of being brought to an early death through the malevolent influence of restless ghosts who themselves suffered such a fate. Comic wit and fancy are not strong enough to dissipate death's threatening shadow, and the power of the spirits seems more and more likely to turn dark and destructive than providential. With both comic and religious expectancies turned topsy-turvy, we leave the *kut* site plunged in a bleak, ironic world of woe and *han*.

Fulfilling his religious function, the *mudang* draws upon the pathos and confusion of the moment to reinforce in the *kut* participants the need ritually to appease the unpredictable ghosts of children who have suffered an untimely death. He concludes the *Pyōlsin kut* with a litany invoking a full range of unsettled spirits and tells them to take what he gives them and go away (Songs, 352-353).

In accord with the shaman's artistic role of giving life and continuity to the imaginative and spiritual world of his people, the *mudang* sends us away with a typically Korean vision of life that seems naive, but is richly sophisticated in its ambiguous fusion of contraries. He has presented scenes that arouse both attraction for and rejection of Confucian values. He has created comic situations that allow the villagers to play with social and religious structures

which, nonetheless, they take quite seriously. He has manipulated the emotions of the spectators to make them feel the challenges of life, now with witty self-confidence, now with a sense of helplessness. He has shown life's fortunes as surprising us with both unexpected joy and sudden death. Throughout much of the medley, he has shown his skill in using laughter's power to transmute life's woe into joy. And now, at the end, far from resolving the tensions and ambivalence of the world he has fashioned, he unsettles us further by taking the medley's comic-religious movement toward a future enlivened by hope and turning it into a movement toward death.

It is no wonder that Confucian society, with its stress on order, has for centuries censured Shamanist activity as anarchic. A *kut* is open to censure as fostering ecstatic disorientation and amounting merely to 'confused belief', the root meaning of the Korean word for 'superstition' (*mishin*). It is also open to censure by the guardians of Confucian order for its comic chaos.

For their part, the *mudang* and their village audience manifest an ambivalence in the face of Confucian values. In the first few *kōri*, they gleefully demolish Confucian standards of order that at the same time they idealize. Confucian order and *kut* disorder stand in a symbiotic *yang/yin* relationship to each other as complementary hemispheres of the spiritual world of the Korean people. No doubt, the villagers recognize that Confucian values of stability and *kut* values of playful chaos are both necessary for their lives

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Deities and Altered States of Consciousness of Korean Shamans

By

Kwang-iel Kim – Tae-gon Kim

There are two kinds of shamans in Korea: one is hereditary and is mainly distributed through the southern part of the Korea peninsula, and the other is charismatic, distributed in the centre of the peninsula (T.G. Kim 1981).

Charismatic shamans have specific deities as objects of worship and private guardians who descended through a divine disease (*shinbyong*). The nature of *shinbyong* is characterized by an altered state of consciousness (ASC) referred to in old literature as ecstasy (T.G. Kim 1981, K.I. Kim 1984).

This statistical study has two purposes: first, we have tried to unravel the phenomenological nature of the deities causing ASC with special attention to shamans' private guardians. Second, we have tried to evaluate the characteristics of the ASC of Korean charismatic shamans during their initiation process.

Subjects and Methods

The subjects of this study are 61 charismatic shamans. Materials were taken from the files of our own field surveys carried out as participant-observation and unstructured interviews during a period of 11 years from 1970 to 1981.

The subjects comprised 50 females and 11 males. Their mean age was 47.5 years (S.D.12.53), with a range from 31 to 79 years, and the mean onset age of the ASC was 33.07 years (S.D.12.12), with a range from 9 to 55 years.

During the initiation process, most charismatic shamans' consciousness is altered by two kinds of supernatural being: good and bad. Good supernatural beings control the shamans' consciousness and become 'the masters' of a given shaman. Good 'masters' were selected for this study. These deities were classified into two categories, natural deities and deified human beings, according to the semantic meanings of the names of the supernatural beings concerned.

The ASC was divided into three categories: possession, trance and possession-belief. Bourguignon's definitions of possession and trance (Bourguignon 1973) were used, in which trance is defined as an ASC with the repetition of messages from spirits experienced in hallucinations or dreams, the imitation of the actions of spirits, or the narration of the subject's spirit journey. The subject can recall all experiences. Possession is defined as an ASC with acting as if impersonating the spirits by speech and behaviour. This does not involve hallucinations, though it is typically followed by amnesia. The term possession-belief is, by us, defined as a condition that is not a real ASC but is believed or faked by the shamans themselves. In such cases, the shamans concerned suffered from various somatic illness or psychological disorders other than ASC. Classification as ASC is not correct according to other shamans' interpretation. But they interpret all of their experiences as being possessed. So, a shamans' own interpretation was neglected in our classification. Rather, our final classification was made by scrupulous assessment according to the above definitions.

Practically speaking, possession and trance frequently intermingle in the course of 'divine disease', even though the two phenomena are distinct. Theoretically, trance is an initial manifestation followed by possession according to the progress of the ASC. Thus, there are two kinds of problems in our evaluation: the depth of the ASC and the time. On one hand, the depth of a shaman's ASC determines whether what we are discussing is trance or possession. Some shamans manifest only trance. Others enter into possession after a considerable period of trance. On the other hand, according to the time of evaluation, our assessment may be different. Cases where both possession and trance were manifested were classified into our possession category, while cases where a trance state occurred without possession were classified into our trance category.

Results

One hundred and four 'master' deities can be found amongst the 61 charismatic shamans. Natural gods accounted for 42.3% and deified human beings 57.7%. 65.4% of cases were possession; 10.5% trance; 24.0%, possession-belief (Table 1). Among the natural gods, 38.6% were supreme or heavenly gods; 6.8% the gods of the sun, moon and stars, 20.5% The Great Bear (Big Dipper); 31.8% the mountain god and 2.3% the dragon god (Table 2). Possession was found in 70.5% of all cases involving natural gods, trance in 6.8% and possession-belief in 22.7% (Table 2). Among deified human beings, 68.3% were deified historical heroes such as generals, Buddha, Buddhist monks and saints, Taoists, the shaman ancestor, and an old man. 31.7% of the deified human beings came from deceased families, relatives and ancestors such as grandparents, great grandparents, grand parents-in-law, aunts, uncles,

Table 1 – Gross Classification of Supernatural Beings and Altered States of Consciousness

Supernatural Beings	Case (%)		Altered States of Consciousness					
			Possession		Trance		Possession-belief	
Natural gods	44	(42.3%)	31	(70.5%)	3	(6.8%)	10	(22.7%)
Deified man	60	(57.7%)	37	(61.7%)	8	(15.3%)	15	(25.0%)
Total	104	(100.0%)	68	(65.4%)	11	(10.6%)	25	(24.0%)

Table 2 – Classification of the Natural Gods and Altered States of Consciousness

Supernatural Beings	Case (%)		Altered States of Consciousness					
			Possession		Trance		Possession-belief	
The supreme or heavenly god	19	(38.6%)	13	(67.6%)	2	(11.7%)	2	(11.7%)
Gods of the Sun, Moon and Stars	3	(6.8%)	2	(66.7%)		–	1	(33.3%)
The Great Bear (Big Dipper)	9	(20.5%)	5	(55.5%)		–	4	(44.5%)
Mountain gods	14	(31.8%)	11	(78.6)		–	3	(21.4%)
Dragon god	1	(2.3%)		–	1	(100.0%)		–
Total	44	(100.0%)	31	(70.5%)	3	(6.8%)	10	(22.7%)

Table 3 – Classification of Deified Human Beings and Altered States of Consciousness

Supernatural Beings	Case (%)		Altered States of Consciousness					
			Possession		Trance		Possession-belief	
Deified heroes	41	(68.3%)	28	(68.3%)	5	(12.2%)	8	(19.5%)
Families, relatives, and ancestors	19	(31.7%)	9	(47.4%)	3	(15.8%)	7	(36.8%)
Total	60	(100.0%)	37	(61.7%)	8	(13.3%)	15	(25.0%)

Table 4 – Classification of the Deified Heroes and Altered States of Consciousness

Supernatural Beings	Case (%)		Altered States of Consciousness					
			Possession		Trance		Possession-belief	
Generals	13	(21.7%)	7	(53.8%)	2	(15.4%)	4	(30.8%)
Buddha, buddhist monks and saints	10	(16.7%)	6	(60.0%)	3	(30.0%)	1	(10.0%)
Taoists	9	(15.0%)	7	(77.8%)		–	2	(22.2%)
The first shaman	7	(11.6%)	6	(85.7%)		–	1	(14.7%)
Old man (a village guardian)	2	(3.3%)	2	(100.0%)		–		–
Total	41	(68.3%)	28	(68.3%)	5	(12.2%)	8	(19.5%)

Table 5 – Character of Deified Families, Relatives or Ancestors

	Number of cases		Number of cases
Ancestor	1	Uncle or aunt	4
Great grandparents	1	Nephew	2
Grandparents	4	Mother	1
Grandparents-in-law	3	Brother or sister	2
Former wife or husband	1	Son or daughter	2

Table 6 – Altered States of Consciousness amongst 61 Charismatic Shamans

Classification	Case	%
Possession	38	62.3
Trance	7	11.5
Possession-belief	16	26.2
Total	61	100.0

nephews, mothers, brothers or sisters, sons and daughters, and soon (Tables 3, 4, and 5). Of all deified human beings, possession was found in 61.7%, trance in 13.3% and possession-belief in 25.0% (Table 3).

Amongst charismatic shamans as a whole, possession can be found in 62.3% of cases, trance in 11.5% and possession-belief in 26.2% (Table 6).

Discussion

This study has limitation in that the subjects are too small in number to generalize the result for all Korean charismatic shamans. But, this is a first attempt to evaluate the character of 'master' deities and the pattern of the ASC of Korean charismatic shamans by statistical analysis.

The 'master' deities seem to originate from nature worship and ancestor worship. Actually, ancient Korean religion was nature worship, in which the heaven, sun, moon and stars were worshipped, and this was gradually mingled with ancestor worship (D.H. Kim 1963). Even at present, ancestor worship remains evident in many folk beliefs and rituals (T.G. Kim 1981), and the shamanistic subculture reflects this traditional pattern of belief. There are two interesting phenomena in the shamanistic concept of deities: personification and syncretism. Shamans personify all deities, even natural gods. For example, they perceive a dignified old man to be the god of the sun, moon and stars. Furthermore, they have multiple images for each given deity. For example, they

recognize the mountain god as a tiger, ancestor, old grandfather and father. Syncretism is thus the basis for the shamanistic concepts of deity.

Regarding ASC, possession seems to be a principal frame in Korean shamanism. Possession per se occupies the majority of cases. Shamans believe in a simple trance, and even somatic and psychological disorders other than ASC, as being a state of possession by some deity. There are no shamanistic journeys to the other world, even in the case of a simple trance. Animal possession is extremely rare in Korea and, even in the case of such possession the spirits behaviour identifies it with a dignified old man.

Conclusion

In this statistical analysis we have evaluated the character of supernatural beings causing ASC amongst charismatic shamans and the nature of that ASC.

Deceased men represented 57.7% of all deities identified and natural gods the remaining 42.3%. The latter reflect ancient religious beliefs of nature worship, and the former reflect ancestor worship. All deities, even natural gods, were personified and syncretized through multiple images. Possession can be regarded as a principal phenomenon of the ASC, for even in the cases of simple trance and somatic and psychological disorder other than the ASC, shamans believe they are possessed by deities.

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Toward a Political Economy of Korean Shamanism

By

Suk-jay Yim – Roger L. Janelli – Dawn-hee Yim

Korean shamanism has enjoyed the attention of several researchers. Its origins, beliefs, oral literature, ritual practices, regional variations, connections with mental health, influences on other religions in Korea, as well as the recruitment of shamans, their personalities, and their life histories, have all received considerable scrutiny.¹ Among the topics that remain relatively unexamined, however, is the relationship of Korean shamanism to the advancement and defence of political and economic interests. The purpose of this paper is to explore that relationship.

The terms 'shamanism' and 'shaman' are employed here with some reservation, however, for they can be misleading when used to designate Korea's largely indigenous faith and its specialist practitioners. The religious specialists, colloquially called *mudang* but more politely addressed as *mansin*, do not fit conveniently into the most conventional categories of ritual or spiritual leaders. Their authority does not derive from positions in an organized church, for example, and hence it seems inappropriate to call them 'priests' or 'priestesses'. The term 'shaman' is equally problematic, however, for Korean *mudang* or *mansin* possess only some of the characteristics which are commonly attributed to shamans, and variant types of Korean religious specialists possess these characteristics in different degrees. One type, known as *kangsin mu* (lit. descending-spirit *mudang*), are called to their profession through spirit possession and exhibit culturally understood signs of possession during their ritual performances. Yet another type, called *sesŭp mu* ('hereditary *mudang*') are recruited through hereditary ascription. These *sesŭp mu*, which have been more common in the southern provinces of Korea, do not claim to enter trance or possession states, nor do they exhibit signs of such behaviour. Very rarely does any Korean shaman, moreover, profess to travel to the otherworld to communicate with spirits. Instead, the spirits come to them.

This exploration of the political economy of Korean shamanism adopts an approach to popular religion which has been employed by several anthropologists during the past decade. Some have examined the ways in which popular religion responds to capitalist transformation (Ong 1987, Taussig 1980, Comaroff 1985); others, partly inspired by the work of Antonio Gramsci and

the Western Marxists, have looked to ruling elites' use of religion to legitimize their political and economic domination (Feuchtwang 1978, Gates – Weller 1987, Chŏng Sŭngmo 1991); and yet others have looked to the role of popular religion in reproducing or challenging gendered inequalities (Martin 1988, Johnson 1988, Lewis 1989).

In our view, political and economic advantage, or domination and exploitation, are universal conditions of human existence; and such inequalities are not achieved or sustained through coercion alone but also through ideological and symbolic means. Privileged elites seek to make their rule a doxic experience for those whom they dominate, naturalizing their control to the point where subjects no longer recognize its artificial or humanly constructed character, or trying to present their command as inevitable by making alternative arrangements seem impossible or impractical. They may attempt to achieve these effects through using religion in any of several ways, such as claiming supernatural sanction for their rule, portraying the supernatural world as a replication of this world, or monopolizing religious symbols of legitimacy and supremacy. Subalterns, by contrast, often use popular religion to contest the hegemony of elites, adopt religious symbols to represent a different but apparently attainable social order, or assert alternative moral claims in their own defence. Thus, popular religion can be viewed as contested terrain, where alternative meanings and actions advance or retard legitimacy, power, and economic gain. Such a view implies that popular religion is not so much a product fixed in the past and perpetuated through habit or inertia, but is instead comprised of beliefs and practices reproduced or altered through ongoing contests. Popular religion, in other words, has a contingent quality.

Because domination can manifest itself in a variety of different social relationships, the search for connections between popular religion and political-economic advantage offers endless opportunities for research. For the present paper, we have singled out only one area for exploration: the relationship between Korean shamanism and the respective interests of men and women in rural South Korea during recent decades. The different roles of men and women in Korean popular religion have previously been examined in the literature on Korean shamanism, and the relationship of popular religion to male domination and female resistance has already been pursued by scholars working in other societies. This earlier research offers us guides as well as substantive points of contrast for our own efforts.

The prominence of women in shamanistic rites for the household was noted by the very earliest researchers in Korea. Though we have few accounts of participants at these domestic rites during the Chosŏn dynasty (1392-1910), accounts from the subsequent decades all point to the prevalence of women among those in attendance (e.g., Akiba 1933; Harvey 1979; Janelli – Janelli 1982; Kendall 1985).

It is important not to overemphasize the place of women in domestic shamanistic rites, however. Men may also tacitly acknowledge the validity of related beliefs and privately support the rites, even if they are reluctant to do so publicly (Kendall 1985:30-34). Moreover, men participate openly at shamanistic rites for a village or city (Chun Kyung-Soo 1984:104-108, Dix 1987, Kendall 1985:32). At shamanistic rituals for the household, the most frequently offered form, however, the predominance of women in the proceedings is conspicuous. Not only most shamans are women, but the mistress of the household plays the most important role of the lay participants; and her female friends, neighbours, and relatives comprise the overwhelming majority of those present.

In looking to shamanism as a device whereby Korean women contest male domination, we recognize that this line of interpretation hardly does justice to the relationship between this popular religion and local-level inequalities. Shamanistic rites are not intrinsically or essentially counter-hegemonic to male control. Rather, Korean popular religion is the site of a variety of struggles for power and economic advantage. The ostensible stakes in these contests are the validity of beliefs and the meanings of particular actions; but these popular religious beliefs and practices are symbolic weapons with which all contending parties may struggle for political and economic advantage. Moreover, the battles and skirmishes are not always between men and women: popular religion can also play a role in conflicts between women themselves, such as those between a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. A more comprehensive analysis of the relationship between shamanism and local-level domination would require looking at all other forms of privilege in rural Korea and a more detailed micro-sociological analysis of particular cases. Here, however, we seek only to sketch out by way of illustration two of the ways in which resistance to male privilege has been evident in rural South Korean shamanism of the past few decades. The first relates to differing opinions about the need to sponsor particular rites, and the second involves representations of ancestors at shamanistic seances.

In a classic study of spirit possession, I. M. Lewis (1989) observed that this religious technique is often used by the politically disadvantaged, and especially by women, as a means of redressing power imbalances or otherwise pursuing political and economic goals. What women are denied by the formal jural system, which the orthodox religion often legitimates, they can sometimes obtain through 'peripheral cults' involving spirits. Instead of asserting their demands in their own names, for example, they can claim that spirits have threatened or caused misfortunes which can only be prevented or remedied through shamanistic rites.

Lewis' thesis cannot offer a general explanation of shamanism in Korea. As we have already noted, some Korean shamans neither claim to experience nor exhibit signs of possession; and shamanism can also be used to reinforce as

well as resist domination. Yet we believe Lewis' line of analysis can aid the understanding of shamanism in those cases where possession or supernatural affliction occurs. More than a decade ago, Youngsook Kim Harvey (1979) observed that women are more likely to resort to the profession of possessed shamanism in times of economic or other crises. Our attention here, however, focuses not on the shamans themselves but on the women who sponsor their rites.

Lewis' thesis has already been considered and found wanting in Korea by Laurel Kendall (1985). Based on fieldwork conducted during the 1970s in a village north of Seoul, Kendall found that women sponsored shamanistic rites not for the sake of their own personal interests but rather on behalf of their entire households, including, for example, curing a sick husband or son. Thus, she concludes that in shamanism a Korean housewife acts to promote the welfare of her whole household. The reported reluctance of men to sponsor or participate in these rites Kendall portrays as face-saving strategies, citing one particularly persuasive case in which a husband instructed his wife to hold the rites during his absence (1985:33).

In this paper, we present a slightly different interpretation of women's actions by recognizing that both a household's interests are multiple and religious acts can be variously interpreted. We think Kendall rightly observed that women represent their shamanistic activities as undertaken for the common interests of their households, and we also acknowledge that women may often perceive their activities in such a light; but we also claim that some of those representations could be regarded as what Takie Sugiyama Lebra (1984) has termed "nonconfrontational strategies for management of interpersonal conflicts". In lieu of more confrontational methods for pursuing self-interest, one finds in South Korea cultural options for avoiding direct conflict, or even the appearance of opposition, by representing one's own interests as those of someone else, one's opponent, or a larger social collectivity. The Korean language, by the way, has its own tropes for various tactics of this kind; *saramül p'alda* (lit. 'to sell a person'), *koyangi chwi saenggak* (loosely, 'the cat is concerned about the welfare of the mouse'). In more general terms, the strategy is also reminiscent of how Korean mothers often control their young children by threatening them with external dangers (e.g., 'a tiger will eat you', 'that stranger will carry you away') rather than parental punishment (Janelli and Janelli 1982:34-35). We now turn to our own fieldwork, also conducted during the 1970s, in a single-lineage village south of Seoul to show how such oppositions of interests between men and women can be alternatively represented and pursued via shamanistic rites.

In one instance, an elderly widow told us of how her desire to sponsor a shamanistic rite was frustrated by her sons refusal to give her the necessary funds. Their unwillingness was understandable. These all-night rituals, known

as *kut*, cost about \$500 in the mid-1970s, the equivalent of about five sacks of husked and polished rice, or about one ninth of an average household's surplus rice production for the year in a community where rice production provided the major means of subsistence.² Hers was, incidentally, not the only case of a man's reluctance to spend money for a *kut*. According to the woman, her deceased parents-in-law were asking for the rite and had inflicted her with a minor illness as a means of communicating their desire. In her view, these ancestors had reason to want such a *kut*: they had gone to other houses of the lineage where *kut* had been held, had been entertained by other families, and now they were embarrassed about being unable to reciprocate.

The woman's account of her illness contains at least four common cultural understandings: (1) illness was caused by ancestors as a sign of their dissatisfaction, (2) that dissatisfaction could be alleviated by a *kut*, (3) *kut* are enjoyable occasions designed to wine and dine and otherwise entertain supernaturals, and (4) deceased extended kin also participate at a *kut*. The only theme which we have not encountered before is the need for reciprocity between ancestors; though reciprocity between the living is an important theme in rural Korea (e.g., Brandt 1972, Chun Kyung-Soo 1984). Indeed, one household in the village we studied was criticized by its neighbours for attending parties at other people's homes but never offering one at their own. As we understand this case of ancestral affliction, therefore, the elderly woman was projecting her own embarrassment onto the ancestors in a culturally appropriate way, attempting to restore her own social standing – or what Pierre Bourdieu (1977) calls “symbolic capital” – in the community. Note that she did not represent the *kut* as an event to relieve her own embarrassment, preferring instead to portray the rite as an action to be undertaken for the benefit of the ‘ancestors’ and implicitly, for the sake of the entire household. Her sons evidently had a different view.

Perhaps too, in this and other cases, by placating ancestors who have caused family misfortunes, women also assert their importance to the welfare of the household. Instead of accepting domestic labour, bearing and rearing children, and old-age dependency as their only roles, women can argue through shamanistic rites that they have a major effect on the welfare of the entire household.

Yet another way in which rural Korean women have used shamanism to challenge male domination is by contesting the view that ancestors are benevolent. In the world of neo-Confucian ancestor rituals, agnatic forebears are usually passive beings to whom descendants are eternally indebted for the gift of life and for care and nurturance received during childhood. According to a metaphor common in literary sources, ancestors are the roots of a tree and their descendants are its leaves and branches, each part of the tree nourishing the other. Men use ancestor rites to advance implicitly the value

of agnation, the inheritance of property through the male line, and the importance of men in the reproduction of rural society, the very themes which would legitimize the devaluation of women and their subordination to male control. For example, though wives prepare the food for the rites, which are offered for their husbands' forebears, women are generally excluded from formal participation, a symbolic assertion that they occupy peripheral positions in the patrilineal kinship system formally sanctioned by neo-Confucianism.

In shamanism, a different and more hostile image of ancestors is portrayed (Dix 1979). Instead of being passive, ancestors are active and demanding: they inflict harm on descendants if their needs are not met or their rituals neglected. When a family has met with a serious misfortune, the senior woman of the household may visit a shaman to find out its cause and learn (or, more likely, confirm her suspicions) that the misfortune has resulted from the action of an ancestor. In our own fieldwork in one Korean village (Janelli – Janelli 1982, D. Janelli 1986) we found fourteen cases of misfortune attributed to ancestors.

Whereas ancestors at neo-Confucian rites merely come to accept the offerings presented to them, ancestors speak to the living at shamanistic rites; and their speech reinforces their image as demanding, dissatisfied, and cantankerous beings. One segment of most household *kut*, known as the 'ancestor kut' (*chosang kut*) takes the form of a seance at which the dead speak to the living through the mouth of the shaman. On these occasions, ancestors directly press their demands, complain of the treatment which they received when alive, and have to be placated with additional offerings of food, wine, and money.

"Whereas agnatic forebears are invited guests at formal ancestor rites, the attitude toward all the dead at seances was neatly summed up by one participant who told them, 'Take your travel money and go'" (Kendall 1985:144).

By portraying ancestors as potentially harmful and thus challenging the alleged benevolence of agnatic forebears, women implicitly challenge the view that agnates and agnatic lines are sources and channels of benefice. The contested interpretations of ancestors are colloquially expressed in the Korean language: instead of '*chosang tok*' (thanks to the ancestors) which is often invoked in connection with formal ancestor rites, '*chosang t'at*' (the fault of the ancestors) is the more appropriate phrase at shamanistic rites.

The very identities of the ancestors who speak at these seances may also challenge male hegemony in yet another way. Whereas the neo-Confucian rites are offered only for agnatic forebears, reducing to insignificance all other kinship linkages, a married women's natal parents, siblings, and other deceased kin may also come to participate at seances or affect the welfare of her household. The frequency with which these other relatives appear at seances seems to vary considerably from one village to the next (cf. Kendall 1985, Janelli and

Janelli 1982); but this strategy nevertheless offers women a cultural option for asserting an identity other than the peripheral position to which agnatic lineage organization would assign them.

Conclusion

In the preceding pages, we have tried to illustrate the value of an approach to Korean shamanism that has thus far been neglected. In trying to show how indigenous Korean rites and beliefs are saturated with contests over power and privilege, we have attempted to demonstrate another dimension to this fascinating popular religion.

Notes

The authors are indebted to Laurel Kendall and Alexandre Guillemoz for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

1. For a bibliography of works on Korean shamanism, see Ch'oe (1985).
2. Average farm holdings were 116 hectares per household, of which 79% was comprised of paddy (Janelli and Janelli 1982:16). Since the annual yield on paddy land in the mid-1970s was 48.7 kilograms of husked and polished rice per hectare (ibid.), farm households produced an average of 4463 kilograms of rice annually.

I estimate per-capita rice consumption at about one *kama* (87 kilograms of husked and polished rice), on the basis of rough calculations, but that figure appears to be in line with more detailed data reported from elsewhere. Clark Sorensen (1988:106-107), citing statistics compiled by the South Korean Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, observes that the consumption of rice per adult male equivalent in 1976 was about 127 kilograms. Lower consumption

by children would reduce a family's average per-capita consumption and bring it closer to my own figure of 87 kilograms. Since average family size was about five and a-half persons (Janelli and Janelli 1982:28), family consumption thus averaged about 478 kilograms per year. Thus, a family's unconsumed rice averaged about four thousand kilograms, which would have had a market value of about four and a-half thousand (US) dollars in the mid-seventies.

Note that the four-thousand kilograms did not comprise a pure surplus. From money received from marketing unconsumed rice, some farm families had to pay rent, and all farm families had to pay for production expenses and replacement costs for farm tools. Thus, the cost of a *kut* absorbed far more than one-ninth of a family's disposable income.

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Area Studies and Shamanism

JAPAN AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Area Studies and Shamanism

By

Yoriko Kanda

Introduction

On the Sanriku coast located in Japan's Tohoku area and Cheju Island in South Korea, on both of which I have conducted fieldwork, people try to communicate with supernatural beings through a shamanistic religious mediator to balance everyday life. Women ask the mediator for advice in every aspect of their daily life, and take the advice as a spiritual anchor. I was interested to seek the religious epistemology of the native people in these areas. This can be seen in the relationship between a religious functionaries and the people who support him or her, particularly women. In due course, I have come to think that their relationships and the way their rites operate, which can be understood through relationships, are no different from other examples in other areas studied as part of the complex of 'shamanism'. Of course, ritual contexts and epistemologies differ from area to area. Yet, the structure of rites, the role of religious functionaries, and the relationships between supernatural beings and clients mediated by a religious functionary are found in many cases.

Nevertheless, some researchers regard neither religious functionaries, called *shimbang* in Cheju, nor the rites which *shimbang* hold, as part of shamanism (Ch'oe 1984); some scholars use terminology with care (Hyön 1985).

By the same token, Japanese researchers who study shamanism have studied neither the religious functionaries in Sanriku Coast in Tohoku nor their rites. I intend to show why similar religious phenomena have been treated in different ways to discuss some problems in study of shamanism.

The Study of Shamanism and Shamanistic Religious Phenomena

In Japan, generally, when researchers work on shamanism, they base their works on the following definition: "A shaman 'directly contacts or communicates' with supernatural beings, by going into a special mental state called trance" (Sasaki Kokan 1980). Trance is an essential concept; in Japan, this has distinguished the study of shamanism from other studies. However, recently, some have tried to broaden this definition (Sasaki Kokan 1989). I, from the

point of view of an area study specialist, think that the broader definition is appropriate.

In South Korea, there are two ways to treat shamanism; one is presented by Ch'oe Kilsöng and the other by Ryu Tongshik. Ch'oe asserts that those who have experienced a shamanistic disease are shamans while those who succeed through heredity are priests (Ch'oe 1984). Ryu argues that if we follow Ch'oe's definition, some typical Korean forms of shamanistic rites such as *pyölsin kut* (village rites) and *ssikkim kut* (rites for the dead) have to be excluded (Ryu 1984).

Shamanistic Phenomena in Korea and its Typology

Ch'oe classifies Korean shamanism into an ecstatic type and a non-ecstatic type (Fig. 1) while Ryu divides it into individual rites and communal rites (Ch'oe 1971, Ryu 1984).

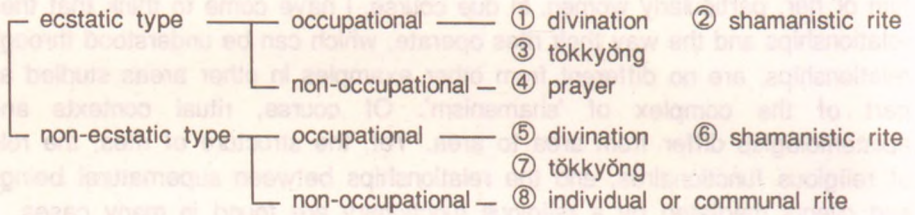


Figure 1 - Ch'oe's Typology (1971)

Here I am dealing with *mudang*, an occupational female shaman who conducts shamanistic rites, and those called *tanggol*, *shimbang*, or male *mudang* who also conduct occupational shamanistic rites. The former is ecstatic and the latter non-ecstatic in Ch'oe's typology, but *tanggol*, *shimbang*, and non-ecstatic *mudang* are not regarded by Ch'oe as shamans. Ryu's typology, given in Figure 2, covers almost all rites except Confucian rites, as shamanistic.

In Cheju both male and female *shimbang* exist. Hyön Yongjun defines shamanism in Cheju as follows:

"a religious phenomenon concerning religious functionaries who conduct rites by going into trance (ecstasy or possession). Trance is regarded as a fundamental requisite of shamanism. This includes not only those commonly called *mudang*, but also other religious functionaries who meet the criteria, such as diviners. *Mudang* (*tanggol*, *shimbang*, *manshin*, *paksu*, and *munyo*) take the role of priests, spirit mediums, healers and/or diviners. The role of a priest is particularly dominant in *kut* (rites with song and dance)" (Hyön 1985).

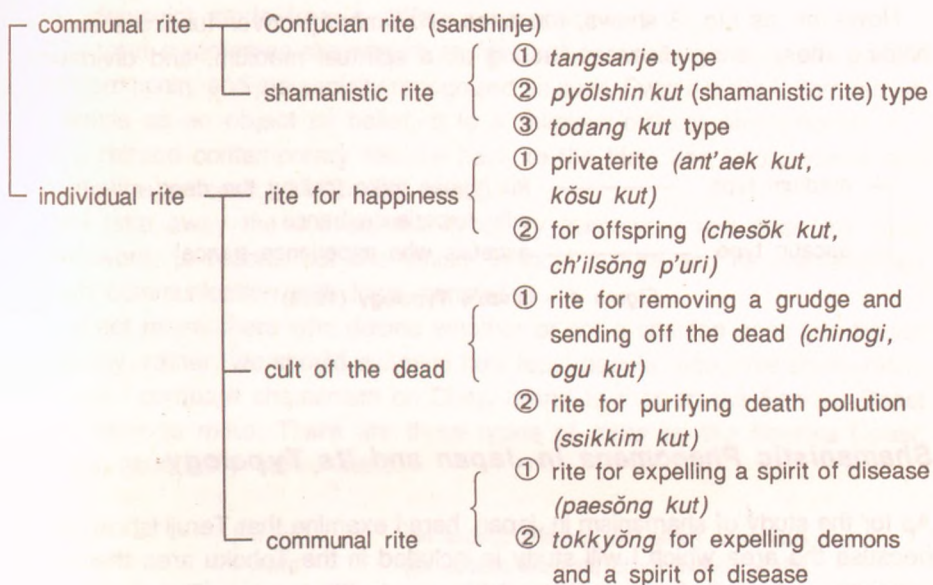


Figure 2 - Ryu's Typology (1984)

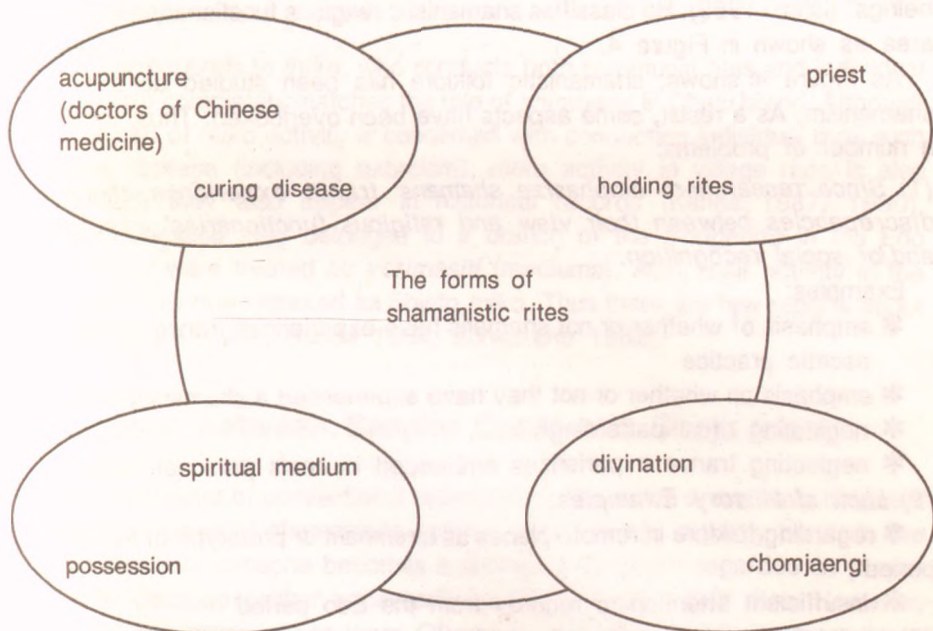


Figure 3 - The Range of Shamanism amongst the *shimbang* on Cheju Island; Hyön's typology

However, as Fig. 3 shows, the roles of *shimbang* cover functions such as holding rites, curing diseases, acting as a spiritual medium, and divination.

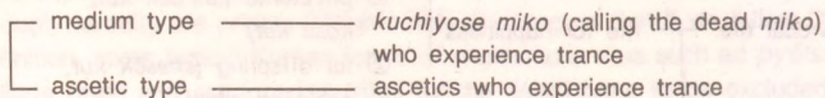


Figure 4 – Ishizu's Typology (1969)

Shamanistic Phenomena in Japan and its Typology

As for the study of shamanism in Japan, here I examine that Teruji Ishizu, partly because the area which I will study is included in the Tohoku area that Ishizu mentions and partly because since Ishizu made his typology it has not been elaborated. Ishizu states: "The point is shamanism, not the shaman himself. We should regard trance as the way to make a relationship with supernatural beings" (Ishizu 1969). He classifies shamanistic religious functionaries in Tohoku area as shown in Figure 4.

As Figure 4 shows, shamanistic folklore has been studied as a part of shamanism. As a result, some aspects have been overlooked. Thus, there are a number of problems:

(1) *Since researchers emphasize shamans' trance experience, there are discrepancies between their view and religious functionaries' experience and/or social recognition.*

Examples:

- * emphasis of whether or not shamans have experienced trance during their ascetic practice
- * emphasis on whether or not they have experienced a shamanistic disease
- * neglecting ritual patterning
- * neglecting trance experiences embedded in one's personal history

(2) *Lack of History Examples:*

- * regarding folklore in remote places as a remnant or prototype of the ancient period
- * insufficient attention to records from the Edo period

(3) *Lack of attention to what is excluded from the typology Examples:*

- * *Shintō miko, suzu miko* (*miko* dancing with bells)
- * *yorimashi* (mediumship) by a wife of *shugenja* (a practitioner of *Shugendo*)

My viewpoint starts from a different perspective:

(1) I treat customs as shamanism so far as they exist as a religious custom in the community and are socially recognized as such. Even if a rite is formalized, if it exists as an object of belief, it is a religious-cultural phenomenon.

(2) I retrace contemporary folklore back to the Meiji and Edo periods, and examine the process of historical change.

(3) I take away the conventional typology framework and base my work on fieldwork, to reconstruct shamanism in local culture and its epistemology through communication with local people.

It is not researchers who decide whether or not a shaman goes into trance or ecstasy; rather, we should examine how local people recognize shamanism.

Before I compare shamanism on Cheju Island to that on the Sanriku Coast I must refer to *miko*. There are three types of *miko* on the Sanriku Coast, who are generically called *itako*.

<i>itako</i> (local generic term)	{ <i>miko</i> -	(an ascetic shaman, not-blind) communal rite
	{ <i>itako</i> -	(an ascetic shaman, blind) individual rite
	{ <i>kamitsuki</i> -	(one who has experienced shamanistic disease, not-blind)

(*Itako* corresponds to a medium and *kamitsuki* to an ascetic by Ishizu's typology.)

Miko corresponds to *miko*, who conducts both communal rites and individual rites; her role completely matches the role of *shimbang* in Cheju Island. Although the large part of *miko* activity is concerned with conducting individual rites such as curing disease (including exorcism), *miko* activity in village rites is also emphasized; they also appear in historical records (Kanda 1987, 1990). However, because they belonged to a branch of the *Shugendo* in the Edo period, *miko* were treated as *yorimashi* (mediums). Also, their activity in the Edo period was often ignored as Shinto *miko*. Thus there are few reports about *miko* (Yanagita 1962, Honda 1954, Bunka-cho 1985).

Comparison between Sanriku Coast and Cheju Island

From the viewpoint of conventional researchers, these two areas have not been regarded as areas of shamanistic activity. Perhaps this is partly because the process in which someone becomes a shaman here is not regarded as proper and partly because neither necessarily go into trance in their rites. However, people in these areas rely on them. Of course, we cannot simply compare these two areas, for there are differences in the social status of religious functionaries and in the epistemology of the two. Thus, I would like to refer to similarities first.

Before that, though, let me introduce the profile and outline of shamans in both areas. As for Cheju I cite Hyon. In 1959, there were 373 *shimband* (133 males and 230 females) and 1.73 *shimband* per *ri*. Their motives to become a shaman were: (1) Because their ancestors and/or parents were *shimband*, (2) Because they happened to find a shamanistic instrument, (3) Because they suffered a disease. The motives are based on the idea that they are selected as a shaman by a deity. There are also other motives such as marriage and the necessity to work to make a living. These comprise 'voluntary initiation'. In the process of becoming a shaman, *shimband* train themselves for two to ten years, then hold a '*shin kut*' rite to become a shaman. This rite symbolizes death and rebirth, and it is also a rite signifying possession by a deity (Hyon 1985).

On Sanriku Coast *miko* call themselves *miko*. They are always female, but in Shintō festivals they conduct *yudate takusen* (an oracle with hot water) with male *hoin* (mountain priest) and *kagura-shu* (*kagura* dancers). I managed to interview 12 *miko* and heard stories about 27 more *miko*, among whom two are still living. It can be denied that the number is decreasing. According to *Hei-gun Shumon-cho* (the register kept by a temple at Hei-gun) in 1798, there were 366 *yamabushi* (itinerant priest) and 149 *miko* in the area. From this, we can calculate that there was one *yamabushi* to 110 men and one *miko* to 211 women. The motives to become *miko* are (1) Because ancestors were *miko* or *yamabushi*, (2) Because they suffered disease or were sickly, (3) Because they admired *miko*.

After *miko* train for two to five years, they hold '*komori no gyo*' (a rite for initiation) for seven to twenty-one days. They are then given a *daijiyurushi* (license) by their master. *Komori no gyo* has something in common to the mountain training of *yamabushi* and also symbolizes death and rebirth. However, during the process of becoming *miko* there is no rite of possession by a deity.

Next, let me discuss occupational abilities. Table 1 is based on five types of shamanistic roles determined Hyon.

The range of roles in two areas overlap. Thus, the range of roles on the Sanriku Coast is understandable if it is compared with Cheju Island rather than another part of Japan. Nonetheless, there are some problems. Though, on both Sanriku and Cheju, men occupy the major role on the surface of political and social life, how men and women are involved in shamanistic rites differs. First, let us turn our attention to the participants in village rites. On Cheju Island, though males hold Confucian rites, they are hardly involved in women-centered shamanistic rites except the new year rite at the beginning of which the community chief gives *sanken no rei* (giving three bows in Confucian style). The rites for men and for women are completely different: Confucian rites for men and shamanistic rites for women make a pair with no overlap.

Table 1 - Types of Shamanism on Cheju Island
and the Sanriku Coast

Type of shamanism		<i>Shimbang</i> on Cheju Island (male and female)	<i>Miko</i> on the Sanriku Coast (female)
1. Priest type	public rite	- <i>tang kut</i> (village rite with song and dance) - <i>tang kut</i> with sitting (single rite)	- Shintō rite: <i>yudate takusen</i> (with kagura dancers) - Shintō rite: <i>nemari takusen</i> (single rite)
	individualrite	- rite for happiness (for house and offspring) - cult for the dead (after the funeral and for two years mourning) - rite for curing a disease	- spring rite for happiness (for house and offspring) - rite for purifying death pollution (after the funeral) - rite for curing a disease (incl.exorcism)
2. Diviner type		- <i>shink'al</i> (secret knives) - <i>sang'an</i> (secret moneys and cups) - divination with rice	- beads or rosary - writing nine letters on paper
3. Medium type		- <i>ponbusarūm</i> (divination) - <i>yōngje ollim</i> (calling the dead)	- oracle <i>hiimi</i> (private oracle such as spring rite or <i>oshiraasobase</i>) - kuchiyose
4. Healer type		attributing diseases to supernatural cause divine } apologizing ghost good } and evil } worshipping human spirit - soothing the spirit	some diseases are curable with prayer but others are not - curable in early stage - epidemic and/or injury - after exorcism, going to hospital
5. artist type	(as public entertainer)	<i>kut</i> - sacred religious rite <i>nori</i> - play (→ pseudo possession)	- <i>miko</i> dance in <i>yudate takusen</i> - <i>honchigatari</i> (speaking of secret ballads in oracle style)

On the Sanriku Coast every rite is done in Shinto style. Thus, the male representative of parishioners takes the leader and a Shinto rite is conducted. However, in the following rite, *yudate takusen*, it is women who participate and listen to an oracle, though men are present. Hence, men do not participate in the small rite in which only *miko* give oracles. Moreover, in some areas,

an oracle is given on the day following the main rite because women are busy on the first day.

In both areas, it is women who have relationships with supernatural beings. However, male attitudes differ. On Cheju, men almost reject shamanism and hold Confucian rites by themselves. On the Sanriku Coast, a wife may sent to a Shintō rite in place of her husband. Although men do not actively take part in the shamanistic rites, they do not completely ignore or reject them. Some take part in place of their wife and some cheer the shaman if she gives a good oracle. On Cheju today, the chief of the Fishermen's Union or an Assembly member comes to a rite to give an address; thus, we can see signs of change.

Next let me move to the shamans. On Cheju Island, calling the dead and oracles are so lyrical and impressive that even an outsider may be moved by tears; the rite is active and musical.

On the other hand, on the Sanriku Coast, among the rites conducted by *miko* in *yudate takusen* oracles are given while standing; later there is a *miko* dance to music. But the rhythm is slow and hardly active. In the rite for curing disease, they try to exorcise evil spirits by throwing beans and/or rice, chanting incantations and taking magical steps; this is very powerful and even menacing, but we cannot say it is active. *Kagura*, performed in the rite, is active. It is influenced by the *Shugendo* of Edo times and the rhythm of the music and the dance are highly active. There is the role division between men and women but in *kamigatari* (telling stories about a deity), the role of giving an oracle is taken by a woman and the religious artistic parts, such as narration and telling stories about deities, are taken by *kagura* dancers.

Supporting Group and Shaman

1. The Concept of Deities amongst Women Who Support Shamans

* Novice *shimband* and Women in *Sing'wase* (New Year's Rite)

A novice *shimband* narrated a story about the history of origin of the village deity. However, because the contents were incorrect, women got angry and told her that the deity would not descend hearing such a poor narrative. In fact, the advent of the deity could not be achieved and a rite to call the deity had to be repeated.

* Reaction of the bereaved at *kwiyang p'uri* (rite for sending the dead to the other world).

A man listened the *yŏngje ollim* about his dead younger brother who had been insincere to him when alive. He got angry at his brother's selfishness, witnessed as he made requests even after he died.

Both *ponbu sarum* and *yongje ollim* were narrated in the first person but at the end switched to the third person.

From the Sanriku Coast:

- * In an oracle, *ehedo* (a woman who speaks to a deity) directly communicated with the deity.

- * The oracle was noted down and delivered to the participants.

- * Hot water, bamboo grass, and salt used for the oracle were given to women participants.

- * The women sang *goiwai uta* (a song for praising a deity).

- * The oracle was given on the day following the rite, for women were busy doing miscellaneous duties on the day.

I have shown how participants of a shamanistic rite react through actual examples which show that the participants completely believe a deity, spirits and/or ghosts descend and speak to them; they also expect the deity and/or spirits to give them an oracle. If local people did not believe in these things, the examples could never have happened. Women in these two areas are not satisfied with one-way communication, with praying or holding a service for the dead. They want to know what supernatural beings require; they want to know whether or not these supernatural beings will grant requests and whether or not they are behaving correctly for a deity and the dead.

2. Personal Experience and Consciousness of Shamans

From Cheju:

- * Mr. Yi (49 years old) worked as a newspaper reporter for 25 years, but got sick three years ago and became a *shimbang*.

- * Ms. M (66 years old) got sick when 42 years old and became a *shimbang*.

- * Ms. M (27 years old) got sick when 21 years old and became a *shimbang*.

Three out of nine *shimbang* whom I interviewed became a *shimbang* because of sickness. The other six had a parent or kinsman who was a *shimbang*. They asserted that to become a *shimbang* meant abeyance to a deity's will. Though it was the deity's will, they still had to bare a long training and were not regarded as full-fledged *shimbang* until highly evaluated by senior *shimbang* at a *shin kut* rite. And, most importantly, they have to satisfy clients; otherwise they cannot make a living as a professional shaman. If clients appreciate a shaman for holding a good *kut*, for skillfully calling a deity, the shaman gains in confidence. During my fieldwork, one *shimbang* visited me on her holiday. At that time, the communal village rite had just finished and the participating women asked for divination to another *shimbang* about domestic and private matters. When the women noticed the *shimbang* who had come to visit me, they surrounded her and asked her to give divinations. Though she was young, she

was well-known as a good *shimbang*. Even though the area was not her territory, she was sufficiently well-known to be asked.

From the Sanriku Coast:

- * *Miko* Y (71 years old) was surprised when her prediction about a tidal wave came true.
- * *Miko* S (76 years old) has had a keen sixth sense since she was a child and her predictions always come true.
- * *Miko* W (60 years old) believes in a deity, and so her predictions miraculously come true.

These three *miko* explain that if they sincerely believe and worship a deity, their predictions will miraculously come true. According to them, because of their faith, deities tell them what will happen regardless of their own intention. They say that some styles of rites and oracles are given by master shaman during their training, and then during co-operative activities. In the actual time of a rite, however, they cannot tell what scriptures, incantations or oracles they will give, for these are not necessarily the same as those they have learned; the order is not necessarily the same as they have learned, either. They state that deities tell them all they should do. This shows that *miko* on the Sanriku Coast believe that by belief and prayer, 'the deity reacts to them'. This leads to holding the deity in awe, and reinforces their belief. *Miko* S has the following experience: at *yudate takusen* during the rite of a certain Shinto shrine, as she sang a song to call a deity, she fainted; when she came back to herself, she sat to the altar and finished the rite without giving an oracle. She said that she did not want to go to the shrine any more, because she had made such a big failure of the rite. Nonetheless, people who attended the rite said that nothing unusual had happened and that she finished the rite after giving an oracle as usual. I think we can interpret this case to say she completely lost consciousness, that is she was possessed by a deity, and so gave an oracle.

Thus, both on Cheju Island and the Sanriku Coast, how shamans express their relationships with a deity vary: some explain the reason to become a shaman as a deity's will; others say that in reacting to their faith and prayer, deities give them oracles. However, we can say that each establishes himself or herself as a religious functionary by their relationship with a deity.

There are also local people who rely on these religious functionaries and receive their discourse as a message from a deity and/or supernatural being. For these, whether or not the *shimbang* or *miko* on whom they depend have experienced trance in the becoming a shaman or in life is not questioned. I think that far greater importance is attached to whether or not the oracles come true, whether or not their requests and/or hopes are realized by the rite conducted by the shamans, and whether or not they are satisfied with the ritual performance and its results.

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Itako and Mokuren: An Instance in the Ritual of *Kuchiyose* (Calling the Dead)

By

Peter Knecht

The oldest texts of Japanese literature, *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, already have a description of a visit by a living person to the netherworld. Izanagi enters the dark world in order to attempt to bring back his wife, Izanami, but the endeavour ends in failure and Izanagi barely manages to escape the revenging ugly creatures of the dark world (Kurano et al. 1969. 1:62-69; Sakamoto et al. 1972. 67:96-100). Nevertheless, peoples' interest in that world and its denizens was kept alive and manifests itself not only in medieval accounts of visits to hell but also in recent movies and some of the believer-focussed literature of new religions. If this seems to be too farfetched an interpretation of a widespread interest, we need only look at the crowd that gathers in late July on the desert-like top of Mt. Osore in North Japan. These peoples' aim is to be reunited, if only for a few minutes, with one of their departed and to hear how she or he fares in the other world. And this happens at a place that itself is seen to represent the main quarters of hell, so that the pilgrims may gain their own impressions of the desolate kind of place hell, the abode of the suffering dead, is.

Of course, the visitors to Mt. Osore do not enter hell themselves, even if the place may give them a partial insight into it. Rather, the spirit of a dead person is brought to this world where it meets its surviving relatives and tells them about its experiences in hell. The spirit is called up by (mostly) blind women called *itako*. Through the mouth of such a woman the spirit speaks to its family. These are usually very short encounters, lasting only a few minutes. Most people would ask to call up a recently departed spirit, but there is no problem about calling up any spirit.

Any ritual performed in order to call the spirit of a dead person may be called *kuchiyose*, but I shall use the term in a more restricted sense in this paper. I refer to an extended ceremony that lasts several hours, in which a single spirit is made to speak to any member of the surviving family who wishes to address it with a question. In fact, in such a ceremony it is the spirit of the family's most recent dead that is called upon in this form rather shortly after the person's death, if possible not later than a year after death. The

kuchiyose session that provides the immediate background to my discussion was held on 15 August 1982 for the spirits of two people who had died during the previous few months. This day in mid-August was therefore the first celebration of *Obon* after their death, so the *kuchiyose* performed for them was of the so-called *shinkuchi* (new calling) type. Compared with the other type, the *furukuchi* (in which any spirit may be called), the *shinkuchi* performance exhibits certain features particular to it: the *itako* visits the house of the bereaved family, the calling as a rule involves only one spirit but for an extended period of time, and the ceremony is performed in an atmosphere of intimacy because the audience consists mostly of close family members who easily regain their rapport with the departed person. The session may, therefore, at times become a very lively and agitated exchange between the spirit and its family. Here it is not possible to go into further detail about the whole ceremony, however. I would rather focus attention on a feature that might seem to be rather marginal, but is in fact central to the whole procedure, because it represents visibly the way of access to this world for the spirit and also provides (although this may be unknown to most, if not all, of the participants) the rationale for the whole ceremony.

In order to perform the *shinkuchi* seance a table was set up in the best room of the house, more or less in front of the temporary ancestral altar put up for the occasion of *Obon*, the *bondana*. The table faced the audience, and the *itako* took up her position behind it in such a way as to face the audience and have her back turned to the *bondana*. That this arrangement was quite significant was made clear by the *itako*'s remark that the posthumous name on the tablet, which took central position on the temporary altar, should face the audience. After all, the spirit would be speaking to the audience and not to the *itako*.

In front of the tablet an incense burner was placed, together with a burning candle, a cup each of tea and water, and some additional offerings such as fruit and sweets. There was also a wooden box to receive the glass chips that were dropped into it every time a new *kuchi*, a new pronouncement, was asked for.

Between the table and herself the *itako* positioned a rather large wooden box that at first contained her utensils, but then was used as a sounding body for her bow throughout the ceremony. This bow is a crucial instrument in the ceremony. First, the *itako* will beat its string with a bamboo stick for an extended period of about ten minutes at the beginning of the seance while she is bringing in the ancestral spirit, who then will serve as a guide to the spirit of the recently departed, the main actor in the ceremony. Second, she will resume hitting the bowstring during the ceremony in order to mark the ending of an individual pronouncement by the spirit, and in this way invite the next question to be asked. The bowstring is made of hemp (*asa*), and some unfinished hemp fibre

is attached to the bow's end on the *itako*'s left side, while some cotton wool (*hiki wata*) is tied to the bow's right side end.

Also to the left of the *itako*, but on the floor next to the table, is put a bamboo basket containing three *sho* (about 4.6 liters) of polished rice. Two twigs are stuck into the heap of rice, one from a willow, the other from a peach tree. According to the *itako*'s instructions, given while she was setting up the altar and utensils, the peach twig should face east, the willow twig south. As a matter of fact, it was not quite clear what she meant by saying that a twig should be placed 'facing' a certain direction (*muki*), so the willow ended up being placed on the northern half of the basket and the peach on the southern. However, it was apparently of a certain significance to the *itako* that the twigs should be placed in a given direction. Later on there will be an occasion to return to this problem.

There were still two more points she explicitly insisted upon. Although a *shinkuchi* seance is held for only one spirit, ours was somewhat unusual, in that two such sessions were held in a row in order to call upon the spirits of two people who had died rather shortly one after the other. The *itako*, therefore, prepared two sets of twigs and gave instructions that one set be placed on a low table in front of the *bondana* until its turn would come. Furthermore, she insisted that the family make sure the twigs would be treated with respect once the ceremony was over and would be deposited on the graves of the people whose spirits were called at the earliest opportunity. They were then to be left there to decay. This sort of treatment hints at a particular connection between the two kinds of twigs and the dead person, or more correctly, the spirit of the dead person. In fact, in response to a question about the function of these twigs, the *itako* said, that they serve as a kind of link enabling the spirit to appear before its family. This explanation puts the twigs into a group of various means that can serve as route of access to this world for some spiritual being, such as a deity or an ancestor, and that are subsumed under the general term *yorishiro* ('a place to rest'). In a very broad sense, any pointed instrument could serve as such a resting place for a spirit, but often it is a twig of a kind. However, why should the *itako* insist that the twigs for this ceremony are to be of willow and peach and not of *sakaki* or another tree? Are willow and peach particularly suited for the calling of ancestral spirits? And if so, why should this be the case?

In a short note to explain the use of willow and peach in a *kuchiyose* seance, the reporting team of a Sendai newspaper quotes an episode recounted to them by an *itako*. According to this tradition Buddha had made a bow from a willow tree, fastened a string of hemp to it, and struck it with a twig of the peach tree in order to invite and save the spirit of a disciple's mother, who had fallen into hell because of her bad conduct in life (Kahoku Shinposha Henshukyoku 1984:85). The disciple in this story is not mentioned by name, but there can

hardly be any doubt that it would be Mokuren, the same Mokuren who has been one of Buddha's closest disciples and whose mother had fallen into the deepest hell, as we read in the *Urabon Sutra*. A quite unusual feature of this *itako*'s story is that Buddha should be the one to save the mother's spirit by calling her by the striking of a bowstring. Now, the sources where we find the story of how Mokuren's mother is saved normally do not say that it was Buddha himself who called her. One of the main sources for this episode is the so-called *Urabon Sutra*; in this text, however, Buddha merely tells Mokuren what he should do in order to help his mother, and then Mokuren brings his mother food, but there is no mention of his using a bow to call her spirit. How then, we may ask, did the bow get into the story of the *itako*?

I believe that the episode reported by the newspaper team is a somewhat distorted fragment from an oral tradition living among *itako* in the northern part of Miyagi Prefecture, possibly even in a larger area. I happened to come across a more complete version of this tale in an interview with an *itako* from Wakayanagi, also in Miyagi Prefecture. The opportunity for this interview came almost a year after I had attended the *kuchiyose* seance described in the beginning. The version I managed to collect on this occasion was more faithful to the structure of the story in the sutra, but the details are distinctly different in that they give an explanation not only for the ceremony of *kuchiyose* as such, but also for some of the utensils prominently used in that ceremony. Below I present the main parts of the version, omitting only repetitions and phrases where the *itako* added explanations of terms because she assumed I might not understand them sufficiently since she was using the local dialect rather than standard Japanese.

When Buddha was still alive he had a disciple whose name was Mokuren. Mokuren had lost his mother while still very young, and when he grew up he felt an ardent wish to meet his mother. When he was about twenty, his mother appeared repeatedly in his dreams telling him that she was suffering in hell and could obtain no relief. Mokuren went to consult Buddha and was told he should call the spirit of his mother.

Close to where the Buddha lived there was a mountain called Dandoku. Buddha told Mokuren that, to prepare for the calling of his mother's spirit, he should fetch from the eastern region of Mt. Dandoku a branch from a peach tree, seven *shaku* long, and use it to make a bow. He should then go and get a three-*shaku*-and-two-*sun* branch of a tree called Hozuki from the mountain's western region. (This tree is not found in Japan and therefore willow is used instead.) Then he should go to the south and get a thread of hemp from the sleeve of the Kannon that resides there. And finally he should go to the west where silkworms are raised and get a thread of silk, which would not break. This would serve as wool. As he was told, Mokuren made a bow

out of the peach branch, attached the string of hemp to it, and struck it with the willow twig.

When he struck the bow with all his might his mother appeared and complained bitterly that she was suffering in the hell of the hungry spirits. Because of their hunger they would not be able to climb even to the (ordinary) hell (*jigoku*), so he should help her (and the others) to reach this stage, since going directly to paradise would be out of question for them.

It is said that it rains very often in India during the hundred days from the fifth to the seventh month. Monks spend this time walking about and reciting the *nembutsu*. It is on exactly the hundredth day that *Urabon* is celebrated, on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. At that time Mokuren cooked rice and brought it to feed his mother, but it caught fire and turned to ashes.

When he went to ask Buddha why this happened, Buddha told him that he should prepare food not only for his mother but also for all the hungry spirits suffering with her. Mokuren then distributed food to all spirits and they came from everywhere and ate it to the last crumb. Now they had strength to climb to the (ordinary) hell.

Buddha was deeply moved by the child's dedication to helping his mother and so decided to pull her up to paradise with the thread of silk.

That is why we use a bow, hemp, and cotton wool (silk) when we are called the first time for a *kuchiyose* on the seventh or hundredth day.

We search for a peach branch from an eastern and a willow branch from a southern direction, then stick them into the rice like chopsticks. We put up a number of things with the tablet and then that's the place where the spirit arrives.

The *itako* who told this story belongs to a group of religious professionals called Daiwashu. The group has a centre and also a formal organization that even issues certificates for its members, who live scattered in the villages and small towns of the area. However, the group does not take care of the training of the *itako*; at least the one I am speaking about here received her training from a private tutor in whose home she had spent several years as a child. It is therefore quite possible that her story is the idiosyncratic property of her teacher and her immediate or more remote disciples, but cannot be taken as being representative of the *itako* of Tohoku or even only of Miyagi Prefecture. For such reasons it is difficult to gauge how far the story represents a more general way of thinking among such professionals. However, I am not concerned with the story as an instance of oral tradition but rather as a piece of tradition that reflects the thinking of religious practitioners about the origin and rationalization of their trade. The fact that Mokuren is the main actor in the story is enough to see this story as a branch of a tradition that has developed over a long time in East Asia around the account of his visit to hell. However, there are significant differences between the story of the *Urabon Sutra* and

that of the *itako*. I shall not go into details; they have been discussed extensively in the studies by Teiser and Mair (1989). Their work has given us a pretty clear idea of the main lines and the changes that have occurred within this tradition. I shall compare the *itako*'s story only with the content of the *Urabon Sutra*, which is widely used as the rationale for the celebration of *Obon*, the period when the ancestral spirits are welcomed into the house and presented with special offerings.

The sutra tells how Mokuren spotted his mother in hell and tried to send her food, but this turned to ashes. When he consults with Buddha he is told that he should give offerings to the monks at the time they come out of seclusion at the end of the rainy season, so that his mother might be relieved from suffering in hell. Buddha decreed that the monks should in return chant for the relatives of the donors, and everybody accepted this arrangement happily and followed it faithfully thereafter (See Teiser 1988:49-54).

When we compare the *itako*'s story with the sutra we notice that the time the episode is said to have happened is the same but its significance has been reinterpreted. In our story, too, things happen at the time the monks have completed their period of ascetic training and of *nembutsu* chanting; however, the end of this period is important because it defines a period of hundred days, a period that marks the outer frame of the time within which a ceremony of *kuchiyose* of the *shinkuchi* type should be held for a recently departed. In this context we notice further that there is no word of a food offering to the monks in return for which they would then chant for the spirits in hell. Although Buddha himself is addressed several times and other Buddhist 'elements' also appear, the reason for Mokuren's success appears to be quite different from the one given in the sutra. Although a general Buddhist atmosphere is kept, the facts are reinterpreted. Thus a food offering is not given to the monks, but Mokuren turns it over directly to his mother, only to find she cannot eat it because it burns to ashes. Buddha's explanation to Mokuren does not say that the offering as such was wrong. What went wrong was that Mokuren offered the food only to his mother instead of to all the hungry spirits. Unlike what is given in the sutra, it is not the food offering as such, but the somewhat selfish thinking that only looks at one's own relative, that is wrong and singled out for redressing. On the positive side, the story shows that food offerings can be given directly for the benefit of the spirits. The person that presents these offerings is the shaman (Mokuren and also the *itako*) who calls forth the spirit for a meeting with the survivors. As I have already mentioned, certain offerings are given to the spirit and put in front of the tablet on the temporary altar, but even during the *kuchiyose* itself the *itako* might suddenly interrupt her speaking and ask for more tea because the spirit is thirsty.

Among the closest disciples of the Buddha it is Mokuren who is said to have acquired the six penetrations and who therefore has a command of special

magical powers. This enables him to visit hell, but even before he does this the sutra says that Mokuren, thanks to his piercing divine eye, spotted his mother being "reborn among the hungry ghosts" (Teiser 1988:49). In the *itako*'s story there is no mention of such a piercing-eye power in Mokuren. The mother announces herself and describes her plight in Mokuren's dreams and asks for help. Of Mokuren it says that he was longing to see his mother for a long time. Now, it is a quite common topic in Japanese belief concerning the spirits that an unsatisfied or suffering spirit announces itself in order to have its grievances known and taken care of. This may happen in dreams, but it may also take the nastier form of persistent sickness or some other kind of misfortune that strikes the family or an individual. Once the reason for such a misfortune has been detected, one of the standard remedies suggested is to amend one's alleged lack of consideration for the ancestral soul or to arrange for a proper service to be held for an unsatisfied spirit or one that has no family relation. This latter form may be of minor concern in ordinary belief, however, it plays a rather important role in the thinking and ritual activities of some of the new religions that tend to see misfortune mainly as being spirit-related. That such direct action on behalf of the spirit is appreciated is stressed repeatedly in a *kuchiyose* seance. On one side the spirit pledges to give protection to the living, but it also asks that they in return do not neglect their obligation to care appropriately for the dead.

In order to respond properly to his mother's request for help it is not enough for Mokuren to know about her situation. He has to call up her spirit so that it appears before him and he can provide her with the food she is asking for. Now, this is exactly what the *itako* is doing in a ceremony like the *kuchiyose*. In the *Urabon Sutra* we do not read of something similar; we only learn that through the appropriate action of Mokuren and the monks the mother was saved. In the *itako*'s story, however, Mokuren appears to become himself an *itako* who, with the help of a bow and number of other items, can make the spirit appear and hear of its wishes directly. The especially noteworthy point is that it is Buddha himself who teaches Mokuren how to go about acquiring the powers of an *itako*. As in the sutra, Mokuren is a shaman, but here he becomes accomplished in the profession on the advice of Buddha himself and not because of some special ascetic training. It would be quite mistaken to conclude from this that an *itako* does not need to go through a rigorous ascetic training. However, this is not what the story wants to emphasize, which is, rather, the fact that Buddha himself instructed Mokuren about what measures to take in order to become an *itako*, and that no less a person than Mokuren is the first in the line of those who can call the spirit of a dead person in a *kuchiyose* seance.

From this point of view, i.e. from the point of view of the active *itako*, it is not surprising to note that so much consideration is given to the details of

the search for the main accessories of the rite. The insistence on relating the search to definite directions of the compass is striking, but there are certain puzzles involved in this. For instance, if this was meant to be an indication that *kuchiyose* has also a cosmic dimension, by which it includes the whole world, then there is no information given concerning north. Furthermore, it is first said in the story that Mokuren had to fetch the willow branch from a western region, but later on we are told that he has to get the branch from the south. I do not intend to insist on these facts very much because I was unable to verify the information given in one single session. However, there is some bit of information that, to my mind, seems to mean that directions have a certain significance, even if at this stage I do not have much of a clue as to what that significance really could be. It strikes me that the story in one instance coincides exactly with the request of the *itako* performing the *kuchiyose* I could attend almost a year earlier. Where the story relates how Mokuren went in order to secure the branches he is said to have looked for the willow in a western region. But then the *itako* concludes the story by saying that this is what they do when they are called to perform a *kuchiyose*, namely they fetch a peach branch from an eastern and a willow from a southern direction. The latter does not square with what she had said earlier in the story, but that was what was done by the other *itako* whose ceremony I did witness. I do not want to insist on this too much, but it certainly seems to me that directions are of more than casual significance in *kuchiyose*. Unfortunately, I do again not feel I am in a position to judge what this significance would be.

There is no indication in the story, nor did I hear from any of the two *itako*, why the branches to be used should be of willow and peach. We might, however, arrive at some answer from circumstantial evidence. In popular belief both trees are related to the otherworldly realm. Peach is most often thought of as having apotropaic powers to ward off any evil that threatens to invade this world, and may therefore be used in order to seal the *kimon*, the 'demons' gate' or access route to the otherworld in the northeast. However, around Mt. Osore, one of the centers of *itako* activities which I have already mentioned, people do not like to have peach flowers in the house or peach trees for fruit in the vicinity of the house because they believe that the tree transmits the spirits of the dead to this world. This idea may have originated with the tree's use in the *itako* ritual, and therefore would not qualify as an explanation for why it is used. But in combination with the other idea that it keeps out threatening forces we at least recognize a belief which ascribes to the peach tree a power to deal with the spirit world either in a negative or a positive way. On the other hand, many people would readily relate the willow with ghosts, especially in summer, when almost invariably gruesome ghost stories (*kaidan*) are popular. The willow is said to be found on the border of the river separating this world from the otherworld, and so it provides the natural backdrop for the appearance

of a ghost. Even in the everyday world, willow may be found at the end of a bridge or on the borders between villages, a fact that would seem to underline their 'liminal' quality as links between worlds. In fact, the weeping willow with its hanging branches is particularly seen as a route of access to this world for spiritual beings from the other. This sort of evidence may not provide a solid explanation for why willow and peach are used in the *kuchiyose* that brings the spirit of a recently deceased person back to this world for a short while, but at least it provides a plausible explanation.

Conclusion

A long tradition has painted Mokuren as someone special among the disciples of the Buddha, and recent scholarship has demonstrated that the attraction Mokuren exercised on the population is based on his being a powerful shaman. Stephen F. Teiser has argued and shown that Mokuren's power as shaman is the reason for his long-lasting appeal to the Chinese, an appeal that is kept alive through stories, ritual, and performances (Teiser 1988, 1989).

In Japan, too, Mokuren enjoys continued popularity backed up, of course, by the *Urabon Sutra*, but also by stories of the *setsuwa* type. The *sutra*'s roots go at least back to China, as do those of the stories if we accept the views of Victor H. Mair, who sees an 'essential connection' between *setsuwa* stories about Mokuren and those of the Mokuren Transformation Texts from Dunhuang (Mair 1989:91). However, as the tale collected from the *itako* of Wakayanagi demonstrates, Mokuren lives on in still another guise, i.e. as the model and 'ancestor' of the *itako* themselves and of their trade, at least as far as this concerns their calling up of the spirits of the departed. It is Mokuren who, on the advice of Buddha, collected and then combined into a characteristic configuration those items that are basic in order to perform such a calling up of spirits, a *kuchiyose*.

In the *Urabon Sutra* Buddha tells "all of the good sons and good daughters" (Teiser 1988:53) that from now on they should follow in Mokuren's footsteps and every year repeat his deed, i.e. donate food to the monks in order to repay the kindness of their parents. In the *itako*'s story Mokuren's is both a primordial and an exemplary action. It is not, however, an action to be performed by all of Buddha's followers, it is explicitly declared to be exemplary for those who follow in Mokuren's footsteps as follow shamans. His actions are exemplary for those who are called upon by the people to guide the spirits of their dead to this world so that these spirits may communicate with their survivors once again. Thus Mokuren's action has been reinterpreted by the *itako* in such a way that it became the exemplary deed not for Buddha's followers at large, but only for a specific group of shamans who see themselves as Mokuren's followers.

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The Land of the Dead in Japanese Shamanism*

By

Manabu Waida

Since the beginning of the century, the study of shamanistic phenomena in Japan has been pursued mainly in two regions that are widely separated from each other. One is the northern part of Japan called *Tohoku*, and the other is the southernmost maritime region dotted by a number of islands, collectively called *Nansei Shoto* or Southwestern Islands. Shamanism in northern Japan is a phenomenon characterized above all by a group of religious specialists called *itako*, who serve as mediators between the world of the living and the world of the dead. Mostly female and blind by birth, they are mediums who are recognized as such by their techniques of summoning the spirits of the dead from the other world; they claim to be able to communicate the words of the deceased individuals to their surviving relatives. Much has been brought to light concerning these *itako* and their activities, including the process of their becoming mediators, their training, their rites of initiation, and so on (Hori 1953:651-707; Eder 1958, Sakurai 1974, Takamatsu 1983, Kusunoki 1984, Blacker 1986:140ff.). Unfortunately, it is not always true that the image of the *postmortem* existence cherished by the *itako* and their clients has been brought into relief by fieldworkers.

The purpose of my presentation is not, however; to explore this problem. I wish to deal instead, at the present moment, with a problem in shamanism in southern Japan that is evident in Okinawa Prefecture. More particularly, I would like to clarify, however tentatively it may be, the conception of the land of the dead that is held by the shamanic figures on the island of Miyako. Located halfway between the main island of Okinawa and Taiwan, Miyako is a lovely small island in the midst of the cobalt-blue Pacific that is ringed with coves of white sand beaches and surrounded by a halo of coral reefs. If you fly from Tokyo, you will first arrive at Naha, the capital of Okinawa Prefecture, in two

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hours and twenty minutes. Then if you take a local plane, you will reach the island in fifty minutes.

In Miyako there are religious specialists who are capable of communicating, in a state of trance, with the gods and spirits in heaven and/or in the subterranean world. They can be possessed by these gods and spirits, but are also capable of making the ecstatic journey in Eliadean sense (Eliade 1961:152ff., 1964:5. Cf. also Waida 1983), enabling their soul to leave the body to contact the gods and spirits in heaven or in the underworld, or to travel to distant space. The religious specialists are often referred to as *yuta*, a designation widely used on the main island of Okinawa and its adjacent islands (Lebra 1966:79ff.). More frequently, however, they are called *kamkakarya*, meaning those who are in direct contact with the gods and spirits (Sakurai 1973:3ff.; K. Sasaki 1984:240ff.). They are also called *munusu* or *monosu* by the Miyakoans, and especially by the inhabitants of Ikema and Irabu, two islets close to the island of Miyako (Noguchi 1972:274f.; Yohena 1973, 1974, 1976). Meaning 'those who know', *munusu* enjoy a high reputation as possessors of special knowledge concerning the spiritual world closed to the ordinary people. They claim to 'see' the figures of the gods and spirits, to 'hear' their voices; and to 'know' their message to us. In short, they are endowed with knowledge of a special kind, and on account of this supernatural knowledge they function as mediators between the world of the divine beings (gods and spirits) and the world of the human beings.

To the best of my knowledge there are few among them who have chosen by their own will to become such *kamkakarya*. They confess almost always that it was not their will to become the *kamkakarya*, that they have been 'forced' to such a profession by the will of the other, the will of a certain god or an ancestral spirit. According to their inner consciousness, it was their destiny; calling, or vocation, predetermined by the gods and spirits.

One destined to become a *kamkakarya* exhibits exceptional traits from adolescence; she becomes nervous and occasionally has epileptic seizures. She begins to have dreams and visions in which the gods and spirits approach her; she sings not only during daytime but also in her sleep at night, entering into dialogue with the divine beings; and she likes to wander in solitude, withdrawing to the forests, always driven by the unheard voices of the gods and spirits. It is not unusual, moreover, that she loses her appetite, living only on salt and water and spending sleepless nights for days and weeks, and even for a few months. As a consequence of these extraordinary experiences, she appears so absent-minded, dreamy, and eccentric that she is often mistaken as a crazy and insane person (*furimun*). I can narrate stories of this kind *ad infinitum* based on my own interviews as well as research of many other fieldworkers (Sakurai 1973:221-233, Uezu 1974:43-52, K. Sasaki 1980:103ff., 1983:2ff., 1984:202ff., Takiguchi 1985, 1986a, 1987ab, 1990, Okamoto

1989), but I think it unnecessary. What is noteworthy is the fact that the future *kamkakarya* starts her career by showing these psychopathological symptoms, and that these strange symptoms are interpreted by the full-fledged *kamkakarya* as *kamburi*, *kamzara*, or *kamdari*, namely, sicknesses or 'insanity' caused by certain gods or ancestral spirits.

Once these shamanic sicknesses or 'insanity' occur, the future *kamkakarya* can hope to cure herself from them only by accepting them as *signs of calling* from gods or ancestral spirits and deciding to become a *kamkakarya*. If, on the contrary, she refuses to accept the calling; then these gods and spirits often continue to torture her; her shamanic sicknesses worsen until she is in danger of becoming genuinely insane. Then what she must do is identify what particular god or spirit has been sending his message to her, then to make him her guardian god (*shugoshin*) or guardian spirit (*shugorei*), and finally to become a *kamkakarya* by submitting herself to his spiritual guidance (Yohena 1973:16, 1974:65. Cf. also Takahashi 1983, nos. 2, 63, 70, 343). The future *kamkakarya* suffers, but the suffering is there as something to be conquered. There are some who fail in the process, and others who pass through it triumphantly. We should keep in mind that only those who accept the suffering as a *spiritual crisis* and conquer it are promised to become a new being, a powerful *kamkakarya*.

Generally speaking, there are three categories or types of the *kamkakarya*. The first category comprises those women who, due to their innately given capacity for trance, serve the local cults of the village community to which they belong. Often called *kakarya* or *kakaryamma*, they are priestesses specializing in communicating, in a state of trance, with the gods and spirits of the heavenly world. They are also engaged in the work of praying to the heavenly divine beings for the benefits of the families and the individual members of the local community (Kamata 1965ab, Okawa 1974:93-96, Nema 1982:107, Okamoto 1987:285f.).

The second category includes those, both male and female, who deal with individuals in need of a solution to their problems. Often called *tinza no kamkakarya*, they have specific relations with the gods and spirits of the heavenly world, avoiding contact with things associated with death and the world of the dead; their fear of contact with death is such that they refuse to attend funeral ceremonies even when they are observed for their close relatives.

What distinguishes the second category of the *kamkakarya* from the first category mentioned above is that the latter mainly serves the personal needs of individual persons whereas the former joins other priestesses in serving the cults of the local community. However, this difference is not categorical; there are some female *kamkakarya* who at the same time serve as priestesses of the community cults. In fact, in case the community cult needs, as it does;

a specialist capable of falling into trance, she is often recruited from among the *kamkakarya* of the second category. Conversely, trance specialists in local cults of the community are often found becoming the *kamkakarya* of the second category after retirement. It may be added; too, that there is a sort of common denominator between these two categories of the *kamkakarya*, that they deal specifically with the gods and spirits in heaven and are under a strict taboo, among other things, of avoiding contact with the state of impurity called *busozu*, which is brought into existence by the phenomenon of death (Oki 1983; S. Sasaki 1983). In this respect, they are clearly distinguished from the ordinary people in the mundane world as well as from the third category of the *kamkakarya* to which we turn.

Finally, the third category of the *kamkakarya* exists in connection with the world of death. A specific characteristic of this third category is direct contact with death and the world of the dead. Precisely because of this characteristic, the *kamkakarya* of the third category are regarded as impure (*busozu*), and they are actually shunned by religious specialists of the other two categories. Accordingly, they are distinguished from others by such designations as *gusōzasu*, *sumuza no kamkakarya*, or *sungam kakarya*. In other words, the *kamkakarya* of the third category are capable of dealing with the gods and spirits of the underworld as well as those of the heavenly world. Understandably, they play important parts in funeral ceremonies; not only do they escort the spirits of the deceased individuals to the abode of the dead, but they also summon the spirits of the dead from the world beyond the grave (Sakurai 1973:18, n. 1, 393, K. Sasaki 1980:179, Oki 1983:93f., S. Sasaki 1983:102ff., Takiguchi 1985:132f., 1987c:17).

What particularly interests me is their knowledge concerning the *postmortem* existence, and I will rely primarily on information obtained from them when analyzing the image of the land of the dead cherished by the shamanic figures on the island of Miyako.

For a moment, a brief discussion of Miyakoan terms for the land of the dead may be in order. The natives of Miyako, including religious specialists, often refer to *kam nu suma* as the land inhabited by the gods and ancestral spirits, to which one is destined to go after death (Kochi 1979:22, 25, Okamoto 1987:350). It is sometimes assumed to exist somewhere in the south, as the term *pai nu suma* (the 'land to the south') would suggest (Motonaga 1973:5, 8). The location of the land of the dead is more concretely indicated by another native term *niija* (or *niirya*), a term denoting the residence of the deceased located at the bottom of the earth (Keyomura 1927:16-18). According to the Miyakoans, it is a very gloomy and miserable place peopled by all kinds of evil spirits, and those who have done wrongs in their lifetime are doomed to this dark subterranean abode (Ōi 1984:373). Understandably, *niija* is frequently identified with *jigoku* (Chinese *ti-yü*), which may be rendered more literally

as 'earthly (or subterranean) prison'. As it is well known, *jigoku* is often used as a translation of the Sanskrit term for hell, *naraka*, meaning 'devoid of happiness'. However, the most common term referring to the land of the dead is *gusō*, which literally means 'life after death'. This is the world where one is destined to go and reside after death. While *gusō* is often equated with *nijja*, it is sometimes said to be more comprehensive in scope. As one of the *kamkakarya* puts it,

"*Gusō* (the world of the dead) is divided into three cosmic zones: heaven, hell, and the earthly world in-between (called *naka nu yū*). What people usually call *gusō* corresponds to the earthly world between heaven and hell, where the roads to heaven above and hell below also lie" (Uezu 1974:46).

The same *kamkakarya* describes as follows what she claims she has seen when visiting the world of the dead: life in the world of the dead is exactly the same as in the world of the living. There are schools, police stations, law courts, business companies and shops, and of course, vegetable gardens to be cultivated. People also carry on the same occupations as they did in their lifetime; peasants are peasants, fishermen are fishermen, weavers are weavers, and so on. However, there is one notable difference that these people utter no word from their mouth. When I was about to buy something at a shop, I was told not to buy. The house in the world of the dead, including the ceiling, the floor, and walls, is made of polished mirrors (Uezu 1974:46. Cf. also Tanigawa 1971a:110f). This remark clearly indicates that the future life in the world of the dead called *gusō* is considered by the *kamkakarya* to be an extension or continuance of life in the present world.

It may be added, in this connection, that they conceive the other world as an inverted image of this world. Everything takes place as it does here, but in reverse. When it is day on earth, it is night in the beyond. According to their belief, the sun (*tida*) rises in the morning through an imaginary 'cave' (*gama*) in the east, giving light; life, and warmth onto the world of the living (*myāku-yū*). But in the evening when people go to rest, the sunsets in the west through another 'cave' in order to traverse the world of the dead (*gusō-yū*), completing an ever ending circuit (Tanigawa 1971b:92ff., Sakurai 1973:291, 304, n. 38). The sun illuminating the world of the dead (*gusō* or *nijja*) is nothing other than *Gusōtida* or the Sun Goddess of the Underworld; who is also known as *Nijja Ummatida*, the Mother Goddess of the Underworld. Just as the world of the living is protected by *Ninupa Ummatida* or the Mother Goddess residing in the north, as well as by her twelve divine children in charge of the twelve different directions of the universe, so is the subterranean world of the dead guided by the Mother Goddess *Nijja Ummatida* and her twelve children.

The journey to the land of the dead (*gusō*) is believed to be a long and

difficult one. It can be reached only after traversing 'seven mountains and seven valleys' (*nana yama nana suku*, also known as *nana mine nana suku*). As it is often said even among ordinary people (Uezu 1974:46), "the world of the dead lies beyond seven mountains and seven valleys" (*gusō no michi wa nana yama nana suku*). The spirit of the deceased is thus in real danger of getting lost on the way to its destination.

Precisely for the purpose of rescuing him out of this danger, a ceremony is often performed by a *sungam kakarya* shortly after his death. The aim of the ceremony lies in summoning the ancestral spirits of the deceased person and ask them to 'make the path' for him. Hence the ceremony has been traditionally called *mitsudatsu nigai*, an invocation for making his 'way', 'path', or 'road' to the land of the dead. The invocation may be made on the very day the funeral ceremony is to be performed, but it is usually done on the third day after death occurs. According to my informant, who is a *sungam kakarya*, death transforms the physical body of the dead person into something like the cast-off skin of a snake, and his spirit is at a loss in the air, unable to return to the body. The state of suspension lasts for three days. Then an invocation for making his path to the world beyond, *mitsudatsu nigai*, is requested by those who wait for him.

"When I woke as if from a long sleep," so speaks the spirit of the deceased person through the mouth of the *sungam kakarya*, "I found myself in a place unknown to me, near a river. I could breathe out, but strangely I had no power to draw a breath." In the meantime; the deceased person finds someone approaching him from afar and wonders if the man is coming to offer help to him. He comes to realize gradually that the approaching man is one of his ancestors who passed away three or four generations back in his family line. Coming close by, the ancestor announces, "You are my child." "I have been sent to meet with you here on the river and to serve as your guide to the land of the dead. Your breath has already gone, so you can no longer go back to the world of the living." Looking back, the deceased person insists, "I do wish to go home." But he finds himself unable to take even a step backwards. He has no choice other than to walk after the guide in his afterlife journey. The ancestor-guide miraculously makes a bridge and helps him to safely cross the river.

The function of the guide is essentially to show the spirit of the deceased person, who has been lost, the path or way leading from this world to the other world, the world beyond. As if to symbolize the separation between the two worlds, the river and the bridge to cross the river emerge on the mythological landscape. The land of the dead is still far away, however; it is a remote place lying beyond seven mountains and seven valleys. Climbing a mountain and going down to the bottom of a valley and again ascending the peak of another mountain - thus crossing seven mountains and seven valleys;

they eventually arrive at the borderland between this world and the other world. A wide, flat plain extends in front of them, a plain where the gods and spirits of the dead gather together. They also notice the so-called seven public offices of the land of the dead (*gusō nana yakuba*). It is a complex of the houses where the new arrival registers his entry to the world of the dead.

The deceased person is distressed in grief, still absorbed in fond memories of the old days spent in the world of the living. Then the spirits of his ancestors console him saying, "You have already come to the land of the gods and spirits, so you have to register here. There are gatekeepers at each side of the entrance to the office complex." The ancestor serving him as a guide tells these gatekeepers on his behalf, "Do him favours as he is going to reside in our land."

Inside the gate, the gods are standing and beckoning the deceased person, saying with their sweet voices, "Come on in, don't be afraid!" The first to utter this word of invitation is *Tintōganasu*, the sun god. Comforted and encouraged by the word, the deceased person, accompanied by his guide, makes up his mind to enter through the gate. Among the gods is found the lord of life (*Nutsu nu nusu*) telling him, "You were supposed to live such and such years, but your life span was lengthened (or shortened) to so and so years because of such and such reasons." The god of fate (*Misadami no kami*), whose function is to discern good from evil, is present, who says, "The whole of your lifetime is recorded in a register as clearly as if it were reflected in a polished mirror or illuminated by the sun."

The god of water is also there; ready to give the deceased person a bucket filled with water. "You can no longer drink from the water of the human world," he says. "But drink from the water of the world of the gods and spirits. You must also bathe in it and drown your smell as a human being." The deceased person wails, thinking of his dear home and of all those relatives he left behind. Comforting him, the god of water goes on to tell him, "Accept the pail, drink water from it, and pour water from it onto yourself, and you will become a pure being." The deceased person makes up his mind to accept the water-pail. The god of water still urges the dead with his soft and tender voice, 'drink of it and bathe in it.' The deceased person finally makes the plunge, drinking of the water of death and bathing in it. Then he says, "I have drunk of it and been dowsed with it. Consequently, no longer am I in form and shape like those in the human world, but like those people in the land of the dead." He goes on to say, "I can now see the whole world whenever I wish to, and I will protect by all means my family and descendants wherever I may be." The deceased person also supplicates to the gods; "My heart is in peace after bowing to you. I humbly beg you to pardon all wrongdoings of my ancestors, and I also beseech you for my sake to pardon any wrongs that may be done by my descendants. As far as my own wrongdoings are concerned, I will let my

descendants report of them to you." Subsequently, there comes forward the god *Tintoku daichō nu nusu*, who is in charge of the books recording his deeds in his lifetime. The books are thoroughly reviewed, and a decision is made on his destiny, whether the deceased person is to go to heaven or to hell. The *sungam kakarya* concludes her story with the remarks that there are seven stages or grades in hell and that the dead is to go down to one of these hells, depending on the nature of his wrongdoings in his lifetime. "Heaven (or paradise)," she says, "also has seven stages or grades."

Her account of the judgment of the dead and of his descent to hell is obviously very brief, and in order to have a better picture of it we have to make use of the information from some other *kamkakarya*, to which we shall turn shortly. But for the moment, let us pause and take a closer look at some of the salient points in the mythical geography, as described by the *sungam kakarya*.

In the first place, her mythical geography clearly shows the separation of the world of the dead from this world by the river, an archaic symbol widely attested in the general history of religions. The dead is to walk on a bridge across the river in his initiatory passage from this world to the world beyond. In addition to walking across a bridge over the river, the dead is supposed to traverse 'seven mountains and seven valleys' (*nana yama nana suku*), also known as 'seven peaks and seven valleys' (*nana mine nana suku*). This image of the afterlife journey through mountains and valleys does not seem unique, however, to the *kamkakarya* of the island of Miyako; according to the shamanic figures (*yuta*) on the main island of Amami, to the north of Okinawa, the spirit of the deceased person goes to the world of the dead (*gusho*) across 'seven mountains and seven hills' (*nana yama nana saka*). The dead also walks on a rope to cross a river before traversing seven mountains and seven hills (Yamashita 1977:277f.). According to the tradition handed down among the islanders of Kikaijima, the deceased person goes to the world beyond after walking on foot seven days and seven nights (Ito 1964:72f., quoting Iwakura; Yamashita 1977:278). It is also interesting to note; in this connection, that the symbolism of the number seven is highly conspicuous in the mythical geography: seven heavens, seven hells, seven mountains and seven valleys, seven public offices in the land of the dead, etc. We also hear shamanic figures of Miyako talking about seven souls owned by the human being (Yohena 1970:232; Naoe 1983), as well as about seven ladders through which the gods and spirits descend from their heavenly abode (Takiguchi 1986b:81). The symbolism of the number seven is so amply attested in the beliefs and practices of the Miyako Islanders that it deserves a special inquiry.

The second notable feature characterizing the shamanic story is the distinctly bureaucratic structure of the world of the dead. The first thing the deceased person ought to do upon reaching the world beyond is to register his entry in the so-called seven public offices of the land of the dead (*gusō nana yakuba*).

The gatekeepers are there, and we hear of the archives of good and bad conducts, of the courts of justice, and of the prisons of the underworld in accord with karmic book keeping. Such divine beings in the mythical geography as the lord of life (*Nutsu nu nusu*) and the god of fate (*Misadami no kami*) are functionally homogeneous to the Chinese god called Director of Destiny (*Ssu-ming*). Similarly, the god in charge of the books recording all of man's conducts in his lifetime certainly reminds us of the Keeper of Records (*Ssu-lu*) well known in the Chinese folk religious tradition (Teiser 1988:168ff., Seidel 1991:254ff., 294ff., 299ff. Cf. also Sakurai 1977:476-478).

Thirdly, our shamanic story of the afterlife journey of the dead tells of his dramatic encounter with one of his ancestors on the way. The ancestor approaches him on a river, helps him to cross it, and serves as his guide when crossing mountains and valleys until he reaches the world of the dead. This scenario certainly reminds us of fascinating reports of persons describing how during their near-death experience they saw other people coming to meet and help them, i.e., the spirits of relatives and friends who have already passed away as well as a being of light appearing in front of him (Moody 1975, Kalweit 1988). Although the resemblance between the two scenarios is undeniable, my interest for the moment does not lie in pursuing the meaning and implications of this remarkable parallelism.

Significantly, according to some other *sungam kakarya*, it is not always the ancestor who serves the deceased person as guide in his afterlife journey. One of them speaks of the Bodhisattva Amitabha as guide; he prays to Amitabha on behalf of the deceased by saying, "As the path to the land of the dead (*niija*) is dark, please, Dear Amida, take him (or her) by your hand and guide him" (*niija e no michi wa kurai kara, dozō, te o totte michibiite kudasai, Amida-sama*). This formulaic phrase is substantially the same as one of the prayer stocks used many decades ago by the *nembuchā*, a group of lower class people who served the mortuary rituals by reciting such prayers: *Gushō no michi kumachi, te tote hiki tamōre, Amida-butsu* (Shimaziri 1978:195).

In addition to the ancestral spirit and the Bodhisattva Amitābha, the *sungam kakarya* often serves the deceased as psychopomp; she/he escorts the dead to the grave, which is believed to be the entrance to the land of the dead. At each side of the entrance stands a gatekeeper, a lesser god who checks entry to the seven public offices in the land of the dead. As a *sungam kakarya* escorts the dead to the grave, in her/his trancelike consciousness she/he reaches the entrance to the world of the dead; more particularly, contacts the gatekeepers. This is also the case when the *sungam kakarya* communicates with a spirit of the dead residing in the world beyond the grave. The first thing she/he ought to do is contact the gatekeepers and to gain access to the seven public offices of the land of the dead. It is firmly believed that direct communication with the dead is virtually impossible for any *sungam kakarya*.

Passing through the gate, the shaman goes on to see the god bureaucrat *Nana yakuba nu nusu*, the lord overseeing the seven public offices of the land of the dead and tells him, "I have come here to meet with such and such a person for so and so purposes. Please grant me your permission so that I may talk with him." Only when the lord consents, the *sungam kakarya* can talk with the dead concerned; the lord orders some other gods to open the coffin in which the dead is placed, to raise him, and to allow him to converse with the *sungam kakarya*. The land of the dead is somewhat differently depicted by some other *kamkakarya* whom I met with. According to one of them, the grave is the avenue to the land of the dead, the courts of justice, and the subterranean prison. As she explains it, "inside the grave is found a house, the large space like a dark limestone grotto whose end is almost unfathomable. The house is furnished on both sides of the wall with long shelves on which are placed coffins and urns containing the bones of the deceased ancestors: As we move while looking at these coffins and urns, we can go on and on into the depth, as in a limestone grotto."

"According to my knowledge gained through dreams and visions," so continues the *kamkakarya*, "toward the end of the grotto there is an opening, on the ground, with seven stairs leading downwards. As he steps down these stairs one by one, the deceased person eventually finds himself in a cave, facing a gigantic round mirror on the wall shining brightly at its centre. This open space is a court of justice, a seat of judgment in afterlife where the deceased is brought to trial. The dead is forced to sit in front of the mirror; which reflects all his conducts. There he sees himself, he sees all his actions, great and small, good and bad, that he took in his lifetime, from his childhood to the time of his death. Consequently, he realizes that it would be utterly impossible to tell a lie about his conducts, that his wrongs which had remained hidden while he was alive would be thoroughly exposed to light."

At the front of the courtroom, on its uppermost platform; there is the god of fate, *Misadami no kami*, taking his seat as judge. This god is also called *Niija Asatida*, the Father God of the Underworld who has as his wife *Niija Ummatida*, the Mother Goddess of the Underworld. Significantly, the god of fate serving as judge of the dead is further identified by the same *kamkakarya* with Emma (Chinese Yen-lo wang; King Yima), the King of the Underworld. On lower platforms are found seated his assistants, gods collectively called *Chobo nu nusu*, who are in charge of the logbooks recording all the conducts of the dead in his lifetime. Other gods are also present in the courtroom, such as the one holding an abacus, the one with a notebook, the one with a pen in his hand, and so on. Moreover, there is one supremely important god in the courtroom although he is barely visible to the dead. He is the lord of life (*Nutsu nu nusu*). An old man with a long white beard, he is found sitting behind the

judge, beyond the veil of a waterfall, and watching in silence what is going on in the courtroom.

Usually, the dead readily accepts to pay the penalty for the wrongdoings that are reflected in the mirror and recorded in the logbooks. Sometimes though, he persists in denying the wrongs to his brothers, other relatives, and friends, thus making it quite difficult for the judge to pass sentence on him. On such occasions; the judge would send one of his messengers to earth to bring these brothers, other relatives and friends down to the subterranean court so that he could hear from them and make his final decision. This means that the messenger would take their souls away, that consequently they would become sick and die soon after the departure of the deceased.

When the dead has been found guilty, he is thrown into prison in hell located in the darkest corner of the cave. There are a number of cells in this gloomy and miserable subterranean place inhabited by all kinds of evil spirits. The dead is to be confined in one of these cells, depending on the weight of the sentence passed on him. The dead is subjected to torments of hell. Life in hell is narrated as follows by one of the *kamkakarya* who claims she has visited the infernal region. Guided by the dead aunt of mine, I visited the subterranean world. Dark and invisible, I took steps downward to hell where I noticed people, men and women, working in blue robes, watched by supervisors with sticks in their hands. I saw these supervisory beating some lazy people with the sticks. I further noticed there a large wooden board with nails as long as fifteen centimetres protruding from it, as well as a cauldron filled with boiling water. I was told that men of evil, when they were found too disobedient, would be forced to undergo the tortures of walking on the nails, of being thrown into the boiling water, and finally of suffering the second death. When I was looking around in the land of the dead (*gusō*), I did not recognize many people. But as I was leaving, I noticed that I was sent off by many. I was told to promise that I never look back on my way to the world of the living. When I reached the peak of a mountain, however, I broke the promise and looked back to see human skeletons in lines (Uezu 1974:46).

Horrible as these tortures are, the dead is not eternally condemned to life in his prison cell. From time to time he is released from his usual torments in prison for a retrial. In other words, he is given a chance for the penalty of a lesser degree as he receives a stock of merit produced by his descendants through the performance, on certain fixed days, of burning incense, of sending off the so-called paper money by fire, and of making prayer and food offerings. It is also said by the *kamkakarya* that the dead attempts to secure his temporary release for a retrial by sending a 'message' to his descendants in the form of misfortunes such as sicknesses accidents and other domestic troubles. When these misfortunes occur, they are usually taken by the *kamkakarya* as 'ciphers' being sent from the infernal regions and then the

misfortunes are deciphered as incidents due to what is usually called *ugan-busuku*, i.e., lack or insufficiency of merit-making activities, such as the making of prayer and food offering, incense burning, and the sending off of paper money by fire to the divine world. The dead thus receives benefits in the form of a more comfortable existence in the hells. Eventually, after the span of seventy years (according to one *kamkakarya*) or seven generations (approximately two hundred years, according to the other *kamkakarya*), the dead is destined to tread the path upwards, the path toward a beatific life in the heavens until he earns a status of the guardian spirit (*shugorei*) gracefully protecting his descendants.

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The Impact of Japanese Colonialism on Puyuma (Taiwan) Shamanism

By

Josiane Cauquelin

The Puyuma, a people of the Austronesian language family numbering about 6,000, live in the South-East of Taiwan. They are divided into two dialect groups each with a different myth of origin: the Katipul group born from a stone and the Puyuma group born from a bamboo. Here, I'll speak only of the Puyuma (*Nanwang* in the Taiwanese administration), who number about 1300 people.

Until the arrival of the Japanese in 1895, the Puyuma lived in a closed village, admitting no foreigners at all. Their social system was ambilineal (the ancestors of both sides were honoured in rites), but at the beginning of the century showed a strong tendency toward an harmonic system of the matrilineal/matriocal type (about 90% of the cases according to my own statistics of 1984). Social organisation was based on residence, and children belongs to the residence. The elder daughter inherited but she had to take younger sisters with their families inside the main house.

The village was placed within a dualistic system, each house belonging to one of the two moieties named *ami* (mountain side) and *timut* (sea side). Each used to shelter three main houses with three men's houses and one boys' dormitory.

Women controlled the domestic sphere and toiled the soil; they were the guardians of the material properties (houses, fields), and they educated the children (boys up to 13¹). Men hunted, protected the territory and, for ritual purposes, practised head-hunting. They had no power at all inside their wife's house, where they felt as if 'they were crushed under the foot's sole'.

In 1895, the Puyuma received a violent shock from outside in Japanese colonisation. In 1926, four of the six men's houses had already disappeared; they were useless since the society was undergoing a process of acculturation. The Puyuma did not resist the Japanese, but on the contrary even helped the military in fighting their neighbours, the Bunun. In 1929, the colonial power moved all aboriginal villages and Puyuma was transferred three kilometres north to its present location. Then, progressively, Taiwanese peasants and shop-keepers started to build houses next to the Puyuma's houses. Schooling was done in Japanese, men were compelled to do forced labour, hunting was

forbidden, shamans were persecuted, and head-hunting had already been forbidden in the 1920s. Men were idle and started to help women in the fields, which was considered degrading. The transformation brought social changes, and slowly a patrilocal/patrilineal system supplanted the old system.

Up to the arrival of the Chinese from mainland China, agriculture was the main source of income. But for the last 20 years the Puyuma have been selling their land to the Taiwanese in order to buy televisions, motorbikes and so on. Young people leave their villages and go to work in the big cities: Kaoshiung, Taipei and so on, while the old stay at home waiting for money to be sent by their exiled children.

Despite all the changes, traditional religion is still very much alive. The *meqlaw* are bamboo diviners, the *benabulu*² are men priests officiating for the whole society (calling for rain, protecting the village, sacrificing to village ancestors). Finally the *temararamaw*³ are women shamans who only deal with individuals. In the past, some men also practised this trade, but they were transvestites. I shall retain the indigeneous term *temararamaw* in order to reach a better definition of the practice involved.

The following presentation of the rites and functions of the *temararamaw* is based on personal experience: I participated in rituals and did not remain as just an observer. If I have been accepted by the practitioners it is mainly because I learned *puyuma* language.

How to Become a *temararamaw*

You can become a *temararamaw* only if you have an ancestor who was himself or herself a *temararamaw*. He or she will become your guardian spirit, *kinitalian*.⁴ According to their explanations, the elected person has no choice, although I met an old woman who had been elected by a guardian spirit when she was already married and a mother. Her husband strongly opposed her becoming a *temararamaw* and threatened divorce if she accepted her investiture. After several purification rites accomplished by the *temararamaw* community, her guardian spirit abandoned his prey. Generally speaking, husbands are hostile to their wife's inthonsation as a *temararamaw* (it is true that their activities may start very early in the morning and end very late at night). But consanguines are very enthusiastic. An interesting case is Irubai, a young lady aged 35 today mother received the first signs. The transmission can be either through the mother's or father's side; there are cases of siblings becoming *temararamaw*. The elected woman goes through extraordinary experiences: visions, strange dreams, the death of young babies, sterility, and so on. In the case of Irubai, she experienced a very peculiar feeling of suffocation, like hard pressure on her shoulders. We can observe two different ages in

life for inthronization: around 30 and between 40 to 50 at the end of menstruation.

The inthronization ceremony introduces the novice into the *temararamaw*'s community. The ceremony goes on for five days. On the first day, the soul leaves the novice's body (a death according to shamanistic practice). On the second day, the bamboo diviner indicates the site inside the courtyard where the *temararamaw*'s small room, *lawinan*, will be built; if the novice has an auspicious dream during the next night, the room is built by the family on the third day. On the fourth day in the early morning, another *temararamaw* puts, inside the room, a betel nut symbolising the 'protector-spirit' of the place; in the evening of the same day, all *temararamaw* make cult objects of the novice (especially her bag, small pearls and so on). The final evening, her teacher puts a bag on the shoulder of the newly elected girl and her soul, which had been wandering about for the last five days, is called back and replaced on the top of the girl's head. This is a re-birth. A marionette is then offered to the guardian-spirit in exchange for the soul. On the fifth and last day, an aggregation rite takes place: all the *temararamaw* share a meal, eating from the same bowl. The very last evening, the new *temararamaw* moves with her husband, but not children, inside the newly built room.

The symbol of the new *temararamaw* is her bag. This 'makes' the *temararamaw*: inside, she puts her ritual tools (knife, hand-bell, string and so on). Her first gesture before practising is to put her bag on her left shoulder, for the left is the ritual side. Priests always mention that the bag is the difference between those who have no communication with the spirits and the *temararamaw* who communicate with that invisible world. It is in her bag that her guardian spirit. The shaman must practice everyday; if not, she has to open her bag and make her guardian spirit smell her, so it won't think that it has been abandoned. I consequently remember, some days, Irubai being very anxious because no patient had come to call on her.

Rites and Functions

From 1895, the Japanese prohibited the *temararamaw* from practicing, and some still remember how Japanese policemen chased the *temararamaw*, threw their bags away and forced them to hide. The Japanese understood that the *temararamaw* were opposing the strength of their administrative system; these women concentrated their energy towards tradition and held the group together as a cultural entity. In spite of this repression, the trade is still very active today. It is enough to take a walk inside the village to see one of them, left hand towards the sky, invoking the spirits with a syncopated voice.

1. Rites

I divide *temararamaw* rites into two types: ordinary ones done everyday, and extraordinary ones. Ordinary rites always follow the same pattern, whether to explain a nightmare, to diagnose illness, to bring a husband back home, or to purify an object. Generally, the *temararamaw* goes to her patients house, but for small diseases the patient comes to her: she puts her bag on her left shoulder, cuts betel nuts and calls all the spirits. The offended one 'comes'. Her voice becomes unclear, she cries and for a short moment is out of reach. Nowadays, she calls for the 'spirit of changing' (*benabatis* and *demađutum*) 'because of all the changes our people have undergone since the arrival of the strangers'.

Extraordinary rites are performed for calling back the soul of a very sick person, or the annual trance, *yaulas*.⁵ Then, she needs to get out of her bag a hand-bell which normally remains tightly enclosed and hidden inside. This hand-bell, *singsingan*, belongs to her guardian spirit. After being elected, she went to the heirs of the dead *temararamaw* and bought, at a very high price, the hand-bell which used by an ancestor; it is her only musical instrument. The quest for the sick soul happens during day-time, when the *temararamaw* goes into the invisible world, talks with the spirits, argues with them and finally brings the soul back inside her hand-bell. The soul is then replaced on the top of the head of the diseased person. The trance, *yaulas*, was sometime ago performed for any serious illnesses, but this rite is very tiresome, and today is performed only once a year. On the last day of the annual festival *pualasakan*, which goes on for one week, each *temararamaw* takes a long bath and retires to her small room with a dim light. She sits on the earth facing her spirit altar, undoes her long hair and lets it fall in front of her face, building a screen between the visible and invisible. The hand-bell serves to put rhythm into the trip – the *temararamaw* lets her hand-bell move to left or right searching for auxiliary spirits. If any obstacle, such as the presence of a stranger, disturbs her search, the hand-bell stops ringing and it takes a long time for her to get in touch with the spirits. The auxiliary spirits are ancestors, either dead *temararamaw* or dead friends. Her trip is purely imaginary, for she is never possessed by the spirits, nor does she jump or scream. Most are helped only by their husbands who wait to catch the shaman when she falls down, so she won't hurt herself. The senior *temararamaw* is helped by Irubai who translates the spirits' answers to patients who have come to question them, hoping that this big trip will bring an answer to some unsolved problem. The *temararamaw* use a sacred language taught by the spirits in her sleep. Some *temararamaw* sing, some talk, but all end their trance with a fixed song.

2. Functions of the *temararamaw*

The *temararamaw* assume a therapeutic function (curing sociological and biological illness), a divination function and an exorcism function.

Her therapeutic function applies, first, to biology. The Puyuma are well aware of the difference between small disease and big illness. In the first case, the patient comes to the small room of the *temararamaw*. Her acting is enough: she cures the soul. But in case of big illness, the shaman goes to her patient and after treatment calls for a doctor to cure the body. On the sociological level she, in every house, collects information and so holds secrets that she can use while 'working'. She validizes the social code, pointing out non-respect for this code. The daily life of the Puyuma has to go on, combined with duties toward the spirits, and it is very easy to forget one of these duties. There is no rite for the protection of the domestic circle, for the house, field, car, altar and so on, which can be forgotten.

As regards divination, the *temararamaw* has the same knowledge as the bamboo diviner for retrieving an object. But when the problem is to bring an unfaithful husband or a run-away back home, she is the only one who has the capability to do so. It is mainly during such rites that she reveals magical power that she will never admit to be it is black magic (for she repels bad forces). To her, she always stands on the right side.

Her exorcism is performed in every field. She reveals conflicts within a family or between neighbours. She wrings bad spells out of people or houses, though such omens are always said to cast by foreigners (Taiwanese, Paiwan or Chinese).

Shamanism and Possession

The above description of ordinary and extraordinary rites brings us to consider the *temararamaw* in a shamanistic-possession continuum.

Shamanism can be described at five different levels: first, that of the initiatic illnesses suffered by the *temararamaw*; second, that of the soul leaving the body either of a patient or of a *temararamaw*; third, that of the *temararamaw* herself who plays music whereas the possessed have music played to them (Rouget 1980); fourth that of the annual trance, *yaulas*, and the calling back of a soul. We know that shamans only exist because they have patients, and at Puyuma most of these patients are brought in by the bamboo diviner, whose bamboo point's out the *temararamaw's* name and the date of a rite. It looks, then, as if it is useful to have a bamboo diviner within the consanguines or affines. The *temararamaw* did not used to be paid for her work. She only

received betel nuts, but for the last 10 years, although there still is no fixed price-list, a rite requires from 300 to 1,000 (*yuan*) (for comparison, a worker in Taitung earns 10,000 *yuan* a month). The fifth and last point is that of clan quarrels.

Other aspects prove that the rites of the Puyuma have incorporated some possession phenomena. These include the purification of men or objects and the initiatic symptoms described by Irubai who felt pressure on her shoulders – a well known feature of possession trances.

According to R. Hamayon (1986:126), auxiliary spirits are allied within a given hunting group but are ancestors within a given pastoral group. Puyuma society had, under Japanese pressure, to switch from hunting to tilling, to switch from reproduction through alliances to a system validizing private property and affiliation. For Irubai: "my female ancestor-spirit wanted me to become her daughter," she says. But Hamako, aged 60, who was sterile before becoming a *temararamaw*, talks of a trance followed by pregnancy. Two types of relation appear: a filial for Irubai, but an alliance for Hanako.

The last point about possession practices is that today they help the *temararamaw* unite as a group. Shamans do not belong to any social group. Their solidarity is devoted to the clan which initiated them. Shamans thus usually have conflictual relations. Today the formation of a social group proves that *temararamaw* stand in an intermediary position. On third day of the third lunar month, the *temararamaw* organise their annual festival; all of them must participate. The daughter of sick *temararamaw* represent their mothers. It is during this festival that the *temararamaw* try to solve clan quarrels.

Myth and History

The puyuma *temararamaw* seem to have forgotten their past. They maintain that Samguan, a transvestite man, was the first *temararamaw*, and before him there was none but those who had a third eye, *miapali*. But Samguan was contemporary to the parents of the elders of the present generation. His genealogy reveals that when the Japanese arrived in 1895 he was about 25 years old. When I listened to the final and fixed song of the annual trance and as I translated it, I met people I had heard of – dead friends, dead teachers, and so on. But then at the very end of the song there appears a name, Udekaw. This might be a woman's name. I was very surprised for I knew all the talking spirits but not about Udekaw. Among the 13 *temararamaw*, only one could give me an explanation: "Udekaw is a very old *temararamaw* that we have never so far met." None of the others could tell me anything at all. I got the answer, then, that confirmed what I had surmised but for which I had had no proof – Samguan of course is not the first *temararamaw*, whereas Udekaw

is the real first *temararamaw* whose memory has gone with the wind. In that final song, Udekaw describes her trip. She walks along the paths, she crosses a bridge, she walks on wet beaches, she goes back to Takilis.⁶ This song is the end; it guides the vision of the *temararamaw* while she sings it, but it is not an exploration because the trip is soon over. She mentions a bridge, a very important accessory used by auxiliary-spirits in shamanism. Shamans are human beings with the capability of going to the invisible world in order to get explanations from spirits, and the bridge is necessary to go between worlds. So history has got rid of the myth. Samguan is today the only one the *temararamaw* still honour; he is the ancestor-spirit of the senior *temararamaw*.

As I have said, at the beginning of the Japanese occupation shamanistic practices were forbidden, so here comes Samguan. According to the legend, he was working in his field when the 'spirits who liked him' took possession. His spontaneous trance was a punishment from the spirits who loved him: it is true that spirits punish those they love for having neglected them. We notice, as well, that since Samguan was working in his field he was already pushed out of the male sphere into the female sphere. This may mean that after a total interruption of shamanistic practice, and after a certain number of years, the practice was resumed underground and transformed. So Samguan was the restore as well as the renovator of shamanism. He transformed his first spontaneous trance into a ritual possession trance. The *temararamaw* bag is exactly the same as that which fell from the sky at Samguan's feet while he was in a trance. In addition, he allowed freaks, 'those having the third eye, to become *temararamaw*.' He himself, as a transvestite, was ostracized from the male sphere of manly warriors, the *bangsaran*.

Samguan overthrew Udekaw. The first *temararamaw* should have been Udekaw, a woman according to the final song. But today all *temararamaw* refer to Samguan as the founder. Before the Japanese colonization the inner social circle was dominated by women. There was a relation between *intra-muros* power and religious practice. The Japanese administration, by having the village move, allowed Buddhist Taiwanese to settle inside the village. Besides, it is the colonial administration banned shamanism. Hamayon noted that:

"it is at the moment that political subjection, religious acculturation, and social disorder takes place that the difference between the sexes becomes an epiphany: often there appears an inversion of the dominant sex. Furthermore, the myths ascribe the origin of shamanism to the sex group opposite to that one practising, which can bring some compensations to the social constraints involved and confirm that the shamanistic approach incorporates both sexes" (Hamayon 1982:24).

At Puyuma, thanks to the new myth attributing the origin of the practice to the opposite sex, the transvestite man, freaks among freaks are allowed to play an active role in society.

Conclusion

The *temararamaw*, persecuted under the Japanese occupation, are now naturally forming a community in order to protect their practice. As time goes by, their group structure moves toward sisterhood. At their festival, they forget clan quarrels and unite. During one week, they perform all rites together, except trance. But their cult has been transformed; the links between shamanistic practices and therapy are social facts, and consequently have had to undergo similar transformations. The Japanese colonization destroyed their society. They reacted and went through a process of restructuring. The shamanistic function which used to serve the clan now tends to become a possession cult. The acculturation of the shamanistic Puyuma society shows that the *temararamaw* are 'incorporating' more and more the spirits of possession to the detriment of the shamanistic trip to the other world.

Notes

1. At the age of 13, boys entered a dormitory which they left at 18 to enter the men's house.
2. *bulu*: to throw away.
3. *tara*: to hold's out one hand; *-em*: actor focus; *maw*: supernatural.
4. *ʔali*: the gardener's tracing line; *ki-*: 'to do to oneself'; *-in-*: accomplished form; *-an*: generic from.
5. *yaulas*: *i*- location; *aulas*: the spirits' world.
6. *Takilis* is a place a long the coast well known by the Puyuma.

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Shamanism and New Religions in Japan

By

Sachiko Hatanaka

In Japan, new religions often appeared during periods of social change, such as after the Meiji Revolution and at the end of both world wars. From the time of the World War II, in parallel with the high growth of the Japanese economy, many new religions have emerged that now compete successfully against each other. These are more ceremonial, more heavily routinized, and less mystically appealing than religious traditions. The new religions engage in enthusiastic missionary activities. They have often been called 'neo-new religions'.

The new religions do not always have fundamental tenets, but characteristically display certain features such as the promise of salvation, a strong faith in magic and miracles, a preference for the spiritual over the physical, the practice of shamanism and authoritarianism, syncretism, and a strong sense of community. Occasionally the founder of a new religion calls himself or herself a god's incarnate. Furthermore, founders typically have charisma, and great personal charm which allows them to establish their authority.

The decline of high growth in the economy since the oil crisis of 1973 caused a transformation in social consciousness, and an emphasis on the spiritual fulfilment. This phenomenon has resulted in a 'religiously floating' population, easily attracted to new forms of religious experience.

Even though many religious associations labelled as new religions emerged one by one during this period of social change, many broke up, disappeared, or were revived in a different format. Religious associations now number about 5000; as of 1988, there were a total of 318 new religions. At times, the combined membership total of these groups is greater than the actual population of the country.

New religions resemble folk and primitive religions based on animism more than established religions. The general corpus is established based on a 'magico-salvation belief' and displays a syncretic character. There are two main ways in which such new religions are formed. One is through a sudden revelation from a god which convinces the founder to start the religion; the other is through experience within another religious group which stimulates the desire to establish a similarly successful organization. In both cases, each new religion purports to be the result of direct communication with a god. There is no clear

distinction between rituals and tenets. New religions often combine traditional elements with contemporary themes in their belief systems and symbols, finding new applications for old ideas of established religions. Japanese religions are more concerned with practice, discipline and training than with theological pursuits; consequently, there is in most new religions a place for 'polishing the soul' and achieving spiritual excellence. Reminiscent of popular folk religions, there is an emphasis on exorcism, the performance of miracles, and the construction on earth of the 'Kingdom of God'.

Most of the new religions born in the 1970s developed following a boom in mysticism and magic. Examples are found in the Mahikari, Agon, and GLA groups, who challenged modern science and put high priority on spiritual rather than scientific ideas. Many new religions also propagandized as 'World Religion' and extended their active missionary work overseas.

What has enabled such spirituality to emerge in modern Japan? Antecedents in the Japanese tradition are the worship of household divinities, ancestors, and attempts to pacify wandering, angry spirits. The Mahikari religion, founded in 1959, similarly highlights occult spiritual phenomena, secret rituals, and miracles – particularly spiritual possession and psychic cures. The founder, Yoshikazu Okada (1901-1974) was an elite military officer. He had to leave due to a physical injury caused by an accident in 1941. He established a company in the struggles following World War II. In 1959 he decided to dedicate his life to the service of god, and began a second life. He reported being awakened at five o'clock one morning inspired by a revelation from a *Sū*-God, the 'Lord of Creation', the received instructions: 'Get up. Change your name to Kotam. Raise your hand. Trials and tribulations are coming!' Then, according to Okada's account, he received directive which revealed how radiation, the 'Divine Light of the Creator', could produce health, harmony, happiness, and freedom from emotional pain and financial hardship. This divine light was *Mahikari*, or the 'true light', which is supposed to be a purifying spiritual energy. He began his religion with 33 followers in downtown Tokyo, while studying hard about religion. Okada made a unique system out of his tenets and words; a discredited pseudo-scientific etymological art called 'Kotodama' (meaning 'word-spirit') especially attracted many followers. A businessman, one of Okada's followers, financially supported the religious activities.

The Mahikari worship hall, or '*dōjō*', is where spiritual energy has effect through the enactment of a purification ritual called *Tekazashi*. *Tekazashi* means to raise a hand to a passive recipient's forehead or affected body part. As a ritual it is restricted to those over ten years old who have already received the 'true light' ten times. There is no justification given for the use of the number ten. Mahikari worship services are held monthly throughout Japan. The *Tekazashi* ritual is mastered through intense practice eight hours a day for three days, an apparent allusion to the importance of the three-day period. Christian

traditions (the three days of Jesus' temptation, the three days between crucifixion and resurrection), although Mahikari is not directly related to Judeo-Christian or other Western religious practice.

After mastering *Tekazashi*, a believer receives a miracle-working amulet, which when held over the forehead of another person is supposed to transmit heavenly 'spirit rays'. Amulets are credited with innumerable miracle cures. Conducting and receiving the *Tekazashi* ritual is said to elevate the soul-spirit, and purify the mind and body.

Okada had previously directed one branch of the World Messianity. A central tenet of this was that sickness and misfortune were caused by accumulation on the soul's surface of a kind of pollution. Mahikari, with its belief in purification through *Tekazashi* and the dispersion of pollution through the miracle-working amulet, is the most recent among a cluster of new religions which derive from Ohmoto, a religious Order established in the late 19th century.

One religious leader left Ohmoto and established the World Messianity. A characteristic feature of the latter groups (there are sixteen major ones) is that they regard their religious leader as the Saviour. Mahikari is no exception. Mahikari's *Tekazashi* follows Jorei in World Messianity, which in turn succeeds *Miteshiro* in the Ohmoto.

The fundamental belief system of Mahikari consists of three main concepts: first, the earth comes from a single origin; second, the human race has a single origin; and third, all religions of the world have the same origin. Mahikari aims to foster proper attitudes in people and is dedicated to the creation of a marvellous spirit-centered civilization in the 'holy 21st century'. Most followers are more interested, however, in *Tekazashi* miracles than in tenets and rules. The instantaneous effects of the *Tekazashi* ritual are the main attraction to modern Japanese. Okada preached that the practice of purification, previously performed by holy people only, can now be done all.

The number of Mahikari followers dramatically increased after Okada's November 1968 successful demonstration of his purification method on a popular television program, 'Afternoon Show'. In the early 1970s, he continued to vigorously preach his message until Mahikari became a nationwide religious movement.

As the movement expanded, Okada's messianic consciousness grew deeper. Revelations came continuously at night, and he transcribed them in 'automatic writing' at incredible speed. The revelations collected and published in a 486-page volume, *Goseigenshu*, a volume which is now the holy scripture of Mahikari. Believers regard all Okada's words, including those which originally appeared in the Mahikari magazine, as part of his complete holy teachings.

The Mahikari organization consists of more than 150 branches in Japan and a number of missions in Europe, the Americas, North Africa, Asia, and Oceania. It is not possible to translate the teachings into English because of their narration

in *kotodama* (word-spirit), although some pamphlets have been distributed overseas. Mahikari was well accepted outside Japan by those who favoured mysterious spiritually-based religions rather than logical well established faiths, or by those attracted to flexible religious organizations.

Although the organization does not report exact membership numbers, 1985 estimates were that as many as 500,000 people had undergone *Tekazashi* training and received amulets. The reason totals cannot be established with certainty is that Mahikari exercises no binding force on believers, who come and go freely. Mahikari is a mid-sized sect among Japan's new religions.

The worship rituals of Mahikari mostly originate from Shintōism. However, as is the case with many other new religions, Mahikari borrows liberally from the world's best-known religious traditions, from Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Islam. Nevertheless, the greatest inspiration remains the local traditions of common people. The profound influence of folk religion on the lives of Mahikari believers has been documented by Winston Davis, who lived among followers in 1976. Before resorting to Mahikari and the *Tekazashi* ritual, many of the believers first consulted palm readers, spiritual mediums, diviners, and faith healers to seek help for personal problems.

A new phenomenon among new religions is the attraction of young Japanese people. One possible explanation is that today's youth have an easy life with little mental struggle, and so long for strong mental experiences, or mystical, mysterious events.

Pollution problems, the nuclear crisis and the state of the earth have been actively discussed throughout the world. Okada took all these subjects to loudly warn of impending crises. His warnings developed into criticism of contemporary civilization for its decadence at the end of the 20th century. He called the educated classes to listen and a number of educated people became followers of Mahikari.

The most crucial influences of folk religion on Mahikari can be seen in the notion of spirits, the fate of spirits, and the establishment of contact with and exorcism of spirits. These shamanistic features are integral to all Japanese folk religions. For example, one Mahikari purification rite, *Okiyome*, derives from the exorcistic rite of the Salvation cult, and is closely related to ancient shamanism.

The standard procedure for Mahikari believers in their monthly worship at the *dōjō* practice hall is as follows: upon arrival, believers sign an attendance register, write their wishes, offer a prayer to the *Sū*-God, bow and clap in sequence, greet fellow believers, and pair off to chant *Amatsu norigoto* the 'Prayer of Heaven', in classical Japanese language with Shintō diction. The prayer is chanted with the spirit of *Kotodama*.

Then, believers begin to purify each other with 'true light', taking turns to perform active-passive roles. In this, the palm of the hand is directed towards

a partner's forehead, behind which the primary soul is said to reside. Purification invariably begins with a ten-minute (or longer) body irradiation, with the miracle amulet placed at various vital points to heal all ailments, from arthritis to cancer.

While the primary soul is being cleansed, a passive participant may begin to sway from side to side. This defensive response to 'true light' is called 'spirit movement', and is considered positive proof of spirit possession. The passive recipient becomes like a shaman. Other responses include various movements, crying, and speech, all considered manifestations of the possessing spirits resisting the energy of the amulet.

The *Tekazashi* ritual illustrates the avid interest among Mahikari followers in the *Okiyome* exorcistic phase of purification. The magical nature of the religion stems from the fact that the use of the amulet seems to require neither belief nor faith on the part of a passive recipient.

Mahikari believers, in their evangelical appeal, encourage others to 'try and see'. This is not only a pragmatic approach, but also a manipulative technique applied by professional magicians. In the recruitment of new members, Mahikari promises quick, miraculous healing: personal recovery is the primary motivation for most first-time visitors to the *dōjō*. In most cases, spirit possession is seen amongst female visitors and believers, at perhaps because of a general suggestibility found among women, based on confidence in emotions rather than logic.

By reading a passive recipient's mind, the purifier/investigator is supposed to be able to identify and scold the evil spirit occupying the soul. The result is a silent confrontation between the purifier/investigator and the spirit. According to Okada's teachings, the best investigations are done silently, such speechless scoldings and investigations are again reminiscent of folk religion, and the shaman's *gantsū* clairvoyant eye. Eventually, the passive recipient of purification is awakened from their trance-like state, the possession spirits having been pacified and sent back to 'the other world'. Each worship session concludes with the command, '*Oshizumari*', 'Peace! Be still'. This is said to have the spiritual power to calm soothe, and silence. '*Oshizumari*' is always given after radiating 'true light' with the amulet to the forehead and after the prayer whether or not there has been 'spirit movement'.

There are several key differences between traditional shamanistic healing and the Mahikari purification ritual. Shamans evoke the appearance of both evil spirits and deities in their treatment of patients; Mahikari investigators inevitably determine that any deities are actually evil spirits masquerading as deities. And there are no specialists or holy practitioners in the Mahikari religion. All believers take turns to perform the roles of active investigator and passive medium.

In comparing all new religions with folk, shamanistic or primitive religions, another distinction can be made in the relationship between leader and followers.

Shamans always work and teach one-to-one, interacting with each person individually. But the founders of today's new religions usually interact with the whole group, in a one-to-many configuration, perhaps as a result of the mass media.

On the other hand, there are a number of similarities. Founders of new religions employ a syncretic method to develop their basic belief system, symbols, and organizational features. For example, the founders are charismatic leaders. They establish relations with guardian spirits, animal spirits, ancestor spirits, Buddha, and other gods and spirits which permeated the religious imaginations of shamanistic or folk religious belief. The founders also claim moral authority from an all-powerful god, a 'Lord of Creation'. The founders become spiritual leaders who preach their system of beliefs to a variety of different people all over the world, regardless of prior religious orientation, cultural factors, or nationality.

Considering only the basic 'magico-religious' phenomenon inherent in shamanism, it is possible to perceive each new religion as a new complex of religious phenomenon combining ancestor-worship and traditional shamanistic features with practical, 'here and now' benefits.

Okada's sudden death caused a big succession problem. The religious body of Mahikari broke into two orders. Neither has a charismatic leader, but both have taken over Mahikari's tenets and ceremonial rituals without change. In conclusion Mahikari offers an example of the significance of new religions in today's Japanese society.

The Diagnosis of Disease as a 'Shamanic Equation' among the Hmong of Laos and Thailand

By

Jacques Lemoine

As a healing technique, shamanism is better known through the curing effects it has on patients than the process of diagnosing disease. For instance, does a shaman identify a disease by gathering symptoms from what the sick person or the family tells him of the circumstances of its appearance, or by inspiration and clairvoyance while in trance? The exact relationship between the analysis of the patient's psychological structure by the shaman and his own findings while travelling on his path in the Beyond has seldom been studied. Finally, much has been written on the shaman's path and journey, and it is still not clear if the way is always the same, with a fixed repertoire, or an excursion at random in the Beyond dependent on the quality of his 'ecstasy'.

Some years ago I found among the southwestern part of the Miao peoples, namely the Hmong (Mong) of Indochina, a very logical system, providing all the elements of a structural analysis of the shaman's diagnosis. A Hmong shaman is a roving healer who goes from place to place wherever he is called by patients. He carries the very minimum shamanic equipment, veil, gong, finger ring-bell, rattle-sword, and divinatory blocks. At the sick person's house he finds a makeshift altar prepared where he can summon his spirit-troops and a flexible bench which will become his flying horse during trance. He always operates in a state of altered consciousness. But he uses no hallucinogenic drug only the sound of the gong hit by his assistant and, with higher frequencies, the ring-bell and rattle-sword he holds respectively in his left and right hands. This musical accompaniment may stop at some point of the performance, but his singing continues from beginning to end, as the main support to the trance and the action. Wearing a long black veil, the Hmong shaman is blind to this world as well as to the other, and he is not a seer. He is told the action taking place by a 'clear-sighted' spirit helper who, together with the spirit 'of the trance', always stays close. In psychiatric terms what happens could be classified as 'auditory hallucination'. His own mouth voices with high pitches and at a faster tempo his own injunctions and orders to his spirit helpers and the reports he hears from his 'clear-sighted' spirit. At some point of this dialogue

with the supernatural, he learns what information he needs and starts taking action to resolve his patient's psychosomatic condition.

The emphasis on diagnosis is laid by the Hmong themselves who divide shamanic activities into two distinctive parts performed at different times in a given order: (1) the diagnosis (*ua neng shai*), followed (or not) after a few weeks by (2) the 'curing' (*au neng khu*). The Hmong explanation is that a good diagnosis is followed by relief, and if relief is stable the same shaman is called again to perform curing. Curing actually is the reenactment of the shaman's performance when he successfully investigated and identified the cause of illness. But it differs greatly:

1. Although in both performances trance is mandatory (for the shaman it is the only way to join with his spirit helpers and operate in the unseen part of phenomenological reality), in the diagnosis performance all the shaman activities are conducted in isolation, attended only by his assistant, witnessed only by a general lack of interest from the people of the house. In the curing performance, on the contrary, the patient and his family are usually associated closely with the operations.

2. All the important actions which first led the shaman to success in taking care of the disease are now reenacted in front of household members. Exorcising wild or malevolent spirits is done by the shaman himself, holding a real sword and impersonating his fierce spirit helpers, or by occasional assistants recruited for the performance. Sacrifices of chicken, pigs, goats and dogs, are real, and real blood is stamped on the patient's back in order to show that the 'life' (or vital soul) taken from the victim can be used by the shaman as a spiritual material, for instance to buffer his patient's weakening soul.

3. In the 'curing' performance, the shaman not only makes a dramatic show of his diagnosis but he also settles accounts. Spirit money and the life of the victims are used to pay for his former arrangements with supernatural agencies, or to strengthen the souls of his patient, extend his lifespan, etc.¹ And for the first time he will also receive a fee for his healing, namely one foreleg of the sacrificed pig or goat.

To summarize, the main qualification of a Hmong shaman is his ability to produce a diagnosis congruent with a patient's illness. It is obvious that the diagnosis will vary from patient to patient and from shaman to shaman. How then does a successful shaman manage to penetrate the core of his patient's problems and find the cause of illness? The answer is manifold but can be stored in a single structure. This encompasses the shaman, his patient and the causes of illness.

Ego's Constellation

The complexity of his patient's ego is met by the complex task force of the shaman's spirit helpers. These are numerous and specialized. Their physical appearance commands their function: rapidly flying hawks are used to catch the 'jutting-out shadow' soul as it moves off the body; wild ducks plunge into marshes and ponds in order to rescue souls who have fallen into mud; wolves and dogs are set in pursuit of 'running bull' souls to bring them back; tigers will hunt tiger-witches, and elephants will use their strength to hold up a failing 'shadow' soul, etc. In other words, through trance the shaman multiplies his limited human capacity into a troop of spirit helpers. With them he can penetrate the unseen part of the sensible world. Although, being a man of this world himself, the shaman cannot see the unseen, his special 'clear-sighted' spirit who always stays close to him will report everything that happens. Constantly

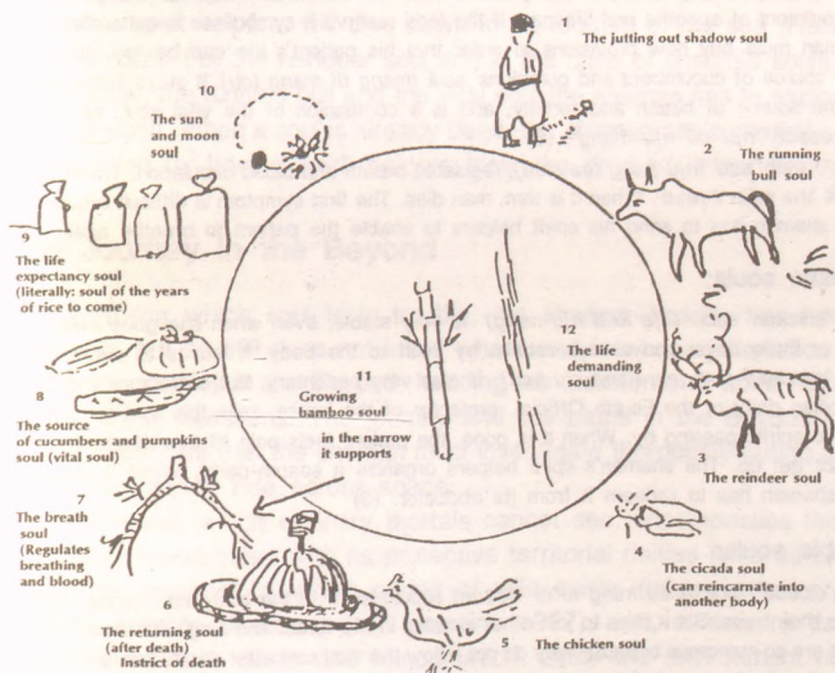


Figure 1 – The Hmong Shaman's Analysis of His Patient's Ego

informed of his spirit helpers' investigations, encounters or fights, he can mount his 'dragon-horse, vessel of wind and cloud' and lead his troops on their path in the Beyond. What are they looking for?

A Hmong patient's Ego, in a Hmong shaman's analysis, is divided into twelve different souls.² This division represents the various important aspects of human psychosomatic life. They can be further grouped into four categories, according to nature and behaviour.

1. Sedentary souls of the body:

- The 'life-demanding' soul (*long tzu long lao*), incorporating health and wealth in a joint capital of fortune. For the Hmong it is individual destiny. When exhausted, the shaman burns spirit money in order to rebuild this fortune.(12)³
- The 'bamboo' soul (*nju siong nju ndong*), grows in the marrow of the backbone. It holds our body upright. When worms have entered it, it may lean over or even lay down. The patient becomes weak. His 'breath' soul becomes loose, cut off from its support.(11)
- The 'sun and moon' soul (*ngao nu njau li*). This soul never leaves the body even after death. It stays on the forehead when a man is in good health but moves towards the back of the head when he is weak or ill. (10)
- The life-expectancy-soul ('of the years of rice to eat' *krau na khau siong*) is the embodiment of appetite and lifespan. If the food reserve it symbolises is exhausted, the shaman must buy new provisions in order that his patient's life can be fed. (9)
- The 'source of cucumbers and pumpkins' soul (*mang tli mang tou*). It stays in the veins as the source of health and fertility, and is a companion of the vital soul, as in the expression '*nju pli nju mang*'. (8)
- The 'breath' soul (*nju pang fua siue*), regulates breath and blood circulation. The Hmong call it 'the satin thread'. When it is torn, man dies. The first symptom is difficult breathing. The shaman has to send his spirit helpers to enable the patient to breathe again. (7)

2. Domestic souls:

- The 'chicken' soul (*nju kr'a nju nong*) is very stable, even when she goes away for two or three days, and always returns by itself to the body. It leaves at death. (5)
- The 'reindeer' soul (*niu tiang niu kau*) is also very sedentary. But sometimes the Door Guardian deity or the Fourth Official, protector of the house, sells this soul for money to wild spirits passing by. When it is gone, the patient feels pain all over his body, and cannot get up. The shaman's spirit helpers organize a search-party. When it is found the shaman has to redeem it from its abductor. (3)

3. Unstable souls:

- The 'cicada' soul (*nbau kang kr'or ndzue*) should stick to the body as cicadas usually do to their trees. But it likes to join other cicadas in the forest and sing with them. These souls are so numerous because they do not follow the vital soul after death, but reincarnate in another body provided that this person is of the same clan as the dead. They wander until they find the right body to dwell in. It also happens that a cicada soul belonging to a living person may go and settle in another person, especially in a young foetus. The first person loses his appetite and weakens rapidly. The shaman must interrupt the reincarnation process and bring it back to its first place. If he fails, the patient will die. If he succeeds, a miscarriage of the foetus where it had settled happens. (4)

- The 'running bull' soul (*niu tiang niu plu*), like a buffalo, is easily frightened, when it will run away on the path to death, taking along the 'shadow' soul. (2)
- The 'jutting out shadow' soul (*nju tlua nju hlau*) is instable by definition, moving around the body and disappearing at any moment, on the path to death and perdition. (1)
- The 'returning (13 days after death) vital soul (*nju pli si*) is the soul that reincarnates. If the shaman cannot bring it back, the patient will die. According to funeral rituals it will come back on the thirteenth day to visit the family and will be called again after a few months or years before being released, so becoming free to reincarnate. (6)

This analysis enables the Hmong shaman to carry out specific exploration and treatment. For sedentary souls, he will send special spirit helpers to inspect the patient and his close environment in his home and garden. The treatment will consist of exorcising evil spirits and dangerous miasmas. A woodpecker spirit helper, for instance, will remove worms from the bamboo soul and the vital soul of a sacrificed pig will be used to buttress it while it is still very weak. For the domestic souls, a general checking of domestic tutelary spirits, and of wild spirits in the close neighbourhood will help to trace where they may have fallen or been abducted. Treatment will include redeeming captured souls and helping fallen souls. When fallen into water, the shaman, together with otter spirit helpers, will dive down to the bottom of the sea (*Hatzu*)⁴ and find the souls. For the reindeer soul and in the case of unstable souls, namely the shadow, the running bull and the vital soul the shaman has to explore paths in the Beyond. When a soul is already dead, the shaman can sometimes operate resuscitation by having spirit helpers blow the drug of immortality on it.

The Journey in the Beyond

By identifying which soul is in trouble, the shaman already has half of his diagnosis, but he still does not know where and in whose jurisdiction he may find it. His journey in the Beyond, heading his task-force of spirit-helpers, will answer these questions. The journey and the paths in the Beyond comprise a fixed repertoire that the shaman must investigate thoroughly during a breath-taking emergency ride across space.

The Beyond, which ordinary mortals cannot see, encompasses the human community environment with its protective territorial deities (who can help and inform the shaman), a whole gamut of wild spirits (whose attacks provoke different specific diseases) (see Lemoine 1987), and, at a more dangerous level, the ways to death and reincarnation. Once the environment has been thoroughly explored and nothing special has been found, the shaman and his spirits rush to the pats of death and reincarnation. There, they meet divinities and find places where souls are taken into custody or may be hiding. The places are organized in a fixed progressive order, corresponding to increasingly serious and possibly terminal illnesses. The order starts with the (mental) grave where

a vital soul, dominated by a death wish, has taken refuge. Next to it, one encounters the Jade Emperor's office, in a cavern, which controls the book of all destinies and sends death warrants to those who have exhausted their lifespan. Further ahead is the house of Yang Seng Ts'eng and Siong Seng Ts'eng (the 'Pure who feeds life' and the 'Pure who sends life'), the couple who control birth and reincarnation. Then, continuing one reaches the Sour Blossom Field of Nzi Nyong, the Hmong god of death and epidemic. He has a corral where he keeps 'reindeer' and 'running bull' souls before he kills and eats them. Sometimes, such souls bypass Nzi Nyong's corral but are still grazing young tender grass on the 'scorched slope'. Further on, the shaman's party meets the Court of the Master of Inferior Heaven where reindeer and bull souls may be abducted. If they find such a soul belonging to their patient, they have to redeem it from the god or recapture it if the god does not agree to set it free. Finally, if it has already been eaten, the shaman can still send his dragon and eagle spirits to search for the bones thrown all around the place. If they can put them all back in the right order, they spray on them the magic drug, *kua mua tshua* and mend them together. The bones regain flesh.

The 'reindeer' and 'running bull' souls do not go any further. If the spirit helpers do not find them, it means that the deadly suffering is actually provoked by the vital soul continuing its journey to reincarnation. The search-party then crosses the mountains until they meet the huge Slicer in a narrow pass standing in the way. If a soul can show papers proving that its lifespan is exhausted it is allowed to cross. If it cannot, it stays until the shaman and his spirit helpers come to fetch it. If it has managed to cross the Slicer, the shaman and his spirits have to find a way either to wedge the blade with iron staffs or to climb over it with ladders. On the other side they can rush down to the Kong Tong Bridge which links this World to the land of the dead. No spirit helper can cross this bridge. Only a few shamans dare to undertake such a bold action alone after having exchanged their spirit horse for a 'horse of the dead'. On the other side of the bridge they find the missing vital soul by a sweet water pond, the abode of Ngau A, the mother of Mankind. If she has washed the soul, death is irrevocable, and the patient is already pronounced dead when the shaman returns. If it has not yet been washed, then the shaman negotiates the soul's safe return to this World and to life.

A characteristic of this Hmong journey to the beginning and end of all lives is that the shaman's metaphor explicitly deals with symbolic signals of Ego's wounds. Suffering and sickness are always the result of external aggression by supernatural agents of disease and decay and/or internal disintegration of a soul, a soul who 'does not like us anymore' and quits. In this metaphor, health and life are only guest souls in our body. Most of them will survive us. In order to save ourselves the Hmong shaman has to heal, clean and restore all defective parts, and to expel the image of our own death which we are consciously or

subconsciously nurturing. If his intervention comes late this image is also shared by surrounding members of the family, who unconsciously exert on the patient social pressure towards the fatal ending which they reasonably expect. In his quest to save a patient's life, the shaman has to remove this collective premonition. This is why there exists between Nzi Nyong's corral and the Kong Tong bridge to the land of the dead a short way (on the right) by the highest mountains which leads straight to the bridge. On this path, the search-party meets the 'Jar of tears and cries', those which the family will shed when death is pronounced. If somebody is about to die, the shaman finds out that this jar is full to the brim. His intervention is to try to empty the jar or to shut it with a big stone, thus preventing its overflowing. A similar action is undertaken when further on the search-party meets the 'Vale of Hemp'. Hemp is used to make the bandage in which the dead is tightly tied to prevent a swollen body exploding after a minimum of three days and nights funeral ceremonies. If they find that the hemp is high, they pull it up as much as they can. Again, they try to drive back an image of imminent death, before rushing to the Kong Tong bridge in the hope of catching the vital-soul in time.

The Journey is thus the operating theatre of the Hmong shaman. And it naturally includes, on the right-hand edge, a series of high cliffs-the natural habitat of all spirit helpers. The helper's live in grottoes, around the cavern of Shi Yi the first shaman. When a shaman dies his spirits return to that central shamanic agency, and part of his self follows becoming the head spirit of this troop. When the other part of his self has been reincarnated, the shamanic part will one day come and provoke trance and persistent disease until a new person accepts the 'vocation' and starts shamanizing. The master shaman who has diagnosed the 'vocation', will go and fetch the troop of spirits he has identified and install them on the new altar his disciple has erected for them.

The Shamanic Equation

The Hmong shaman's journey has a fixed repertoire. Sung by the shaman it supports and guides his trance, enabling him to carry out a systematic investigation of a patient. The different parameters can be ordered along two axes: the analysis of a patient's Ego in 12 different souls, and simultaneously the systematic checking of places, where soul one may be in trouble at the hands of supernatural agents. The Journey provides the answers in a progressive order. It is the symbolic tool of the shaman's thinking. At some point, he will find the inspiration he has been looking for, and try to solve a patient's problem from inside the metaphor. If he has been well inspired (or informed) by his spirit helpers, the diagnosis brought back will be congruent with his patient's illness, and the latter will start recovering. There are only

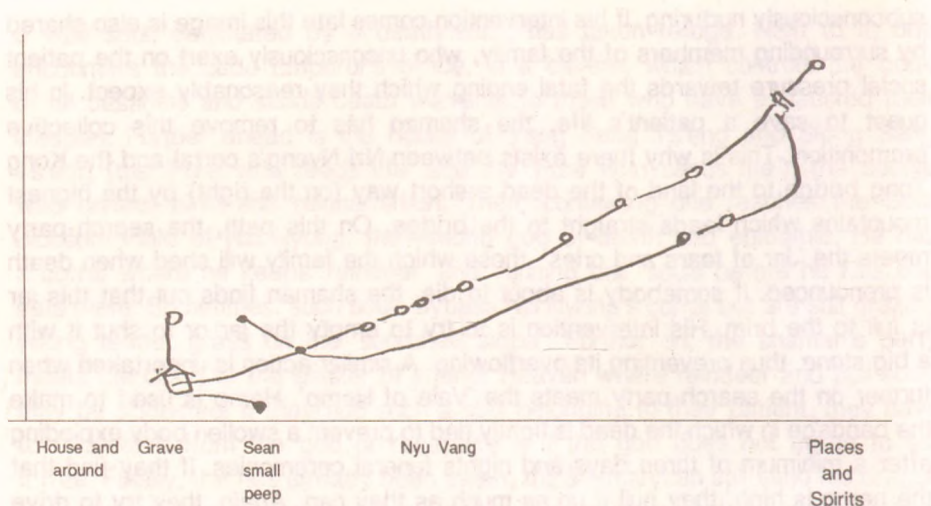


Figure 2 - Shamanistic Equation

two unknowns: the part of Ego to be restored, and the place and agency where it is to be rescued. I have therefore called the Hmong shaman's search a 'shamanic equation', and we can see (fig. 2) that the shaman's path is nothing more than the graphic representation in space of this equation. This is why it is so important for a Hmong shaman in trance to sing entirely and precisely the Journey as a guideline for his exploration of a patient in the unseen.

The Hmong perception of disease is well developed and receives an appropriate answer at each different level. For obvious accidental wounds, infections, and ordinary fevers, the treatment only uses medicinal plants, in the form of poultices or infusion. For wounds or fevers where some supernatural aggression is suspected, divination and magic are first applied, then, and if it becomes more serious a shamanic exploration is called for. In the search for a diagnosis, the Hmong shaman starts from diseases provoked by external aggressors, about which he has a rich tradition that enables him to identify the supernatural agent responsible for a patient's condition. This is the lower degree of the shamanic equation. But he soon meets with the underlying information system of the body which commands resistance, or yielding to illness, and finally death. This is why he needs a very complete analysis of a patient's ego into specific souls and why he checks all of them in due order. He will end up with a diagnosis which will appease or strike his patient at the right place, and this will reconstruct the self and start the process of restoring health.

Notes

1. I cannot expand here on the different shamanic treatments of disease. See my book *Entre la maladie et la mort: Le chamane Hmong sur les chemins de l'au-delà*. Bangkok 1987, Pandora.

2. These are not the souls known to ordinary Hmong people who only know the vital soul, *nju pli* but a technical representation of the person in twelve different aspects.
3. This number and the following refer to the numbers given to each soul in Fig. 1

4. He has a choice between the 'deep' and 'shallow' seas according to where he thinks the soul has fallen.

The Structure of Bru Shamanic Ceremonies

By

Gábor Vargyas

In the study of different aspects of shamanism, relatively little attention has been paid to the question of structure of shamanic ceremonies. By 'structure' I mean a sequence of constant constituent elements, a schema or pattern, that is always the same. In the scientific literature concerning Southeast-Asian 'Montagnards' and their neighbours, for instance, the most varied topics are discussed, such as the typology of religious specialists (Dournes 1973, Pottier 1973), the comparison of the semantic fields of the words shaman/hunter/possessed (Dournes 1977), the personality of the shaman and the spirit world in which he operates, just as the way he proceeds in his diagnose of illnesses (Lemoine 1987) and so on. But the question of structure is hardly ever touched upon. What one gets most of the time on the other hand, is a more or less detailed description of given particular ceremonies. Most outstanding examples of it are Condominas (1957 and 1965), Dournes (1972 and 1978), and Moréchand (1968), amongst others. To my knowledge, the only article dealing *directly* with the question of 'schéma' is that of Condominas (1973).

In the following pages I give a brief account of the structure of Bru shamanic ceremonies. My underlying assumption is that, just as are other elements of shamanism (world view, accessories, ways of initiation and so on), structures are also comparable and may thus contribute to a better understanding of different shamanic systems.

The Bru, one of 60 tribes inhabiting the Vietnamese Highlands, live around the 17th parallel, the former demilitarization zone in Central Vietnam, on both sides of the Vietnamese-Laotian border. They number approximatively 40,000 and their language belongs to the Mon-Khmer Katuic stock. The Bru economy is based on slash-and-burn dry-rice agriculture. Their religion consists basically of cult for the dead, placating of the numerous divinities of nature, and shamanic practices. My fieldwork lasted 18 months and was carried out on several occasions between 1985-1990. The following analysis is based on approximately 30 shamanic rituals witnessed during this time.

In many Bru villages one finds a religious specialist, *mô yao* (*mô* = master, specialist; *yao* = shamanic singing), invariably a man, whom I call a shaman. He is practically the only specialist in religious matters although sometimes we

also find *kuru* or *mô plong* who can be rendered as specialist at healing with magic spells. Though the function of both is healing, there is one fundamental difference; *mô plong* cure with magic spells, though they also use medical plants and practice as bone setter; shamans, however, are specialists in the spirit world whose main work consists of ceremonies during which they enter into contact with the representatives of the spirit world.

This is achieved through helping spirits, *prah*, who are deceased patrilineal ancestors and who 'come to live in their body', or 'are reborn in them' following a serious illness. These ancestors 'teach' their descendants and become their 'spiritual masters'. They live in the house of a shaman in nicely decorated bamboo altars and are invited through prayers and song to follow the shaman to the scene and offer help.

A shamanic ceremony (*yao*) may take place basically for two reasons.

1. In the case of a serious illness when the invited shaman first gives a divination (*seang*) to find out the reason and then proceeds immediately to curing. The cure may have different forms according to different illnesses, but will invariably have a part in which sacrificial food and drink are offered to the divinities – since divinities and their harmful interventions are the ultimate reason of any illness.

2. In the case of a *previous* serious illness when a vow was made to sacrifice an animal during a *shamanic ceremony* (as against a less spectacular, non-shamanic ceremony, *nto'ang*). In this case, after recovery, the sacrifice is offered. The shaman's task consists exclusively of offering food (that is, the sacrificed animal) and singing to the divinities. The structure of both of these séances is essentially the same. This is because disregarding divination and, eventually, special treatment for particular illnesses and 'calling back the soul' of the patient in the first case, both *yao* consist basically of offering food to the divinities. Thus, the first case is always longer and is made on the spot, while the second is shorter, and is given long after illness and recovery.

The structure of *yao* is as follows.

1. Every ceremony, be it shamanic or not, starts with a prayer (*saraiq*) before killing the sacrificial animal(s). This is invariably recited by the head of the family organizing the ritual. Its aim is to inform divinities about what will happen and why. The animal is then sacrificed and its meat cooked in a ritual way. All this is done long before the proper beginning of a ritual, which cannot start before sacrificial plates with cooked meat are placed under the house-altars.

2. Some time in the afternoon (theoretically every ritual is held after sunset) the shaman arrives. He is offered food: a whole chicken and a bottle of good quality liquor that he shares around.

3. He is ceremonially asked to participate. This is called *sêq rit mô* (lit. 'to ask the customs of the shaman'). Just as do different clans, shamans belonging

to them may also have slightly divergent customs and rites. Thus, before any ceremony, participants have to discuss such details and clarify all matters.

4. The assistant to the shaman, *liam* puts together the *klie*. *Liam* can be any man from the village knowledgeable enough in religious matters who feels like doing this job. He has to know how to repeat shamanic songs, to answer questions from the shaman and blow the reed pipe, *pī*, used to accompany singing. *Klie* is a China-bowl that contains the accessories of the shaman: husked rice, egg, and tigers' (eventually bears') teeth, amongst others. These are mainly used for divination.

Shortly before the ceremony, the head of the family recites another prayer. This is called *kuap*, informing the *yang*. (*Yang* is the generic term for divinities in Southeast-Asia.) Its aim is the same as that of *saraiq*.

5. Next comes the prayer connected with the ritual opening of the bottle or jar of alcohol. Alcohol is more than a simple drink, for it is sacred. Opening a bottle, or more especially a jar, has its own appropriate ritual and prayers. When these are given by the shaman, they have a special function to inform the shaman's helping spirit(s) about the ceremony and ask him to follow and give help. While praying, the shaman dips both ends of his fan in the alcohol and sprinkles it on the *klie* and his head.

6. The shaman and his assistant 'chew betel' (*cha panang labaq*). In former times, but no longer, this was a concomitant of social life for receiving and honouring guests. During ceremonies, the *yang* but also the shaman and his assistant, are offered betel symbolically. In reality, there is a small glass of alcohol placed in the China-bowl containing the accessories for betel-chewing. After having recited the proper prayers for recovery, good health, wealth and abundance, the shaman and his assistant drink the alcohol.

7. The prayers are followed almost always by *nto'ong savat*, telling magic spells over what will become 'holy water'. The shaman lits a candle and describes circles with it beneath a bronze pot containing water and an Acacia plant. Meanwhile, he gives secret magic words. Nobody is supposed to hear the words or their efficacy will be lost. He then puts the burning candle in his mouth three time and after each time 'spits' the magic spells into the water. Due to the combined effect of the candle and spells, the water becoomes a 'holy water' which will later be used to purify the room, altars and participants.

8. Now it is the turn of participants to 'chew betel'. In turn, everybody in a row according to social hierarchy and status is offered betel by the shaman. The aim and the ritual is similar to that described above.

9. The preliminary part of a ceremony is over. The shaman puts on his headdress. Objects hung on it symbolize the 'army' at his disposal, his assistants and protectors who will help him. He then takes a pinch of rice from the *klie* and gives a magic spell on it. This is essential. During the whole ceremony rice serves for divination as an implement used for keeping contact with the

supernatural world and for transmitting the answers to questions. As above, it is the magic force of the words that transforms ordinary rice into a sacred implement.

10. Then comes more divination. Constant divination is perhaps the most characteristic feature of Bru shamanism. There are many forms, some given by ordinary men, but most by the shaman alone. A few are simple 'pitch and toss' types, for instance counting rice taken from the China-bowl: if the result is even, the answer is positive, if uneven, negative. The most spectacular divination are near prestidigitation, for instance when the shaman balances different things on his sword – among other things a whole pig.

Generally, a ceremony starts with rice divination. If the answer is positive, the shaman rolls up a breadfruit leaf to form a funnel-like object, puts the grains of rice in it and sticks it into his head-dress. He repeats this four times. These objects, *ntroei*, become the abode of the helping spirit.

11. The shaman then throws rice upwards from his fan and starts singing to the reed-pipe accompaniment of his *liam*. The first, Laotian part, of the ceremony has started. One of the most interesting features of Bru shamanism is bilingualism during rituals – a fact I have to stress but on which I cannot here elaborate. It is enough to say that every shamanic ceremony, as a rule, starts and ends with singing in Phu Thai, a language closely related to Lao, the Phu Thai being an ethnic group living in the immediate neighbourhood of the Bru. The musical form of this *yao Liao* ('Laotian singing') differs greatly from Bru singing where there is no reed-pipe accompaniment either. In this part, which is a duplication of the Bru ritual, the shaman invites his *prah* through a poetic description to come into his body: "I throw glutinous rice so that it rises up and returns to touch you, oh! helping spirit / I invite you to return and come down / ...Seeing an ill person I was chosen as a messenger to pray (and invite) you with joined hands / ...Come down so that I can catch you on my head so that your breath will be in my head / ...Set yourself in my hands so that they become a fan vibrating in the air, oh! helping spirit / I beg you to come down quickly, just as the bushfire comes in the fifth month / ...Come down and possess my body and you, shaman, do not have a rest..."

12. At this moment the shaman is near to trance. The fan-beats are quick and accentuated and the fan touches the shaman's chest on each beat. Suddenly he starts heavily perspiring. He stops fanning, stretches his arms rigidly out in front and starts trembling. The *prah* has arrived! It lasts only a few seconds, and ends with a typical movement: the shaman bends deeply forward and places his hands on his thighs – in a position that curiously reminds one of a sitting Buddha.

13. A dialogue then takes place between shaman and assistant. This is a crucial moment: the helping spirit is asked or ordered to do the required job. From now onwards, the shaman will enact the role of his *prah*. His usual first

question is: "Why do you call me, what shall I do for you?". The answer, given by the *liam* on behalf of the shaman, is: "You have to do this and that...".

In the case of a serious illness, the shaman will continue this Laotian part and give a *seang*, divination. This consists of asking different divinities about the illness and transmitting their answers through a sequence of divinations. With this, *yao Liao*, 'Laotian singing' has finished. The shaman takes off his head-dress and rests.

14. The shaman restarts, now in Bru language. With his assistant, he sings in alternation, without accompaniment. The shaman sings the first musical phrase alone and half of this is repeated by the assistant. In the second half of the repetition, the shaman joins his assistant in unison.

Here, too, there is an introduction, 'information for all the divinities to gather' (*kuap mah ka yiang*) same thing in music as *kuap* and *saraiq* are in prayer.

15. The shaman puts on his head-dress and again invites his helping spirit. It is similar to what I have described, but with one characteristic difference: altered state of consciousness is induced not only by fanning, but by beating the ground continuously with his hands. This is done not only when inviting the *prah* but throughout the whole ceremony from here onwards.

16. The conversation between the helping spirit and assistant is repeated.

17. Two spectacular divinations follow. First the shaman thrusts his sword into a chicken destined to his *prah*. He balances it vertically with the chicken on top. If the sword stands up and does not fall, the answer is positive. Accepting the chicken means that the *prah* will be able to cure the ill person. Then, he offers 'payment' to the helping spirit. He inserts the point of his sword into the handle of a metal pot and balances the whole thing upright. Again, if the sword stands up, the *prah* has accepted the present.

18. From this moment the séance is repetitive. As we had seen, the main aim of every sacrifice and also the séance as a whole is to offer food and drink to divinities. As many as the number of divinities, so the number of repetitions. One after another, all in a row, divinities are invited to come down to accept offerings. The sequence is always the same: 1. rice is thrown onto the fan and counted; 2. rice is thrown up from the fan and singing starts with slow, then more and more quick fanning; 3. at a certain moment the fan is closed and the ground hit either with it or with the bare hands; 4. when trance is achieved, the spirit or divinity has arrived; 5. old type courting songs are sung in the divinity's honour; 6. he/she is offered betel, drink and food; 7. constant divination tells us if he/she is satisfied and if, in exchange, the ill person will recover; 8. The divinity is sent away. This whole part may last two-four hours and makes up the main bulk of the ceremony.

19. At the end of *yao Bru*, *yao Liao* re-starts. All the divinities have left, and then the *prah* is sent home. The same type of music is used again with reed-pipe accompaniment: "Oh Lord, you have eaten, you are well now.../ Give

us back the soul / Lord, you have eaten... make this ill man revive / Lord you have eaten, go back to the West where the birds sleep..." Here the tone changes: "If you come back and travel here on earth, you will be caught in my father's trap / If you come back and travel in the water here, you will be caught in my mother's fishing net.../ If you disobey, my mother will kick you in your back!" And the final sentences: "Let the Lord Elephant (the *prah*) go free, let the Lord Buffalo (the *prah*) be put aside, let the Lord Fan (the *prah*) be put aside." With this, the ceremony has come to its end. The house-lord informs the *yang* once again (*kuap nheq mo'am*). The assistant takes apart the China-bowl with the shaman's accessories and, finally, sacrificial food is consumed by all present.

Let us sum up:

1. Notwithstanding the different reasons, aims and conditions of their staging, Bru shamanic ceremonies have an identical pattern. Their schéma consists of constant constituent elements that follow each other in a fixed order. Although the structure as a whole is the result of my abstraction, the elements themselves are 'emic' categories: they are named and known to every participant.

2. The Bru *yao* is a highly structured ceremony. Its 'structural' essence seems to me to be a linear advancement up to a certain point (the invitation to the different divinities) where the séance becomes repetitive. The number of the repetitions is a function of that of the divinities to be invited. The different sections in this part are separated from each other by short breaks (giving the opportunity for the shaman to rest). This iterative part makes up the main bulk of the ceremony. When it is finished, the ceremony evolves again along a linear line. The whole séance is 'framed' by the invitation and sending home of the *prah* of the shaman.

3. If we were to represent this schéma (in time) graphically, the following diagram could be made: $\rightarrow \bigcirc \bigcirc \bigcirc \rightarrow$ where horizontal arrows stand for linear advancement while circular ones represent the repetitions. However, representing the same schéma spatially would result in an other diagram:

$\downarrow \uparrow \uparrow \uparrow \downarrow$ where arrows directed downwards and upwards mark the movements of the different divinities. The first one stands for the *prah* who 'comes down' to the body of the shaman and is sent then back ('up') to invite the divinities. The others correspond to the circular part of the first diagram and stand for the different divinities who 'come down' to consume the offerings and 'go back' to heaven. The last arrow represents the *prah* again. The ceremony ends when he is sent home ('up').

4. It is not my aim here to compare this structure to others known from South-East Asia. I rather confine myself to state how much Condominas' schéma of the Mnong *mhö'* is different from the Bru *yao* delineated by myself. Although

the latter ones do have, too, a tripartite composition (introduction – the rite – closing), the Bru *yao* seem to me to be much more carefully structured than the Mhong *mhô*'.

5. For the sake of simplicity, in my outline of the structure of Bru *yao* I disregarded the fact that most of them are performed in connection with various illnesses. As such, they may, and do include different other elements and parts whose aim is curing: at the beginning, divination in order to find out the reasons of the illness and the ways to 'correct' the fault that resulted in the sickness (i.e. identifying the kind of sacrifice to be made); during the ritual, different physical treatments of the body of the patient, such as massage, aspersion with lustral water, sucking out harmful objects projected in his/her body, exorcism of the malevolent divinity in his/her body etc.; and at the end, calling back his/her 'soul'. However, these elements are variable from one ceremony to the other in function of the particular illnesses and therefore cannot be put into a definite schéma. Nevertheless, in this context it is conspicuous how much Lot-Falck's outline of a 'typical' Siberian shamanic ceremony is in accordance with what I have delineated. According to her a *kamlanie* (= shamanic ceremony) has two greater parts each having several phases. The first part consists of convocation of the spirits, information, identification of the responsables for the sickness, a 'journey' by the shaman to the spirit world, and at the end, elimination of the spirit of the illness from the body of the patient (in exchange for sacrifices offered to him/her by the shaman). The second part is devoted to bringing or calling back the departed 'soul' of the patient, sometimes in connection with an other 'journey' (Lot-Falck 1973:8). The structure of the Bru *yao* coincides with this pattern in great lines. What I have outlined and analysed in detail, correspondes to Lot-Falck's first part: dealing with the spirit world. Her second part: dealing with the patient's soul is also present, however, in many Bru *yao*. It is the task of future research to see if there are some more similarities within these greater lines.

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NORTH AMERICA

The World Chapter

NORTH AMERICA

NORTH AMERICA

The Wintu Shaman

By

Otto J. von Sadovszky

The Wintu Indians occupy the Upper Sacramento Valley of California. They are closely related to Nomlaki and Patwin to the south in Lower Sacramento Valley (Lapena 1978:324).

With the Maiduans, Yokutsans, Miwokans and Costanoans (or Ohlones) they constitute the California Penutian family. Comparative evidence (Sadovszky 1989, 1993) indicates that they are related to the Uralians in Eurasia, and their closest relatives appear to be the Ob-Ugrians in Northwest Siberia.

The present article is purely descriptive in nature. No comparison is made with any outside group.

Among the Wintu there are two ways to acquire shamanistic power. One of them is the *communal earth lodge search* for the guardian spirit. The second one, the more individualistic *dreaming method*, is often motivated by deep sorrow. The communal search is the more ancient one.

The chief who owned the ceremonial earth lodge, after consulting with a well-established shaman, sent out an invitation to an initiation dance (*lahaconas*). This occurred either in the spring or in late fall.

All persons who wanted to acquire shamanistic powers presented themselves. Some candidates already had dreams or experiences, but this was not a prerequisite. The ages of the candidates varied from shortly past puberty to middle life (Du Bois 1935:88-89).

The ceremony began in the evening. The shamans and the candidates danced naked around the fire and sang to invoke the spirits. The dancing lasted all night. Those who failed to gain a supernatural experience dropped out after a few hours, and went to bathe. No disgrace was attached to them for failure.

The arrival of the spirit was announced by a whistling sound above the smoke hole in the ceremonial earth lodge (Sadovszky 1989:170), and entered the body of the candidate through his ears. The candidate behaved possessed. He had convulsions and after a short period of frenzied dancing fell unconscious. He was carried aside and the older shamans sung over him.

For five days he was instructed in spirit songs, food taboos and other shamanistic practices. Much time was given to learning songs (Sadovszky 1989:168). Every shaman was required to be a good singer and possessed

a number of songs with his various guardian spirits. Lay persons and shamans not in trance were not allowed to sing these songs. (This makes the work of an ethno-musicologist very difficult. It was nearly impossible for me to convince my consultants to sing during my field work. There are other reasons – e.g. economic – for the reluctance of the Indians to sing for a 'white man').

Fasting was a very important prerequisite and the candidates were not allowed to eat meat and salt.

On the last day of the ceremony, the shamans, new and old, went to the river to bathe and purify themselves. Then their bodies were painted with *red*, *white* and *black* streaks to represent intrusive disease objects. Then the shamans danced around the ceremonial earth lodge while people watched them. The shamans carried and waved feathered sticks, flowers, mountain-squirrel skins and other regalia. This lasted for one day. Thereafter the initiates were prepared for shamanistic practices (Du Bois 1935:88).

The chief function of the shaman is the healing of the sick. The healing ritual is as follows: At the house of the patient the interpreter-assistant of the shaman fills the tobacco pipe. The shaman smokes about two full pipes of the strong Indian tobacco, *not inhaling*, rather *swallowing* large puffs. Then he goes into trance. His spirits are summoned by the interpreter-assistant. Once the spirits have arrived the shaman examines the sick person. The diagnosis is based on three concepts of illnesses: disease-object intrusion (*yapaitu-dokos* 'dangerous obsidian or arrowpoint'), soul loss and spirit possession. The disease-objects can be extracted by sucking (*winine*) or by massage (*semiau*). The soul can be recaptured by (*el*)-*dilna* ('soul capture'). The evil spirit can be involved in the soul dance (*tes-conos*). The *tes-conos* required much power, but the 'soul capture' (*el-dilna*) is even more difficult. Sucking is considered the easiest cure (Du Bois 1935:104).

In this treatment a small cuplike basket with striped design (*balamsak*) is employed. After sucking the disease-object out, the pain is put in a bundle of grass and the bundle is buried in the ground with *angelica* root or sunflower root, both of which are destructive to poisons.

The message method is the least common among the Wintu. The 'soul capture' (*el-dilna*) treatment is employed by the shaman only when the patient is very ill or near death. It is possible that the person's soul (*tes*) has already left his or her body. The shaman must go in search of the soul. The audience sings, while the shaman dances. The he looks to the left and to the right and wanders about as if looking for something. If his spirit succeeds in locating the lost soul, he falls to the ground unconscious. He is carried into the lodge and laid down at the side of the patient. Then the shaman speaks and puts the soul back into the patient by placing his hand over the patient's heart. He recommends dietary restrictions for the patient.

In the 'soul dance' (*tes-conos*) the 'poison' is captured from the air; the patient is massaged, and the shaman is eating hot coals i.e. purifying his mouth by putting burning pitch sticks into his mouth and extinguishing them. When he grasps the 'poison' he quickly puts his hand into cold water because the poison removed from the patient is very hot.

The Wintu shaman has other important supernatural functions. He or she transmits cosmological speculations about the nature of the gods, specifically *Nom-les-towa* the chief god of the Wintu.

Among all the California Indians, the Wintu have the most elaborate concept of the almighty, heavenly god. This somewhat extraordinary feature of their religion, unique among the California Indians, was already noted by Stephen Powers (1877:240). Jeremiah Curtin's (1898) consultant *Norelputus* provided us with a sublime concept of *Nom-les-towa*. P. Wilhelm Schmidt in *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* (1926-1949:73-101) utilized this source for his argument concerning the antiquity of monotheism. Recent comparative evidence indicates that this belief among the Wintu is indeed very ancient. We should note that it was the shaman who preserved this belief system up to the present time.

Shamans prophesized before a major undertaking. They predicted the outcome of a hunt, the future of the world (Sadovszky 1989:1175), the possible recovery of a lost object, even the outcome of a lawsuit against the United States Government.

Shamans go into trance in order to end bad weather. "They know everything. Even if you try to hide something, if you killed someone, they can see it" (Du Bois 1938:107).

When the seance is in progress, the shamans and their audience feel the need of an interpreter. The shaman might use esoteric language, complex figures of speech, which are called *kenning*-s in western literature (Schlichter 1951:95; Kroeber 1923:390). Good interpreters were appreciated greatly.

The types of spirits which possess and direct shamans were (1) human souls, (2) the *genii loci*, mountain lakes (*sawal*), (3) animal spirits (especially birds: such as cranes, swallows, woodpeckers), the sucker fish and (4) nature spirits such as the spirit of the sun, moon, morning star, thunder and lightning.

Among the shamanistic regalia we find a great variety of objects. Whatever a shaman considered sacred to his profession it was appropriate and was full of *mana*. The feathers of large birds: those of the California condor (*wuk wuk*), eagles and cranes are especially powerful. Small baskets used in healing and often containing red-clay water, iron oxide (red ochre) which symbolized blood and life were important. Similar baskets with red-clay water were used in funeral services, where the deceased body was sprinkled with such water (Schlichter 1981:107).

Certain staffs, called 'soul-dance sticks' were used by the shaman when dancing in seances.

Generally only shamans could touch rattlesnakes and a necklace made from the rattle of a rattlesnake was regarded with much fear.

A 'pain' container was made of the hollow bones of a bird. Cocoon rattles were made from the cocoon of the California 'giant' moth filled with pebbles. This was, besides the foot-drum, the most common California musical instrument. It produced a fine high-pitched tone somewhat similar to the sound of the rattlesnake. In the dark ceremonial house it had a powerful psychological effect.

It should be noted that none of the Central Valley Indians knew the skin drum and the log drum was used in religious ceremonies. The lack of the skin drum and the lack of any mask in California is a cultural anomaly in North America. In my research I attempted to provide explanations of both problems.

None of the shamanistic regalia were brought into the living quarters. Sometimes small shelters were built at a considerable distance from human dwellings to contain the regalia, or they were kept in trees and rock crevices. From time to time the regalia were fed with acorn meal (the staple food of the California Indians) and tobacco smoke was blown at them. Red-clay water in a basket was put near them.

When a shaman died, a near relative having shamanistic interest inherited the regalia. If a suitable person could not be found, the regalia were thrown into a sacred place in a river or in a 'mountain lake' (*sawal*). They were never burned or buried.

As a conclusion we can state that supernatural experiences were common among the Wintu, since every individual was deeply religious.

The custom of praying and fasting at sacred places, and the contacts with spirits, were universal. What distinguished a shaman from a lay person was not the nature of his or her supernatural experience, but its strength (Du Bois 1935:118).

The Wintu shaman has also the responsibility for the transmission and moulding of speculative thought, as it is so evident in the person of *Norelputus*.

The reputation that the shamans knew everything that happened in the tribe had a deterring influence on the commission of crimes and checked the practices of witchcraft.

The shamans were called upon whenever the tribe embarked on serious undertakings and their advice was sought in all important events.

One of the proofs of the power of a Wintu shaman lies in the fact that while the institution of chieftainship greatly diminished after the European contact, shamanism is practised up to the present time.

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Kootenai Shamanism

By

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The People

The Kootenai (*sánka*¹ in their language) reside in the northeastern part of the Plateau culture area of North America. They are a small group, probably numbering no more than a thousand or so at any time between 1880 and 1950 (Chamberlain 1892, 1907, Coues 1897, Boas 1889, Powell 1891, Schaeffer 1937, Turney-High 1941, Levine – Lurie 1968). They were organized into band societies located along the Kootenay River and its environs from its source near Columbia Lakes in British Columbia to where it enters Kootenai Lake after passing through northwestern Montana and the northeastern corner of the panhandle of Idaho.

The contemporary Kootenai are found concentrated on small reserves in British Columbia, Canada, on a small reservation near Bonners Ferry, Idaho, USA, and on the Flathead Reservation in Montana, USA. Others are scattered throughout the western United States and Canada, either living on other reserves and reservations, or mixed in cities and towns with the dominant Euroamericans.

The Flathead Reservation Kootenai live in the northern part of the Reservation, where they maintain a spatial and cultural isolation from the much larger Salish community with whom they share the Reservation. They remain more traditional than the Salish and feel alienated from reservation political power which they see as controlled by the Salish (Brockmann 1968, Brunton 1987).

The Kootenai operate as a very private corporation with regard to all outsiders. This applies to Indian and non-Indian alike (Brunton 1987). An example of this is what Walker (1982) has called the "doctrine of secrecy". This doctrine is experienced by an outsider as a wall of silence, sidestepped questions, withheld information, and/or intentional misdirection. Anthropologists are especially frustrated by this barrier and information on religion is particularly susceptible.

Despite limitations resulting from this doctrine, the Kootenai have provided outsiders with considerable information about their culture. This paper is based on my fieldwork conducted among the descendants of the Libby-Jennings band of Upper Kootenai, who now reside principally in Elmo, Montana along the west shore of Flathead Lake on the Flathead Indian Reservation (Brunton 1974). It was conducted in the late 1960s, early 1970s and again in the late 1980s.

Claude Schaeffer, whose extensive fieldnotes and writing I drew from selectively, did his work in the mid-1930s. Other ethnographic work, spanning the early 1890s through the 1970s, was also consulted.

Belief

The religion of the Kootenai is an animistic one. Its cosmology is spiritual, involving belief in beings (*nupíkʷa*) who represent all aspects of nature (including man-made things). The majority of these spirits, who preceded humans into the world, are good. They represent no threat and are available as lifelong helpers through the vision quest. The exceptions to this are the Owl and Human Skeleton spirits, who are both bearers of bad tidings involving someone close to the person being contacted. For example, they report serious injuries, illnesses and deaths of relatives and friends. This contact usually occurs when the person is alone in the forest. Human Skeleton is said to have a 'hollow laugh' that is frightening. Owl is said to snatch children and keep them imprisoned in her nest. A child is admonished to behave, or 'old lady owl will get you'. Owls also played an important part in an aboriginal ceremony (Schaeffer 1937, Brunton 1970). One spirit, the 'Great Spirit' (*kwítka nupíkʷa*), is an otiose being who determines the ultimate course of events in the universe. This being operates indirectly through the spirits, granting them the power to effect the lives of humans. Humans interact with the spirits and they, in turn, with the Great Spirit.

Vision Quest

The vision quest is of major significance and is undertaken while a person is 'ritually pure' (*súkʷsik*) and 'ripe' (*kutákti*). This condition is thought to be characteristic of children just before they become adults and for those who have a quality that identifies them to the spirits as 'worthy' (Brunton 1974:81, 1985). Such a person may be 'called' by a spirit to go on a quest when they hear a voice while alone that instructs them to do so. A shaman or an older relative is then informed of this experience and assumes responsibility for sending the person out on their vision quest (Baker 1955:13). Another way of commencing a vision quest is described as being "sent out with a whipping" (Curtis 1911:129, Schaeffer 1937, Turney-High 1941:170, Brunton 1970). In this case a young person has exasperated his/her elders and is sent out to get some proper direction in life. Power acquired in this manner is said to not be as great as that acquired in the other type of quest, but comes easily (Schaeffer 1937).

The quest is undertaken at night. The spirits desire things to be as natural as possible, so the candidate wears no clothing or other artifacts of human

manufacture. The person is purified and made attractive to the spirits by being 'smudged' in sacred juniper smoke. An item from a relative's medicine bundle may be taken along in order to attract a particular spirit. Activities engaged in during the quest may also be used to attract a certain kind of power (Brunton 1974: 81-84). The seeker goes into nature alone without food or water. There are places that are known to be good for vision questing (Schaeffer 1937). The duration of the quest is usually overnight, but longer stays also occur.

A successful visionary is approached by a *nupíkʷa* either as a voice, or 'visually'. If it is 'visual', it is not always described as actual vision. Rather, it is described as a 'deep' experience that is similar to falling asleep or as being 'dazed' and as 'not really seeing with the eyes'. However, when describing the experience, visual metaphor is usually employed (Schaeffer 1937, Brunton 1970).

The spirit may come singing a song. It usually first appears in human form and later reverts to its 'nature' form (Curtis 1911:128-129). The encounter is usually frightening, but the seeker is stopped from fleeing by the spirit's entrancing gaze, which transfixes him/her and appears as 'sparks' or 'rays' coming from the eyes (Schaeffer 1937, Brunton 1974:85-86). While in contact with the visionary, the spirit instructs the person about the power being granted, gives rules to be followed for life and instructions for making a medicine bundle, and teaches a song and a dance. The number of these gifts (sometimes referred to as 'marks') symbolize the amount of power granted by the spirit. The highest number of gifts is seven (Schaeffer 1937).

The *nupíkʷa* warns the recipient about the proper use of the newly acquired power. The person is told not to boast, use it selfishly, use it too often, or to use it to harm others. The power is put into the person in a particular place. This is the "spirit place" (Schaeffer 1937, Brunton 1974:90). Those who receive power from a spirit are said to have been 'pitied' by the *nupíkʷa* (Schaeffer 1937).

Following a successful quest, the seeker returns to the village. The person's sponsor knows whether the quest was successful, either by having observed it clairvoyantly, or by looking into the person's eyes where the spirit can be seen by one with power (Schaeffer 1937). Knowledge of a person's success, the identity of the spirit helper, and the nature and amount of power granted also can be inferred from the person's behaviour. However, all details of the quest are private and are never discussed (Brunton 1970).

Power is a part of a person for life and a successful candidate is referred to as *knupqaqáqa*, and is considered a transformed person. The rules given by the spirit must be followed carefully, or the power will wane (Brunton 1974:90, Schaeffer 1937).

If seekers are unsuccessful on their first attempt, they return home, prepare, and go out again. A shaman or other person can aid them in this. They may

even do spiritual work for the unsuccessful person in one or more ceremonial settings in order to help ensure future success. For example, the sweatlodge is used for this purpose (Brunton 1974:87).

Power also can come to adults spontaneously when they hear a spirit singing. The spirit then speaks to them and grants them a specific power. Dreams are regarded as prophetic and as a source of 'dream power' for individuals (Schaeffer 1937). These powers are different from those received on a quest. They do not involve the complete relationship such as the spirit placing its essence in the person (Schaeffer 1937, Brunton 1974:84).

Once a person has a successful vision, more quests can be taken throughout life. This is particularly true for shamans, who quest regularly. Shamans also are likely to have more than one spirit helping them (Brunton 1985).

Death results in releasing the *nupíkʷa* from its bodily connection with its human counterpart. As it is released it can be acquired by a shaman and added to his or her powers. The individual's spiritual counterpart, the soul, also leaves the body. It lingers nearby and will be reborn in a child to live another lifespan among the Kootenai (Brunton 1974). Thus the cycle is complete, and beings again.

Ceremony

Ceremonies afford shamans opportunities to work with the spirits and their power for the welfare of individuals and the community. Prior to the middle of this century, the key ceremonies of the Kootenai were the Sweatlodge, the *Blanket Dance* (also known as 'Conjuring' and as 'Putting-up-the-Blanket'), the Sun Dance, the Bluejay Dance, and the Jump Dance. In addition, there were ceremonies honouring the first of each seasonal food (First Fruits Ceremonies), game-calling ceremonies and a ceremony for clearing bears from berrying grounds. There were also private and public rituals conducted for spiritual healing and for divination.

The Sun Dance and Blanke Dance are no longer held. A ceremony called the 'Medicine Doings', or 'MDs' has replaced the Blanket Dance in function. The various game-calling ceremonies seem not to be held anymore either. The others remain important contemporary ceremonies.

For the Blanket Dance, shamans (*wámu*) were called by someone in need. Healing in a particularly difficult case, finding lost items of importance to someone, and locating enemies or game were occasions for the ceremony. A gambling venture against neighbouring peoples also was an occasion for a Blanket ceremony. After all those taking part entered the lodge (ideally a *tipi*), the fire was extinguished and a juniper smudge was made that filled the darkened lodge. At the beginning of the ceremony one of the shamans

performed a feat of power similar to that of *yuwipi* men among the Siouans of the Great Plains by being rolled up and bound in a robe and placed behind a 'blanket' screen that was hung across the back of the lodge. Like the Siouan case, he was freed from his bonds without human aid (Schaeffer 1937). It was this person who was carried about by the Owl spirits during the course of the ceremony on a clairvoyant journey (Schaeffer 1937, Brunton 1974).

Spirit songs were sung to summon the *nupíkʔa*. When they entered the area behind the blanket, it shook and the noise of deer dew claws affixed to it told those in the lodge that a spirit had entered. While a spirit was in the lodge, it was offered a lit pipe containing tobacco, and each participant then asked a question. The spirits were said to 'scream' their answers in an archaic form of Kootenai and these were translated by the shamans who remained in front of the blanket with the other participants. After spirits no longer entered the lodge, all participants discussed the information so as to reach a consensus of understanding. The efficacy of the spirits' teaching lay in following their rules and other instructions to the letter. Otherwise the power was said to 'backfire'.

The Kootenai Sun Dance was similar in some ways to those of neighbouring Plains peoples like the Blackfoot. It was sponsored by a man who had been approached by the Sun Dance Spirit and told to lead this ceremony. Leadership was very demanding, calling for following strict rules for an extended period of time, often amounting to years. Not many men had the discipline to do this, and contemporary Kootenai explain the fact that no Sun Dances have been held for half a century by the absence of anyone willing and worthy to lead such a solemn ceremony (Brunton 1987).

The sweatlodge ceremony normally involves both men and women. Participants go to the location of one of the low-domed structures in the evening. After placing red-hot stones in a hole in the floor to the right of the door (which faces east), they enter the lodge and an attendant closes the door. Water is poured on the rocks to the accompaniment of a spirit song. During an inning in the lodge, a total of three or seven songs are sung. An equal number of measures of water are poured on the hot rocks. The songs thus pace the rise and fall of heat and provide the ceremony with its tempo. While the heat and songs fill the lodge, the participants concentrate on their purpose for petitioning the Sweatlodge Spirit for help. They peak their awareness for any messages from this or any other spirit. The messages may be visual, auditory, or intuitive. After the proper number of songs and water, the person in charge of the sweat calls to the doorkeeper, who lifts the door covering. The participants exit the lodge and take a cold plunge in a lake or stream located nearby. After discussing their experiences for a time, they reenter the lodge and conduct another inning. This is done a total of three or seven times and for a total of three or seven days consecutively. After each completed session, participants discuss their experiences related to group concerns so all understand and can follow any

rules and other procedures given by the spirits. Private information is kept secret (Brunton 1974:103-108).

The Medicine Doings seem to have replaced the Blanket Dance. This ceremony begins in the evening and is a 'spirit calling' ceremony in that it involves efforts on the part of shamans to call spirits to the location of the Medicine Doings so that information may be acquired. To this end, spirit songs are sung to call the spirits into the house the people are using for the ceremony. The specific purpose of this ceremony, like that of the others, is healing and gathering information critical to individual or group pursuit (Brunton 1988).

The Bluejay Dance is a midwinter ceremony conducted in the evening. In prereservation days they were held at first one village and then another throughout the winter. Today they are held simultaneously at various locations, thus promoting competition between hosting shamans. Shamans with power from Bluejay lead the ceremony, which includes power demonstrations such as embracing red-hot wood stoves, healing rituals, feasting, and dancing and the singing of power songs. A centerpiece of this ceremony is the transformation of the Bluejay shamans into their power animal. According to my informant, in the 'olden days' these shamans perched in the rafters and entered and left the lodge through the smokehole. Their footprints in the snow on the roof were said to vanish at the roof's edge (Brunton 1970).

The Jump Dance is also a midwinter observance; now a New Year's ceremony. It involves people coming together in the evening for the first three days of the new year to dance, sing, and pray to the spirits. The prayers are ones of hope for the new year at hand; for good fortune, good health, and a general well-being for individuals and the community. Individuals sing their own songs or those which belonged to others now dead. The songs are recognized and are joined by others who know them. Shamans will work with power if spirits communicate with them during the ceremony. Naming occurs during this ceremony, which is distinguished by being the only one to which outsiders are welcome. The ceremony, like the Bluejay Dance, continues throughout the night. It resumes each evening after a day of resting (Brunton 1988).

Healing ritual is conducted on an as-needed basis in the home of the person who needs help. A shaman is summoned and, if he or she decides to take the case, comes to the designated house in the evening. After summoning power through song and rattling, the shaman diagnoses the nature and location of the illness. The diagnosis is usually spirit intrusion, which has been sent by a person angry at or jealous of the victim. It is then sucked out and 'killed' in juniper smoke. The tangible aspect of this spiritual intrusive is shown to the victim and others witnessing the healing. It can be sent back to the person who sent it, but this is dangerous and it is considered safer and more ethical to simply kill it so as to neutralize its potency (Brunton 1970, 1988).

Summary and Interpretation

From the foregoing account, it can be seen that Kootenai spiritualism has as its common motif, work with spirits in the Middleworld.² No data suggest that the Kootenai work in the Upperworld or Lowerworld described by Eliade (1964). Their shamanic work is thus focused on the cosmos familiar to humans through 'five-sense awareness'. For example, when they vision quest the Kootenai go to a special place in the familiar world to seek spiritual contact. These special places are 'ordinary' (see Castaneda 1968) in that they are perceived as places in nature. However, they are removed from the structure of the cultural world; the world of the familiar and 'tame'. They are immersed in the world of the 'wild'; without familiar structure. Lack of clothing and fasting add to this. They are thus pushed toward a liminal condition. When they experience their special Middleworld place from this perspective and in the dark and/or in the appropriate state of consciousness (typical of a visionary) they are able to notice the presence of the spirits, which makes the event exceptional and 'nonordinary' (see Castaneda 1968). The visionary has not transcended one world to another; he or she has shifted consciousness so as to notice the approach of a spirit who has come to meet him or her. In Harner's (1980) terms, the person has left the 'ordinary state of consciousness' (the OSC) and has entered the 'shamanic state of consciousness' (the SSC). If successful, the Kootenai visionary has 'called' a *nupíkʷa*.

Ceremonies involve the same basic approach. In each the spirits are 'called' to join the Kootenai in the Middleworld to help resolve some problem or provide some information. Songs are used to accomplish this calling. The nature of these songs is conducive to a shift in consciousness that allows the participants (like visionaries) to become aware of the presence of the spirits and their messages. The rattling, juniper smoke, heat, darkness, and vigorous dancing (in various combinations) that pervade these ceremonies are powerful agents for shifting consciousness.

Even spontaneous encounters with spirits involve their meeting humans in the forest away from the village. The meeting is thus in the Middleworld and the person involved is somewhat like a vision-seeker and is therefore somewhat liminal in state of mind. He or she is open to contact with spirits in the Middleworld. Spirits commonly announce various things to people under these conditions or provide them with power. For example, we have seen Owl and Human Skeleton make contact this way.

Interestingly, the *nupíkʷa* are said to live in the Middleworld in special places in nature, and not in some other, faraway, otherworldly place (Brunton 1987). Only *kwitka nupíkʷa* is not of this world.

The spirits, though they share the Middleworld with the Kootenai people, are said to be out of time-sync with it. They are in the nonordinary phase of the Middleworld. Knowledge acquired from the spirits is thought to apply to the future of the ordinary phase of the Middleworld. Thus, divination takes on a special meaning to the Kootenai in that it often forecasts their future (Brunton 1987).

When Kootenai shamans do 'journey' (see Eliade 1964, Harner 1980), they do so in the Middleworld in a clairvoyant journey. They are either carried about by the Owl Spirits and see things all over the area or they journey to locate any number of things such as lost property or people, game animals, or enemies. As was seen above, a powerful shaman might even monitor a client clairvoyantly who is out vision questing in order to observe his or her encounter.

Encounters with spirits, planned or spontaneous, are usually divinatory in that persons acquire knowledge that the spirits alone possess. Specific information regarding what should be done to defeat enemies, win gambling contests, and effect healing are typical. In addition to divination in the sense of asking spirits questions, there were specific divinatory rituals that were designed to yield specific information. For example, a map of the region was drawn on the earthen floor of a lodge. A question such as where game animals or enemies were located, or where a lost person could be found was asked. After covering and singing over the map, the cover was removed and the map revealed the answer through the presence of visible 'tracks' in the fresh earth that ended at the location of objects of concern (Schaeffer 1937).

Darkness is sought in most Kootenai ritual. Rattling and singing is also part of the setting for spiritual encounters. This is, as mentioned above, conducive to the proper state of consciousness for spiritual work.

Kootenai ritual is often focused on the individual, even in group settings. The whole group may have a stake in the outcome of some event that becomes the focus of shamanic ritual, but individuals interests are always served also. The privacy and secrecy of personal knowledge acquired from spirits also shows this individual orientation.

In encounters with the *nupíkʷa* the shamans are seen as 'experts'. They have power from the same spirits as do ordinary people, but they have been singled out by the spirits as having the power to conduct ritual and to heal, etc..

'Obscure' and 'symbolic' are accurate ways of describing spirit messages. Informants have admitted that some messages are so obscure that they are never understood, even after the shamans have worked with them with great effort (Brunton 1987). Even less obscure messages obtained in the sweatlodge

and in other settings have to be discussed in order to obtain complete understanding of content and detail (Brunton 1970).

Spirits seem to control much of the spirit/human interaction. They single out people for vision quests, offer power of their choosing to them, are the unbidden bearers of bad news, announce to shamans and others that they should lead particular ceremonies such as the Sun Dance, and provide information spontaneously in a variety of settings. However, humans are not without choice in all encounters, even to spurning the power offered by a spirit to a visionary.

'What goes around, comes around' is an ethic that underwrites Kootenai spiritualism. We have seen that a person has to follow precisely the personal rules given by spirits. These rules always include proscriptions against revealing a person's source of power (the identity of the *nupíkʔa*), against selfish use, too frequent or casual use, and against harmful use. They include specific rules regarding personal conduct; even appropriate and inappropriate foods. If these rules are violated, power wanes or even leaves, with the consequence of death to the human involved in the latter case. Since life is not without mistakes and memories are imperfect as well, power gradually diminishes over a person's lifetime, ultimately leaving the person altogether without protection. At the end of a person's life, the *nupíkʔa* informs him of her of impending death so that preparations can be made. Most death and serious illness is understood as the result of a power differential, even attack by sorcery, since power loss leaves a person unprotected and vulnerable (Brunton 1970, Schaeffer 1937, Turnay-High 1941).

Shamans among the Kootenai are similar to those in other North American groups in that they serve as community resources for solving ordinary problems through the assistance of spirits. They are called by community members in times of need to add their greater level of expertise to that of the ordinary person. They lead or even 'host' important ceremonial activity, perform feats of power, and they heal through the time-honored technique of extraction of spiritual intrusives.

Postscript

The purpose of this paper has been to describe Kootenai spiritualism in enough detail to provide students of shamanism with a view of its expression in this North American culture, thus reflecting the 'regional shamanism' theme of the First International Conference on Shamanism. We have seen that Kootenai spiritualism is consistent with a shamanic/animistic philosophy and practice. Except for their lack of Upperworld and Lowerworld journeys, their system seems thoroughly shamanic. Kootenai *wámu* journey in the Middleworld and otherwise engage the SSC, work with spirit helpers with whom they have a

life-long working relationship, exhibit mastery over fire and magical flight, and experience ecstasy in the course of their healing and divinatory work. Their authority is given directly by the spirits with whom they work in darkness so as to be able to 'see'. They make extensive use of 'sonic driving' primarily supplied by rattles and song to alter their consciousness in order to engage the spiritual realm and its powerful inhabitants. Finally, today, as in the past, Kootenai shamans function as community leaders. They exhibit personality characteristics such as intelligence and excellent memory that make them able leaders and repositories of community knowledge. They are at the forefront of defending the integrity of their culture in the face of continuing acculturative pressure by the dominant White community of the United States and Canada.

Notes

1. The orthography used is the phonemic one of Paul L. Garvin (1948). All such

transcriptions will be italicized. Garvin's orthography is as follows:

	Consonants					Vowels		
Stops	p	t	k	q	ʔ	High	i	u
Spirants		s	x		h	Mid	e	o
Affricates		c				Low	a	a'
Laterals vl		l						
Laterals vd								
Nasals	m	n						
Semivowels	w		y					

2. Here I am using the term 'Middleworld' to designate one of the three 'worlds' encountered by shamans and identified

by Eliade (1964) and Harner (1980). The other two worlds are the Upperworld and the Lowerworld.

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A Question about the 'Chugach Shaman' (Alaska)

By

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The Psycho-physical Approach to Ecstasy

The term 'psycho-physical' in this paper indicates an approach that predicates ecstatic experiences upon varying states of psycho-physical abnormality. Regardless of the content of the ecstasy, its psycho-physical form is approached as if it were abnormal, indeed as if psycho-physical abnormality were necessary for the ecstatic experience.

Four examples of the psycho-physical approach will be summarized in the section below. The first two examples are definitions of ecstasy from comparative religion, whose long-standing in the field renders them especially indicative of this approach: (a) Evelyn Underhill and (b) W. R. Inge. Each was originally published early this century, and each has remained current as cited in recent scholarship. The further two examples reflect this approach in studies of far northern shamanism.

Psycho-physical Definitions

(a) An example of the psycho-physical definition derives from Evelyn Underhill, originally published in 1911. The twelfth revised edition of her work in 1930, was reprinted numerous times until 1967; and her work has recently been cited in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* in the select bibliographies for no less than three entries: 'Ecstasy', 'Mysticism', and 'Mystical Union' (Eliade 1989, 5:17; 1987, 10:261, 245). Underhill has thus remained current throughout the course of this century.

She defines ecstasy as "that state with well marked physical and psychical accompaniments, in which the contemplative loses all consciousness of the phenomenal world" (Underhill 1967:170; cf. 358). The definition is narrower than the other examples within this paper as they do not limit the term 'ecstasy' to that state or yet to a 'contemplative' (one who meditates quietly). Instead, they allow wider parameters, so that 'ecstasy' will include various conscious

and semi-conscious states and various social structures (as will become clear in each example, below). For Underhill, however, 'ecstasy' would encompass none those other states.

Within the narrower parameters, she specifies three 'aspects' of the ecstatic experience: the mystical, the psychological, and the physical (*ibid.*, 359). The first two comprise the content of the experience (*ibid.*, 360-362). The content is 'sane' and 'healthy' when the psychological aspect reaches a 'complete unification of consciousness', and the mystical aspect attains to "oneness with the Absolute", an "immediate enjoyment of the Divine Vision" (*ibid.*, 170, 258, 367). 'Sane ecstasy' is thus unitive: as the ecstatic is united psychologically himself; and furthermore is united mystically with the singular object of his experience. In contrast, pathological experiences lack such unitive characteristics, resulting is psychopathological chaos instead (*ibid.*, 362).

Varying from healthy to psychopathological in their content, the ecstatic experiences remain the same in their physical aspect, itself the trance, and itself clearly distinguished from the other aspects. It is not causal; the psychological aspect is causal (*ibid.*, 360). The trance is a necessary condition for and a consequence of ecstasy (*ibid.*, 360-361; also see my 'Epilogue', below).

Her clear distinction between 'trance' and 'ecstasy' can be valuable, and therefore merits attention, as it allows equally clear conceptual analyses. It can allow the 'trance' to be involved as a characteristic of 'ecstasy', either as a necessary effect (as in Underhill's definition) or as itself the cause. Alternatively, the distinction allows a separation within wider parameters for instances of ecstasy without trance. Some of these instances would be termed 'divine union' instead of 'ecstasy' within the narrow definition articulated by Underhill (1967: 170), although she herself admits a certain point of non-definitiveness in the very 'orison of union' (*ibid.*, 367). Yet other instances could be termed participations.¹

Trance, described by Underhill (1967:360) as 'an abnormal bodily state', is an abnormal psycho-physical state, as the subjects' usual perceptions as well as motor activities are affected, even to an extreme "period of complete unconsciousness which may pass into a death-like catalepsy" (*ibid.*). Indeed, the term 'psycho-physical abnormality' is employed by Underhill herself (*ibid.*). Thus psycho-physical abnormality, although not the causal factor, is posited as a constant characteristic in her definition of ecstasy.

(b) Another example of this type of definition derives from W. R. Inge, published in 1912, subsequent to his Bampton Lectures published in 1899. Inge has remained current in the study of religion as his definition (quoted below)

has also cited with Underhill in the select bibliography for 'Ecstasy' in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (Eliade 1989, 5:17).

"Ecstasy' (*ekstasis*) may be defined as an abnormal state of consciousness, in which the reaction of the mind to external stimuli is either inhibited or altered in character. In its more restricted sense, as used in mystical theology, it is almost equivalent to 'trance'. During ecstasy, the visionary is impervious to messages from without, and can even feel no pain. In the wider sense, all self-induced excitement may be called a kind of ecstasy" (Inge 1912:157).

Psycho-physical abnormality is thus a definitive characteristic, that can range from any self-induced excitement to a cataleptic-like trance.

Another primary characteristic is an 'abnormal state of consciousness' from which, however, he later extricates the unitive ecstasy evinced by Plotinus, the ecstatic *par excellence* according to Inge (1918:143): "the vision of Plotinus is unusual but not abnormal". In this sense, Inge resembles Underhill as she differentiated the content of the 'sane contemplatives' ecstasy from psychopathological states; indeed, Inge may have heeded a polite criticism she directed towards an element in his Bampton Lectures in the preface to her first edition (see Underhill 1967:xiii).

While extricating the psychological aspect in Plotinus's ecstasy, Inge remains rather silent about the physical aspect, yet reflects an implicit viewpoint that becomes apparent when he contrasts the type of unitive ecstasy evinced by Plotinus from another sort. This dichotomy is posited by Inge himself (1918:143). The latter sort conform to his earlier definition (1911). They are "indulged in for their delightful effects", "usually originate in dancing and other physical manifestations", and involve "wild excitement" and "religious intoxication" (*Ibid.*). In contrast, the type evinced in Plotinus's experience is "quiet and calm". Furthermore, Plotinus's "calm type of ecstasy is experienced in solitude": it is known by the contemplative alone. The other sort, however, takes place within "crowds", so that "not only autosuggestion but crowd-contagion plays a large part" (*Ibid.*).

Inge (1918:142-146) thus renders incorporeal the psycho-physical context, or form, of Plotinus's type of ecstasy: it is described without physical attributes and apart from social interaction. But the other sort of ecstasies, encompassing social contexts ('crowds') and 'physical manifestations', remain predicated indiscriminately upon psycho-physical abnormality.

Therefore with the exception of his later treatment of the contemplatives' unitive ecstasy which appears without physical attributes, Inge is otherwise similar to Underhill, as both define ecstasy within psycho-physical abnormality. The longevity of these definitions, cited as authoritative throughout this century, renders them especially exemplary of this approach.

The Psycho-physical Approach to far Northern Shamans

This approach has been applied to or has intruded into studies of far northern shamanism, as will be indicated in the next examples: (a) Åke Hultkrantz and (b) Anna-Leena Siikala, although the latter differs in some respects; as each conforms more-or-less to the psycho-physical definition of ecstasy from the influential studies in comparative religion.

Furthermore, the following examples reflect the influence of a certain 'psychological viewpoint' propounded by a professor in comparative studies in Sweden during the mid-century, as both examples cite Ernst Arbman within their own definitions of 'ecstasy' (Hultkrantz 1973:28, 1978:41, Siikala 1987:39). Hultkrantz edited Arbman. Similar to Arbman (e.g. 1963:xv), both examples allow an equivalence, or synonymity, between 'ecstasy' and 'trance'. Both furthermore assert that the one term has been usual in some academic disciplines while the other has been usual in other disciplines for basically the same set of phenomena (Hultkrantz 1978:41; Siikala 1987:39). The same characteristics are described by Hultkrantz for 'ecstasy' (1973:28) that are described by him for 'trance' (1978:41). The equivalence between these terms is allowed by Siikala (1987:39), who differentiates the set of characteristics assigned to them from the phenomenon of "possession trance" (1987:37); in the latter regard, she agrees with Bourguignon (1973:12-15) whom she cites, and diverges from Arbman whom she criticizes for confusing the concepts (see Siikala 1987:46-47, citing Arbman 1970:238-291, 340-343). The divergence is significant and will be highlighted.

(a) Psycho-physical abnormality becomes a definitive characteristic when the shamans' ecstasy is defined as "hysteroid" by Åke Hultkrantz (1973:28):

"Suffice it to say that [ecstasy] should be interpreted as a state of trance, a psychogenic, hysteroid mode of reaction that forms itself according to the dictates of the mind and that evinces various depths in various situations."

The definition is similar to Inge (1912:157) except that Hultkrantz introduces 'hysteria' as a fundamental element, probably by assimilation from Arbman who is cited in a footnote for comparison.

In a subsequent publication, Hultkrantz (1978:41) interprets the "state of trance" in fundamentally the same terms, as "a psychogenic, hysteroid mode of reaction" and as "a mentally abnormal state of introversion".

In a more recent treatment of the subject, Hultkrantz (1990) articulates fewer characteristics of the 'trance state'; yet the shamans' state remains described as a 'deep trance', and the shaman himself is described as "first and foremost an ecstatic mediator". The more recent statement (1990) is thus comparatively understated without contradicting the earlier descriptions.

(b) The final example, Anna-Leena Siikala (1987), reflects the psycho-physical definition while mitigating its application to the study of far northern shamanism. She emphasizes that the ecstasy can neither be limited to deep trance nor be defined as hysteroid if the structured interaction, or role taking, that typifies the Siberian shamans' ecstatic rites are to occur. She concentrates upon this structured interaction, as the shaman represents the people to the spirit(s) at times, and reciprocally at other times, represents the spirit(s) to the people. For the interaction to occur, the Siberian shaman must remain aware of his surroundings and effectively communicative. He might lose consciousness during a rite, but that condition itself is neither definitive nor constant. Instead of deep trance or hysteria, the Siberian shaman's ecstasy more characteristically involves an 'altered state of consciousness' (henceforth 'ASC').

Predicating the content of an ASC upon expectations within the shaman's own culture, Siikala (1987:31-33) adopts an interpretation found particularly in the USA (e.g., Bourguignon 1973:3; 1974:235), and would avoid analytical judgements about the ecstasies' psychological health. In this way, she differs from Hultkrantz inasmuch as his definitions agree with Arbman's hysteria/possession theory about shamanistic ecstasy, a theory which Siikala (1987:47) criticizes.

Despite this difference, Siikala remains within the psycho-physical approach nonetheless, as she predicates the Siberian shamans' supranormal ASCs upon 'disturbed' neurophysiology and psychology conditions (Siikala 1987:40-46). The term 'disturbed' for the context of the ASC is similar to the term supranormal for the content: both terms are ambiguous, merely indicating conditions other than normal; and the ambiguity serves the relativistic aim, to avoid judgments about normality. The aim itself could have become an alternative approach, if at least the possibility was allowed that Siberian shamans in general were psycho-physically healthy. Siikala, however, does not state even the possibility as a viable hypothesis. Briefly she allows that a healthy person might achieve ASCs (*ibid.*, 46). A practitioner could be healthy; some might be. This is the extent of her assertion. The psycho-physical approach is thus mitigated. But it is not contradicted.

An Application of the Psycho-physical Approach to Examples from Southern Alaska

Can the psycho-physical approach encompass far northern shamanism? Towards an answer, the three examples will be presented from southern Alaska, the first two of which only may be encompassed by that approach: (1) a shaman's rites from Kodiak Island, 1804-1807; (2) a weather changing rite from Unalaska Island, 1791; (3) the 'Chugach shaman'.

(1) **Kodiak Island, 1804-1807.** The source for this description was an hieromonk from the Aleksandr Nevskii Lavra who was hosted at various ceremonies of varying kinds. He compiled a short, insightful ethnography containing the following summation of the shamans' rites specifically (as distinct from other communal rites and festivals within Kodiak culture). It clearly reflects psycho-physical abnormality that was induced by "excessive bodily activity" and that resulted in a semi-cataleptic state:

"The shaman, sometimes naked, sometimes dressed or painted in the strangest manner, jumps about, goes through gyrations of the body, howls at the top of his voice, naming the evil spirit, and runs around the dwelling. In this excessive bodily activity he brings himself to such a state that his eyes become blood-shot and from exhaustion he falls (almost) unconscious to the ground. (At this time he tells various fantasies.)" (Gideon 1989:59-60).

The straining of the body through gyrations and other bodily modes, causing exhaustion and (near) unconsciousness, conform to the psycho-physical approach.

(2) **Unalaska Island, 1791.** This approach is evident in the next case also, although without the extreme animation involved in the preceding example. The source in this case was a naval officer who took the initiative to travel virtually unaccompanied, except for an interpreter, to visit Aleut villages where he was hosted, and where observed, indeed participated, in various events including the following rite to change the weather. The month was March. He himself became the subject for this rite, as he was travelling; and the rite ended with the shaman predicting not only the course of the weather but moreover the course of the naval officer's subsequent travels which unfolded largely as had been predicted (Sarychev 1807:28-29). The following rite involved 'Tojas', or *toion*, who were Aleut leaders:

"Towards evening, I suddenly heard a drum beating in the corner of the Jurt, and was informed by my interpreter that the Tojas [toions] and Shamans were conjuring a spirit for favourable weather. At the expiration of a quarter of an hour, the Shaman began to cry aloud, but soon ceased, and fell senseless" (Sarychev 1807:67-68).

The shaman's scream and sudden cataleptic-like trance reflect the psycho-physical abnormality. Indeed, his physical distress in this state of catalepsy became so manifest that the people present became frightened, lamented, and supplicated that he be spared:

"The terror became universal; a crowd surrounded him, sung a solemn lamentation, and conjured the spirit to spare the good Shaman, notwithstanding which he continued some time motionless, but at last revived..." (Sarychev 1807:67-68).

Having revived, the shaman "informed the bystanders that he had summoned the spirit into his presence, and commanded him to send fine weather". A verbal interaction then commenced with this shaman addressing the spirit and thus

continuing to convince it to change the weather until the spirit, angered, began tormenting the shaman to senselessness again; and there he lay, evincing yet again the characteristic of psycho-physical abnormality within which he had the final visions:

"Upon this the spirit became so furious, that he fell on him, and continued to torment him until he became senseless, during which period it was manifested to him, that the weather would be no better until three days after the death of a certain woman, (whose name he mentioned), which would take place in the course of the summer" (Sarychev 1807:67-68).

While in this instance the excessive physical activities or machinations were not involved, as they had been in the preceding example, yet the psycho-physical abnormality is evident nonetheless in the shaman's manifest suffering and in his cataleptic-like trance.

(3) **The Chugach shaman.** In the final example, the characteristics of the psycho-physical approach are not involved. The 'Chugach shaman' contradicts that approach. Indeed, the tradition bearer (relating the account in retrospect to the ethnographer) contrasted this 'shaman' to others who were themselves more typical of psycho-physical approach.²

The contrast involved the method of healing by this shaman, whose name was Kangatyuy. It differed from methods by others including his own son Kalushi who was also a shaman: "His son Kalushi did not cure people like his father [did]" (Birket-Smith 1953:132). This difference was emphasized: Kangatyuy "always used to blow [he infused his breath into the ailing person] but never did anything else, not even sing. 'That fellow's got good medicine breath,' people said" (*ibid.*). This difference depended, partly on another contrast: he did not know "who his spirit was" (*ibid.*) – therefore, he could not engage his spirit by its name; and hence (as quoted above), he "never did anything else, not even sing".

The contrast extended to the following difference, also: he "never hurt anybody, but he always cured people" (*ibid.*). Other shamans could hurt; and some were actually feared because their spirits were dangerous. An example of the latter in the same region was a famous shaman known as Apaluq who had the malevolent spirit of the Copper River (*ibid.*, 124).

Yet Kangatyuy was referred to as a 'shaman' nonetheless. He was referred to as more effective than Apaluq: "He could [heal] even faster than Apaluq" (*ibid.*). The initial act was itself the realization that he was a shaman: "This was the occasion when they discovered that Kangatyuy was a real shaman" (*ibid.*). And the account about him was the lengthiest in the collection about shamans from the Chugach Bay area (all related mostly by the same tradition bearer).

The account contains a summary statement about his method and character (*ibid.*, quoted above). It also contains an extended description of his initial act of healing and of earlier events that had encouraged the initial act. A persistent intuition had earlier prompted Kangatyuq to revive a fallen bird on 'Middleton Island' by breathing his own breath into it (this is mentioned in the quotation, below). Afterwards, during a hunting expedition into the Kodiak area, he met *monakh Herman*, a forest dweller originally from Karelia, who recognized him as a healer and directed him to the initial act of healing.

The date of the initial act can be ascertained from the reference to *monakh Herman*. He passed away in the Kodiak area in 1836; therefore the first instance must have taken place before 1836.

In this following example, there is no evidence of psycho-physical abnormality on the shaman's part. There is no manifest involvement even of prolonged drumming and prolonged invocation. Beginning with a brief prayer to the unnamed spirit, the healer continued by inspiring his own breath into the ailing child.

"At first Kangatyuq was silent, but then he started to talk. 'I wish you would help me, whoever you are. You let this girl come back to her parents like that rotten bird on Middleton Island that I made alive, then I'll believe myself what I am.' He blew on the girl's mouth. The first time she did not move, but the second time he blew through his hands, and she opened her eyes as if she was waking up. Now Kangatyuq talked and talked, but they were not able to understand what he said. After he had blown for the third time the girl motioned to him to set her up. He lifted her up from the bed, held her there and blew on her mouth. Then she motioned for water, Kangatyuq opened the door and said: 'I wish you would hand me a glass of water.' The girl's mother was nearly falling all over herself as she hurried to the sink for it. The girl drank and said: 'Oh, I am hungry, I wish I could eat'" (Birket-Smith 1953:131).

Nowhere in this account did he strain himself bodily or enter into 'deep trance' or yet enter into any structured interaction that could be construed as role-taking. Instead, he healed by praying and then by infusing his breath into the ailing child. Glossolalia might have occurred. When she began to revive and was hungry, he fed her some rice her mother had prepared for the family (*ibid.*).

Conclusion: A Discernment of Form and Content

The 'Chugach shaman' can not be comprehended by the psycho-physical approach, inasmuch as the account him lacked definite evidence of psycho-physical abnormality, or 'disturbance'. Far from a peripheral occurrence, he comprised a central example, indeed the most extensive example among shamans collected in the Chugach region, Alaska. The contradiction he poses is therefore an essential contradiction.

The tradition bearer who related this account emphasized Kangatyuq's difference from other shamans with respect to both the form and the content of the experience. The difference in content included Kangatyuq's unnamed spirit and its unambiguous moral nature. The difference in form involved the method of healing, and ultimately the nature of the ecstasy.

The difference was articulated within the larger culture that the same tradition bearer described in positive terms. In fact, the insightful discernment was itself articulated within the genre of regional folklore. Therefore, the difference articulated by the tradition bearer should not be confused with a Manichaeian/puritanical attitude which would disparage creative ecstasy in general, and would also disparage colourful diversions including costuming, singing and traditional dancing. It is I who have extracted the tradition bearer's discernment about the 'Chugach shaman' (as I have termed Kangatyuq) from the greater Alutiiq and Russian-Alutiiq cultural setting for the purpose of this study.

The distinction of the form and content in this shaman's experience is related to the distinction I developed at the 12th ICAES (Mousalimas 1990a) between a 'social perspective' and a 'cultural perspective' on shamanism. The latter should more properly be termed an 'ethnographic perspective'. Indeed, Kangatyuq comprised one of the primary examples of shamans within the social perspective, as he fulfilled the shamans' main social tasks without the complex of the very visible and audible characteristics that attracted the attention of ethnographers and that described other regional shamans. Just as Kangatyuq could not be comprehended by the ethnographic perspective in that paper, neither can he be comprehended by the psycho-physical approach to shamanism in this paper, not even when the approach is mitigated. He poses an essential contradiction.

The contradiction is meaningful; for if the psycho-physical approach were accepted as generally applicable, then asserting that any ancient tradition currently subsumed under the category of 'shamanism' was valuable, would be tantamount to asserting that psycho-physical abnormality was valuable and should be encouraged in future generations. It is this assertion that the 'Chugach shaman' contradicts.

Epilogue: A Question from the 'Chugach Shaman'

The contradiction raises an inverse question from the 'Chugach shaman' about the categories within the psycho-physical approach that would attempt to subsume him to abnormality.

An answer may be discovered, firstly, within cosmology: through an enquiry into the academics' own worldview(s). If their worldview was theistic, then an *a priori* assumption would be involved in their approach: that divine nature

was more-or-less separated from physical nature; and therefore by logical necessity, an ecstatic's contact with the divine would be predicated upon a separation of the human psyche away from 'the confines of physical nature'.

It is a meaningful coincidence that for Inge (1918) and Underhill (1967:372-374) alike the paradigmatic ecstatic was Plotinus whose emanational cosmology posited the fullness of the divine in a realm, or in realms, above the mundane. Therefore to reach divine union, the paradigmatic ecstatic singled his earthbound body while he pierced the barriers of the sensual world like a flame, according to the typology articulated by Underhill (1967:366-367). The typology is consistent with the cosmology.

The manner of the separation of the divine nature from physical nature notwithstanding – whether emanational, multi-tiered, three-tiered, or dualistic; the degree of separation (whether more or less) also notwithstanding: the very separation would itself require a movement away from physical nature to reach the divine or to reach divine realms.

Similarly, psycho-physical abnormality would be a necessary condition if the academics' worldview were either deistic or atheistic. Indeed, the abnormality would need be considered even more extreme. Inasmuch as deism considered the divine too remote to be experienced, and as atheism considered the divine non-existent as an objective reality, an ecstatic who claimed to have experienced the divine, or the spiritual, would need be analysed as momentarily irrational, if not insane. Alternatively the analyst might opt for a radical cultural relativity, thus suspending any judgment regarding rationality. Examples of this option have been cited above; another is Littleton (1985), a proponent of 'cognitive relativity' which he ascribes to Levy-Bruhl (but the ascription is erroneous; see Mousalimas 1990b).

Atheistic, deistic, and theistic cosmologies were propounded within universities where the psycho-physical approach to ecstasy and shamanism was forged. More specifically this complex of worldviews was typical of the inter-related Teutonic and English cultures from which three of the examples in this paper themselves derived.

The same approach was reflected by the fourth, however: a Finn whose scholarship could be expected to extend in another direction instead, to be oriented towards another worldview, or constellation of worldviews. It was Karelia – was it not? – that was a central reference within the development of the 'Chugach shaman'.

Secondly, towards an answer to the question from the 'Chugach shaman' about the categories which would presume to relegate him to abnormality, a discovery may occur also within the categories applied by the ethnographer who collected the account. Birket-Smith received the account from a tradition bearer who has yet to be introduced: he was Makarii Fedorovich Chimovitskii, a Russian-Alutiiq regional leader of particular stature, well rooted in his culture. Chimovitskii's distinctions regarding Kangatyuq's differences from other

shamans, while expressed in the genre of regional folklore, nonetheless reflect distinctions that have been articulated in theology since antiquity in some parts of the world regarding differences in the form and content of ecstatic experiences: for example in the 4th century A.D., by Epiphanius of Constantia in Cyprus, and by Didymos of Alexandria in Egypt (see Mousalimas 1991). Makarii Chimovitskii was culturally and historically related to this ancient tradition himself; and he represented the relationship through his reference to monakh Herman from Karelia. The relational link could be represented more extensively with reference to Chugach regional history, to Chimovitskii's own family lineage, and to aspects of his leadership; but the link that he himself provided should suffice here for expedience.

The ethnographer Birket-Smith (1953:2,131,132) categorized Chimovitskii's insights as 'aboriginal beliefs', and the Russian-Alutiiq himself as an 'Eskimo'.

When this approach to the tradition bearer is combined with the psycho-physical approach to ecstasy, then a descriptive predicate appears; and when the predicate is reduced to its abrupt barest, it yields a discovery which may appear stark, indeed as stark as it is amusing. The descriptive predicate would render the 'Chugach shaman' as follows: as no more and no less than a psycho-physical abnormal aboriginal.

Stark as it may be, thus unmasked, the descriptive predicate appears at its barest in just this way, and the appearance may be more amusing than surprising; for it is the same typology that used to dominate the field, however mitigated now. For example, early this century, Siberian shamans were defined as 'hysteroid' members of the 'lower races' by Czaplicka (1914:307-325; n.d.: 242), a Pole writing for the Oxford of that era and projecting categories that she perhaps assumed would be received there then. She made little impression there, as she is rarely cited. However, her typology has been received elsewhere, indeed as if it were no less than 'authoritative' and 'classic' (Arbman 1968:644, 1970:404; Hultkrantz 1973:36, 1978:49-50).³

A contrast can be found in the approach by S. M. Shirokogoroff, the indepth field researcher educated in psychiatry, whose writings do not contain categories such as those. He offers another mode of approach as he emphasizes the *health* of the great Evenk shamans and distinguishes them from immature candidates and from bogus practitioners (1923:247; 1924:369-370; 1935:274,346,350,363-364,373,384; but cf. Hultkrantz 1978:49).

The question thus ultimately turns towards the academics' own categories. In effect, the 'Chugach shaman' himself rises to question their worldview which would subsume him to abnormality.

The inversion is more than amusing: it has immediate relevance and purpose; for the question must be inverted in this way, if the categories and definitions current in academia are to be identified by intellectuals who belong to the most ancient cultures, so that the value of continuity from the most ancient can be explained and maintained for future generations.

Notes

1. For an instance of participation, see the *Septuagint* (Zech. 2:10-13) when Joshua, an angel, and a demon were seen by the prophet Zacharias who was 'in ecstasy', *en ekstasei* [in Greek]. For an instance of union, see Seraphim of Sarov's lucid and illuminating conversation with Nikolai Motovilov while Seraphim was in ecstasy (in Fedotov 1950:265-279).
2. Was a term equivalent to 'shaman' actually applied by the tradition bearer? There are various regional terms that distinguish various types of healers, and the fieldworker was aware of them (e.g., Birket-Smith 1953:116). But did he make the distinction in the transcription? In any case, he subsumed this healer to the category of 'shaman' within the extensive ethnography.
3. Also indicative is the distribution of the references to Czaplicka in Diószegi, V. – M. Hoppál (eds), *Shamanism in Siberia*, see the 'Name Index', 520; compare the scant references to 'Czaplicka' with the 'List of Contributors', 515.

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Sila, the Ordering Principle of the Inuit Cosmology

By

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At the Heart of Inuit Cosmology: '*Sila*'

The cosmology peculiar to the Inuit of Igloolik and neighbouring communities in Canada's central arctic accords a central place to *Sila* and its ambiguous paradoxical movements – made up of predictable, ordered, and cyclical regularity, unpredictable turbulences, and antagonistic tensions all at the same time – and to its many avatars which transcend boundaries and orders of magnitude. This cosmology illustrates *Sila*'s relationship with life and death. An aid for achievement in humans, *Sila* gives rise to extraordinary phenomena in certain animals. It is present in a large number of beliefs, rites, and shamanistic narratives or practices. The following are its main elements.

Under the Sign of '*Sila*'

In the Inuit language, people say that young children are *silaittuq* (unable to be reasoned with) when they refuse to submit to the rules of adults and insist on having their own way. On the other hand, people will call them *silatujuq* (able to be reasoned with) once they have reached the age of reason and follow the counsels of their elders. For an adult, *silaittuq* – literally, 'he has no *Sila*' – means lacking in prudence, judgment, reserve, self-control, and intelligence. It can even refer to madness. Conversely, *silatujuq* signifies circumspect, astute, responsible, reserved, and endowed with common sense. This quality is ascribed to good leaders (*isumataq*).

All human beings are said to contain a certain amount of *Sila* encapsulated with their soul inside a sort of bubble (*pullaq*). When a child is born the soul, a miniaturized self-image, settles into the bubble together with surrounding air marked by the sign of that day's climatic conditions. If the weather is bad, people will say the child is *silaluttuq* (bad weather). If the weather is good, the child will be called a *silattiavak* (good weather). This characteristic will bring about at an individual's death the same meteorological conditions of his or her birth. At death, the bubble actually bursts open, the soul escapes into

the nether world, and the air inside the bubble returns to the ambient atmosphere through which its influence spreads by contact and intermixture. This influence can also be exerted in the course of life when people change dwellings from one season to the next, i.e. when they move from an igloo into a tent in springtime, or from a tent into an igloo in the fall. If bad weather lasts too long one can also ask a *silattiavak* – i.e. someone born on a day of good weather – to go outside, strip naked, raise his/her hands above his/her head so as to be recognized by *Sila*, and roll about on the ground shouting '*Silaga nauk ungaa?*' (So where is my *Sila ungaa?*). Such behaviour is supposed to bring the good weather back.

This metonymical evocation of the time of birth is addressed to the great cosmic guardian powers, *Sila* and *Nuna*, and is played out on the main registers of the senses: the sense of hearing with the baby's first cry – *Ungaa!*, the senses of sight and smell with the exposure to *Sila* of the naked body with arms upraised, or the sense of touch with the action of rolling about on the ground – on *Nuna*. This ritual is referred to in the epic of *Kiviuq*, a myth in which the hero, a young orphan born in bad weather who learned to swim like a seal, swims out into the sea so as to lure his persecutors who pursue him in a kayak. He then raises his left arm out of the water while shouting '*Silaga nauk ungaa?*' His cry awakens the *Uannaq* (the North-West wind blowing when he was born) which stirs up a storm and drowns the pursuers.

In the young child the soul's attachment to the air bubble is fragile, as is also the relationship of the microcosm (the body) to the macrocosm. The soul is not yet used to the body and can escape from it in the form of puffs of air the body releases either through the anus or the mouth. When a child sneezes or breaks wind loudly, this is taken to be a sign that the soul has escaped from its bubble. It is therefore necessary to whistle softly, as one does to call for a dog, to bring the soul back home. Women, too, have fragile souls according to an older male informant from Igloodik. Whenever a woman sneezed or broke wind, part of her soul escaped and one would have to say '*Qaag*' (root of 'to burst open') to stop the leakage. Inuit ethnography is quite incomplete when it comes to body emissions and exhalations although their religious value is attested to in myths, rituals, and beliefs.

The Children of '*Sila*'

In Igloodik the term *Silaat* (children of *Sila*) is given to certain fantastic animals often white in colour and unusually large, which must not be killed on pain of seeing one's own life shortened. People mention *Silaat* bearded seals, *Silaat* polar bears, or *Silaat* caribous, the last being the most often cited. These creatures are claimed to be born from *Silaksait* (embryos of *Sila*), a kind of large egg believed to come out of the ground. Above all, the eggs must not

be broken when found; the consequences can otherwise be disastrous for hunting. Such is what happened in Igloodik in 1978 when fog hung over the village for much of the summer after a dog broke open a *Silaksaq* at a nearby camp-site. From these eggs are born the *Silaat*, grey-brown caribou males similar to a lemming in colour and almost as tall as a horse.

From smaller eggs, or *Pukiksait* are born *Pukit*, white caribou females. *Pukit* and *Silaat* are closely related to the *Ijiqqat* (the invisible beings) who live in the mountains of the hinterland and who, like the Whites, are descended from 'the girl and the dog'. The *Ijiqqat* live very near the caribou and can even turn into one (cf. Saladin d'Anglure 1983; Comer in Boas 1907, and Rasmussen 1929). Like the *Silaat* and the *Pukit* they have the ability to cause fog to descend in order to elude their pursuers. In their human form, they are invisible to common mortals but can be seen by shamans. *Sila's* children also include all of humanity. According to one of our older female informants, we are brothers and sisters of the *Silaat* and the *Pukit* – hence the prohibition against killing and above all eating these extraordinary animals.

The Atmospheric Turbulences of 'Sila'

Although the term for bad weather, *Silaluttuq*, is generally associated with overcast skies accompanied by rain and wind, bad weather is in fact considered to be any meteorological turbulence of some importance, with or without precipitation. People thus use the name of the wind currently blowing when talking about the weather. Of course, the positive or negative value of a wind depends on its intensity, the season, and contexts specific to diverse places and times of the year. Turner (1894:123) points out that the Ungava Inuit had two wind systems. One was controlled by male spirits and comprised the winds from the west, the north-west, the north, and the north-east. The other, under the power of female spirits, encompassed the winds from the east, the south-east, the south, and the south-west. Zeilich-Jensen (1974:34, 40) reports from the Pond Inlet area that winds are grouped in pairs (male/female) each of which he associates with a cardinal point on the compass. His terminology, built up from demonstrative-locatives, does not fit in however with the accepted ethnographic data. In Igloodik the terms for winds are consistent with those mentioned by Parry (1824) for the same area and Boas (1888:235) for the Cumberland Sound. There are four of them, grouped two by two because of their opposing directions: *Uannaq* (north-west wind) / *Nigiq* (south-east wind) and *Kananniq* (north and north-east winds) / *Akinnaq* (south-west wind). Only the first pair are clearly represented as having sexual identities – one is male, *Uannaq*, the other female, *Nigiq*, according to accounts from older local informants.

Uannaq, the great male north-west wind, is violent and brings cold blizzards

in its wake. *Nigiq*, the female south-east wind, blows softly and is accompanied by precipitation of soft and melting snow. They are conceived as being antagonistic to each other: when one blows the other remains calm, and vice versa. Inuit fear these two winds the most: the first one impedes the winter hunt, at the breathing hole cut in the ice for marine mammals; the second one melts igloos and makes travelling by sled difficult. When these winds blew for long periods, a shaman would have to be called in to try to calm them down. To understand the shaman's ritual one must first call to mind the beliefs and representations about the spirit masters of these winds. These spirit masters, like those of the other main classes of atmospheric phenomena, appear to us to be avatars of *Naarjuk*, the master of *Sila*. *Uannaq* is the most closely related of these, for people say of him, as of *haarjuk*, that he is clothed in a laced-up hide and that the wind comes from air escaping out whenever the lacing gets overstretched. People also say both deities have to be whipped until they bleed, or have one of their tendons or veins cut, in order to calm them down during storms.

As for *Nogiiq*, she lives in an igloo with her oil lamp. When the temperature becomes too hot inside, the walls of the igloo start to melt and holes open up – thereby letting out the warm south-east wind. The shaman must proceed to stop the wind by plugging up the holes. These operations take place at public shamanistic seances during which a hide is placed as a screen between the shaman and the audience. The hide represents the laced-up piece of clothing when *Uannaq* is involved, in which case the shaman has to see to it that the lacing is tied up again. The hide represents the wall of an igloo when *Nigiiq* is involved, in which case the shaman must repair the holes. Once again, we find through these characteristics and practices the same symbolic system already brought to light in the cosmology: the forces of nature are conceptualized upon the differentiation of the sexes in a relation of opposition/complementarity. In this relation the north, the cold, the winter, the strength, the violence, and the outdoor activities are the prerogative of men under the symbol of Brother Moon. The south, the warmth, the thaw, the lamp, and the abode are the prerogative of women under the symbol of Sister Sun. This symbolic system is brought to light in the account of Ujaraq (Thérien 1987) for whom these two winds are controlled by the moon and the sun.

To these forces of nature must be added the Fog Master (*Taktuup inua*), another avatar of *Sila*. We have little data on him except for a curious ritual: when a dense and persistent fog hangs over an area and impedes all hunting activities, the Inuit of Igloodik used to ask an adolescent to attach an artificial penis to his pants. He would have to hold it in an erect position and make suggestive gestures, as if making love, saying: 'taktuq nuliirpara! taktuq nuliirpara!' I've had the fog's wife! I've had the fog's wife! At the same time he would walk in the direction of *Sila*, i.e. of the sun, by going around in a large circle. The purpose was to shame the fog into leaving.

'Sila' and the Direction of the World

As already seen in the discussion on cosmology, the direction of the world, the direction of the universe, the direction of *Sila* is the path of the sun and the moon, the path of the constellation of the bear hunters (*Ullaktut*). In fact, this direction is the apparent movement of the whole sky which, from a Western standpoint (i.e. with the north as the point of reference) turns counter-clockwise. From an Inuit standpoint, however, it turns clockwise (with the south as the point of reference). This movement, together with the paths it traces across the sky, constitutes one of the keys to Inuit cosmology and religious practices. It symbolizes the great cycles of both the reproduction of life and the universe: the twenty-four-hour cycle, the lunar cycle, the cycle of the seasons, and the cycle of human life. It is the direction of the left hand. Indeed, left-handers build the dome of their igloo in a spiral that follows this direction, contrary to the practice of right-handers. R. Petersen (1967:262) sees therein an important element of Inuit 'white magic'. Many rituals refer to it, such as the one we just mentioned for dissipating the fog and reestablishing proper weather conditions. We mentioned another one, about the flight of the crow, when Aava was rescued. We will describe a third one which is used in the fall during the change-over from tent to igloo after the first igloo has been built from snow. Before spending the first night inside the habitation, the future occupants had to walk around it in the direction of the sun. Each person would also have to swallow a piece of meat in homage to the Earth Mother (*Nuna*), the Sky Father (*Sila*), and the game animals. The morning after, before sunrise, the children would once again have to carry out a similar ritual by getting out at the break of dawn and walking one more time around the igloo. Little girls and boys were compelled to act this way to succeed in life. The ritual honours the sunrise and, by reproducing the sun's movement across the sky, predisposes one to success in life later on: girls to a successful motherhood with rapid child-births, a condition for having male offspring; and boys to success at hunting with bountiful catches of game animals. It was also a propitiatory rite for preserving life in order that life may unfold in its entirety as predetermined and without accident. For similar reasons, a young woman finding herself pregnant for the first time would have to be exposed to *Sila*.

When the winter solstice festivities were held in the depth of the sunless period, the ritual consisting of going around in the direction of the sun was once again used. In Igloodik it was undertaken during the festive occasion of the *Tivajuut*, at which time a generalized exchange of spouses was organized. Each of the newly-formed couples arising from this occasion had to walk several times in the direction of the sun around the oil lamp, placed in the middle of the ceremonial igloo, without showing the slightest trace of a smile (cf. Rasmussen 1929, Saladin d'Anglure 1989). In the Cumberland Sound, Boas

(1988:196) recounts how the men would assemble in the early morning at the centre of the village and then rush headlong, gesticulating, towards the igloos, around which they would proceed in the direction of the sun. Those born in a manner different from the norm had to dress in woman's clothing and run around in the opposite direction. In Igloodik, children 'born on their belly' were the ones to go this other way.

Mention should finally be made of this ritual's use at burial ceremonies. Once the corpse had been laid out on the ground and covered over with blocks of stone or snow, the relatives would slowly walk three times around the grave in the direction of the sun. The relationship between the life cycle and the direction of the sun, or of *Sila*, was expressed even more explicitly in the orientation of the deceased's bodies in their graves. This orientation was determined by the age at death and the sun's path across the sky. Lieutenant Hooper, who spent the winter of 1822-23 in Igloodik with Parry and Lyon's expedition, provides us with an invaluable description of this practice:

"The body was placed on its back, in accordance with the husband's instructions, with its feet turned southwards, as is the custom for adults. The children are themselves laid out with their feet turned eastwards, the adolescents south-eastwards, the elderly south-westwards and the very elderly with their feet turned westwards" (Hooper 1823:795).

From sunrise to sunset, such is how humans are laid to rest when death strikes them down between childhood and old age. They are laid out in a carefully-crafted harmony between the microcosm of one's body which *Sila* shapes and inhabits – one's lifetime – and the macrocosm which *Sila* animates with its orderly rhythms and its unpredictable happenstance.

'*Sila*' or the Dynamic Unity of Opposites

Throughout our overview of Inuit cosmogony we have brought out the fact that mythical history could be considered to be a long process whereby an undifferentiated primordial state has differentiated into antagonistic and complementary opposites. The first to differentiate were the sexes, followed by day and night, the dead and the living, and war and peace. *Sila* constitutes the dynamic principle of this differentiation through the oppositions good weather / bad weather, *Uannaq/Nigiiq*, and Brother Moon/Sister Sun. We should go over once more the last of these opposing pairs, for it dominates Inuit theory of climatic variations. Indeed, every year the Inuit watch the movements of Brother Moon and Sister Sun attentively to find out who will out over the other by being the first to reappear in the January sky. In Igloodik, because of refraction, the sun begins to be visible for a few minutes on the horizon due south as early as January 13th (instead of the 18th) on a clear day. If the

illuminated surface of Brother Moon is waxing greater in size when the sun returns, he is the one who wins the competition. If Brother Moon is waning or in the new moon phase, Sister Sun wins. A victory for Brother Moon, especially an overwhelming one, foretells a cold spring and summer, and a longer than usual freezing-over of the ocean waters. Conversely, a victory for Sister Sun heralds a warm spring, an early breakup of pack ice, and a hot summer. The term for the lunar month of January (*Ingiaqqaqattauk*) aptly expresses this competition. When, on a night lit by the full moon, the moonlight shines brighter than usual, people in Igloodik see this as a sign that hunting will not be good during the lunar month. Conversely, game animals will be easier to catch when the moon shines less brightly and the blue of the sky stretches to the horizon.

Interpretation of eclipses of the moon (*Taqqiq pulamajuq*) or the sun (*Siqiniq pulamajuq*) is similar although amplified by the latter's rarity in relation to the former and by sky conditions that do not always make it possible to see lunar eclipses at night. In the case of solar eclipses, the Inuit would feel overcome by fear and panic. The elderly Inuit of Igloodik still remember the fright when a total eclipse of the sun occurred on August 31, 1932. An old woman, *Ulluriaq*, recalled how the air abruptly became very cold: the vapour of one's breath could be seen, darkness had overtaken the sky, and everyone was afraid lest the climatic conditions take a turn for the worse. Time and again *Ulluriaq* repeated: "The sun came down to earth to bear a child!" At that time, when shamanism was still very present, people feared for the destruction of the world – the collapse of the pillars holding up the earth and the sky. We have not been successful in obtaining further comments on *Ulluriaq*'s fear. Nonetheless, one may imagine it to be an allusion to the outcome of Brother Moon's incestuous passion for Sister Sun. One such outcome could be an eclipse – this rare conjunction of two luminous bodies turning around the sky unendingly one behind the other and rarely ever meeting.

It is known from the shamans that Brother Moon and Sister Sun inhabit the sky in a double igloo, but not as husband and wife. If we stand by the terms used to designate them, the eclipses are considered more to be absences of one or the other celestial body than a conjunction of both. The reproduction of life never happened in the sky between spirits; even in narratives where shamans talk about Inuit impregnated by Brother Moon, the women always come back down to earth to bear the child after their being taken away to the moon's dwelling place. There is nonetheless some incongruity in a celestial figure coming down to earth to give birth. Its place is in the sky where the cosmic duties assigned to it can be carried out. The entire fragile order of *Sila* is threatened by any confusion of the two universes – by the unpredictability of eclipses in this case. And this order is fragile.

Eclipses of the moon happen more often, are less spectacular, and do not give rise to the same climate of fear. When they do occur, people believe

that the lunar month will be shorter, the weather more favourable, and the game animals more accessible. The antagonism of the seasons resulting from that of the two heavenly bodies, one associated with warmth and summer, the other with coldness and winter, dominates Inuit social and religious life, as M. Mauss (1906) clearly understood. Yet he failed to notice that this antagonism was based on a foundation of sexual confrontation and complementarity. He nonetheless pointed out, from F. Boas's data, the opposition that existed between winter-born people and the summer-born.

In Igloodik this antagonism was expressed quite distinctly in the following manner: those born in an igloo or during the igloo season were called the *Aqiggiarjuit* (the Ptarmigans) and those born in a tent or when people live in tents were called the *Aggiarjuit* (the long-tailed ducks). They were pitted against each other either in team competitions or in tournaments. The adult men and women were divided by season of birth into two camps and played a kind of football. To win, the *Aqiggiarjuit*, i.e. the land birds, had to push the ball as far inland as possible. The *Aggiarjuit*, i.e. the sea birds, had to push it in the opposite direction onto the pack ice and towards the open sea. If the first team won, spring and summer would be cold and under the domination of winter. If the second team won, spring and summer would be warm. The tournaments were undertaken with this same end in view, being held mainly at the winter solstice in the large igloos reserved for games. The opponents would square off face to face and combat each other through derisive songs, feats of strength, or games of skill.

Other games dealt with the departure or the return of the sun in winter. The Cat's-cradle game (*Ajaraq*), mainly for women, was not supposed to be practised in the presence of Sister Sun, for it might hurt her and make her bleed. Consequently, it was played above all during the period of *Tauvijjuaq* (the great darkness) when the sun is completely absent (cf. G. Comer in Boas, 1901, 1907, Rasmussen 1929). Playing the Cat's-cradle game during this period of darkness served to hold back the sun in order to keep it from going away for good. On this point, there is a myth which provides an account by Sister Sun of how her knees came to be furrowed with scars. The scene takes place in the double igloo of the Moon and the Sun in which an Inuit woman beaten by her husband has taken refuge. The visitor sees the scar-covered knees of Sister Sun who, guessing the question on the human's mind, tells her that she had been made to stumble and fall by those who played the Cat's-cradle game. This game would cease to be played after the sun's return and another more masculine one would take its place, the game of cup and ball (*Ajaqaq*). Its purpose was to make the sun climb higher in the sky. Finally, mention should be made of a solar ritual practised at this same time of year and which, in our opinion, aptly illustrates the dynamic of opposites which characterizes *Sila* and its helping spirits: the ritual of the 'twisted' or 'paradoxical' smile (*illui-*

nanganik qungaujaquq) at the first sunrise of the year. Everyone was required to smile strangely by twisting his or her mouth at the sun when it first appeared in January. The aim was to encourage the newly-risen sun by making fun of it with a half-sad half-joyful face. It is worth noting here that in traditional Yupik pictographic art a sad countenance usually indicates a female face and a joyful one a male face.

Thus, once again, the antagonistic and complementary differentiation of male and female, so often evoked in this article, leads to the dynamic unity of opposites in *Sila*, a source of renewal for the life-giving cosmic cycles.

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Shamanic States of Consciousness: Access to Different Realities

By

Ruth-Inge Heinze

Shamans have been able to access different states of consciousness for more than 15,000 years. Field manuals on shamanic trances, meditation books as well as reports, e.g., of hypnotists, tell us that 'non-ordinary realities' can be activated through thoughts, words, and actions on the material level. Mystics speak of a reversed process and say that non-ordinary realities do influence the material world. On what can we base our investigations? Research data accumulated in the fields of comparative religion, anthropology and psychology warn us that when we enter a different state of consciousness, the quality of our perceptions and, consequently, our ways of thinking and feeling change. That means, when our consciousness transcends 'ordinary' levels of existence, the commonly agreed upon rules of time and space do no longer apply. The question then arises what measurements and terminology are available to adequately report on these 'different' experiences?

Before entering the discussion of different techniques to access other realities, I have to clarify that I use the term 'alternate states of consciousness' instead of 'altered states of consciousness' (Tart 1969) to avoid the implication that a state has been artificially altered. I maintain that each of the different states, accessed by the techniques described below, does not coexist but alternates with other states of consciousness and that each state has state-specific qualities and depends on state-specific conditions and rules.

Comparing different states, we recognize a movement toward either hyperactivity or hypoactivity, toward mind expansion or dissociation, combined with either increasing or decreasing control. Even when we observe occasional areas of overlap or flooding (i.e., temporary loss of control), a certain state of consciousness becomes distinguishable when it has reached its peak and demonstrates all its state-specific properties. Tart speaks of

"a unique *configuration* or *system* of psychological structures or sub-systems. The parts or aspects of the mind that we can distinguish for analytical purposes (such as memory, evaluation processes, and the sense of identity function) are arranged in a certain kind of pattern or system... The nature of the pattern and the elements

that make up the pattern determine what you can and cannot do in that state. In dreaming, flying by an act of will is possible. I wouldn't want to say that is totally impossible in consensus consciousness, but it certainly is not easy" (1986:4).

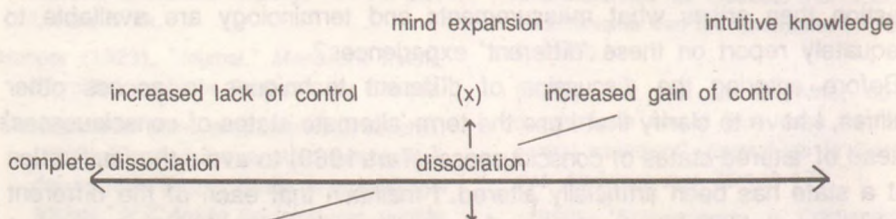
And Ludwig mentions

"alterations in thinking, change in sense of time and body image, loss of control, change in emotional expression, perceptual distortion, change in meaning and significance, a sense of ineffability, feelings of rejuvenation and hypersuggestibility" (1960).

Both researchers confirm my hypothesis about state-specific configurations.

The range of possible alternate states of consciousness has not yet been fully explored, because we are just starting to map out states which are accessed for certain purposes (Fischer 1974-1980, Krippner 1972, Ludwig 1966, Tart 1969). Psychophysiological research on the effects of trance-inducing procedures which lead to states of "parasympathetic dominance in which the frontal cortex is dominated by slow wave patterns originating in the limbic system and related projections into the frontal parts of the brain" has been surveyed by Winkelman (1986:174). Our "hidden observed" (Hilgard 1977) watches the fluctuations of our consciousness between ordinary and non-ordinary realities, but may not always be prepared for uncharted, i.e., previously unknown, territory.

I am offering the following working model to illustrate my points:



(x) indicates the state of consensus reality.

When we begin to cultivate awareness, we progress on the diagonal (from lower left to the upper right quadrant) and notice that our control over the successive states also increases. *Intuitive knowledge* is the highest point in the upper right quadrant. This state indicates full control and complete awareness, i.e., the state of Being (knowing without objectification and discursive thinking). The lowest point on the diagonal (in the lower left quadrant) is *complete dissociation*, e.g., multiple personality, schizophrenia, full possession. With respect to this lowest point, Jung spoke of "unconscious, autonomic complexes" which appear in such a state "as projections because they are not associated with the ego" (1960:95,99).

To give an example for the caution we have to exercise when we want to define a certain state, I want to point to shamans and mediums who call spirits into their body and then surrender their consciousness to the spirit who begins to act through them. In other words, unexpected possession (a dissociative state) will be treated with an exorcism in some cultures, however, prospective shamans and mediums can be trained to use the same state professionally. Trained practitioners will then descend, from the point of consensus reality, deep down into the lower right quadrant. At the depth of their possession, they may temporarily surrender control (i.e., experience flooding) and have to be plotted in the lower left quadrant, however, they have been trained to leave this state after its purpose has been fulfilled and ascend on pathways paved during their training (in the lower right quadrant). Schizophrenics belong to the lowest point in the lower left quadrant because they have neither recall nor control over their state of consciousness.

When going on a 'magical flight', however, shamans and mediums have to be plotted on the diagonal in the upper right quadrant because they experience and control the expansion of their consciousness to the point where they enter intuitive knowledge and the state of 'Being'.

I will now describe techniques and conditions which facilitate access to states of consciousness which differ markedly from the ordinary waking state.

(1) *Extreme Temperature Conditions* – The heat of a *sweat lodge*, for example, induces increased pulse rate, nausea, dizziness, and syncope (fainting). Like with fevers, high body temperatures seem to activate the immune system, detoxify the body, and also release emotional and cognitive blockages, facilitating spiritual experiences.

Spiritual exercises (e.g., meditation, prayer, evocation of saints in Christianity, Wakan-Tankan in Native American tradition or deities in Tibetan beliefs), on the other hand, do not only calm down the mind but also result in a calming of bodily functions which allows a different kind of heat to arise.

We have, therefore, to distinguish between *physical heat* which penetrates our body from the outside, leading to increased physical functions and also influencing our emotional, mental, and spiritual levels of experience and *spiritual heat*, generated through meditation and prayer by stilling physical functions to allow quiet transcendence and entry into different realities. The former should be plotted in the upper left quadrant and the latter in the upper right quadrant of my working model.

(2) *Physical or Sensory Deprivation* – In the *flotation tank*, for example, the boundaries between self and non-self dissolve. The body is not restricted by clothing. Neither sensory nor motor systems are in play. At this point, unusual shifts into slower alpha activity have been reported by Heron and Zubek, Welch, and Saunders (quoted in Achterberg 1985:33-35).

Aside from *restricted mobility* and *visual-sensory deprivation*, *sleep deprivation*, and *seclusion* also lead to alterations in consciousness. *Food* and *water deprivation* have, furthermore, an effect upon the pituitary and adrenal glands which directly affect the hypothalamus and hippocampal-septal systems (Winkelman 1986:178).

On a *vision quest*, individuals fast, do not drink, and forgo sleep for three or more days and nights. Through abstinence, the life energy is, indeed, "redirected toward healing, or to produce states of bliss" (Achterberg 1985:36, see also Foster 1987:264-271). The results are mind-expanding with varying degrees of control.

(3) *Pilgrimages* – Many oral traditions around sacred places – the sacred mountains of the Taoists, sacred trees, tombs of saints, sites of revelations (e.g., Lourdes, France; Fatima, Portugal; Medjugorje, Yugoslavia) – speak of religious trances occurring at these sites. Such trances cause a shift of attention and activate the pilgrims' self-healing powers. The question whether these miraculous shifts are the result of

- i. the *placebo* effect,
- ii. the pilgrim's expectations,
- iii. geographical and meteorological conditions or
- iv. 'outside intervention'

cannot be answered conclusively because we don't have the tools to prove whether a single one of these agents or all of the above caused the shift. We can, however, establish medical records which document the physical conditions of individuals before and after their pilgrimage and we should observe more closely the states of consciousness they are experiencing. These states may differ considerably from individual to individual.

We should also continue with our research of sacred sites which have been and are still used by shamans (e.g., Sedona in Arizona, or Mt. Shasta in California, USA).

(4) *Sonic Driving* – We all know that music entrains our mind and we are inclined to tune into vibrations coming from the outside as we also influence others by the sound of our voice.

There is archaeological documentation that drums and rattles were used already in prehistoric times. Drumming and rattling effects the central nervous system. Whether in religious or non-religious context, chanting also seems to produce pronounced shifts in consciousness, may they be calming, nourishing or evoking.

Research on rhythmic sensory stimulation has first been conducted in the thirties of this century. The Walters found in the 1940s that

"Stimulation of other receptors gives even more convincing results, particularly when a very large group of sensory units can be excited simultaneously and rhythmically, for then the central electrical response is correspondingly larger" (quoted in Heinze 1988:85).

Jilek (quoted in Heinze 1988:85) elicited responses to auditory driving at the fundamental of each stimulus frequency (usually 3 to 4 beats per second, a frequency commonly used by shamans). When Neher exposed clinically normal individuals to low-frequency high-amplitude acoustic stimulations produced by instruments similar to the deerskin drums used by North American Indians, he observed on the electroencephalogram that different sound frequencies were transmitted along different nerve pathways in the brain (quoted in Heinze 1988:86). (He had, however, reinforced the acoustic effects by flashing lights and did not control for all variables.)

It, however, depends on the kind of sonic stimulation whether listeners will descend into dissociative or ascend into mind-expanding states and how much control they are able to retain.

(5) *Kinetic Stimulation and Hyperventilation* – Extensive running and dancing result in overbreathing and oxygen depletion which, coupled with hypoglycemia, causes the appearance of slow wave activity (2-3 cps) and hallucinatory experiences, as do other forms of exertion (Winkelman 1986:180-181). I witnessed, for example, in India and Southeast Asia, ritual dancing which produced dissociative states before fire-walking and other physical feats. I observed, especially among spirit mediums in Southeast Asia who not always use kinetic stimulation, that a change in breathing patterns occurs.

To compare these practices with those in the United States, *rebirthing* comes to mind where the desired state is activated with the help of quick breathing. Dance, rhythmic music, lights, and several breathing techniques, are used by many psychotherapists today who combine elements of various shamanic traditions. Stanislav Grof (1985), e.g., uses holotropic breathing, certain body postures, lights, and music, and Felicitas Goodman (1986:81-118) found that certain postures, assumed during rattling, produce specific imagery, even in ethnically not related individuals whether they lived in prehistoric times or are living among us in contemporary societies.

Energy stimulations can also be observed in the use of *Reiki* (a Tibetan-Japanese version of laying on of hands). Apprentices report that they experience a strong surge of energy during initiation. Noteworthy in this context is also the energy darshan practiced in Asia, e.g., during the ritual initiation of disciples.

(6) *Use of Chemical and Hallucinogenic Substances* – Weston La Barre wrote about the peyote cult (1971) and Harner (1973, also Baer, McKenna, de Luna, etc.) discussed extensively the use of hallucinogenics in shamanistic ceremonies.

However, certain states of consciousness already produce chemical changes in the brain similar to those activated by hallucinogenic substances. The intention and concentration of an individual may suffice without any outside help. Research to investigate the latter possibility has begun and we anxiously await the first result.

Jilek (quoted in Heinze 1988:85), for example, talks about the endogenous opioid agents enkephalin and beta-endorphin, and possibly other neuroendocrine peptides such as neurotensin and bradykinin which may play an important role in the integration of pain information. Beta-endorphin injections will have antidiaphoretic, antidepressant, anxiolytic, analgesic and disinhibiting effects within five to ten minutes after injection and last from one to six hours. Kline (quoted in Heinze 1988:85) speculates that beta-endorphin, produced by the anterior pituitary, may be the body's own way of producing and controlling affective states.

The endorphins can be found in the limbic system, the thalamus, the periaqueductal gray matter, and the substantia gelatinosa of the spinal cord. They are also in areas of the brain which regulate respiration, motor activity, endocrine control and mood. Furthermore, the enkephalins are 'endogenous immunomodulators' which assist the immune system in fighting disease (Achterberg 1985:139). The entire natural pharmacopeia can, indeed, be reinforced by consciously entering and utilizing different states of consciousness. Achterberg added use of imagery which also plays a role in the placebo effect.

(7) *Hypnosis and Deep Sleep* are well documented means to access different states of consciousness. Historically, sleep therapy has been used already, e.g., in classical Greece at Epidaurus.

Tart (in Achterberg 1985:27-28) recorded brain waves (EEG), galvanic skin resistance responses (GSR), and heart rate from a woman who frequently had Out-of-Body (OOB) experiences during sleep. During the OOB, alpha activity was 1 1/2 cycles per second slower than the subject's normal alpha and there were no REM (rapid eye movements) which normally accompany dreaming. There was also no physiological arousal despite her heightened mental activity.

Hypnotherapy and other techniques of focussed attention are effectively used today by trained professionals. Hypnotism has proven to be a technique which bypasses an individual's "erroneously limited belief system" and circumvents "the all too narrow limits of ordinary everyday consciousness" (Erickson, Rossi and Rossi 1976:309).

Extreme deprivation during a vision quest is often reinforced by hypnotic suggestions (Rogers 1982:16-17, 20, 22) with which individuals intentionally prepare themselves for the visionary states. The visions then signal, illuminate, and provide guidance for the transformative process. I did not find any study which explored in depth the use of hypnosis by shamans, either self-hypnosis to bring about and enhance trance states or the use of hypnosis to shift the attention of their clients to provide a healing frame of mind which also includes post-hypnotic suggestions.

During my thirty years of field work, I witnessed, over and over again, how shamans condition themselves. I recognized many similarities to the preparations of actors when they condition themselves (before a performance) for the role

they are going to play. It will depend on the methods used to enter the specific states in which quadrant of the mind expanding states we want to plot the specific state.

(8) *Meditation* – In my book on *Trance and Healing in Southeast Asia Today* (1988:84), I discussed research on wakeful relaxed states where reduction in oxygen consumption occurs together with changes in carbon dioxide elimination. The rate and volume of respiration, when reduced, causes a slight increase in the acidity of arterial blood, marked by a decrease in blood lactate level. The heart beat slows down and there will be a considerable increase in skin resistance and alpha brain wave patterns with occasional theta waves.

We have numerous manuals on different kinds of meditation from Patanjali's *yoga sutras* (Prabhavananda 1969) in Hinduism to the "insight meditation" (*Satipatthana Sutta*, Ven. U Silananda 1990) in early Buddhism, from the tantric meditation systems of later Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism to the meditations of Taoist, Sufi, Hasidic masters and the Christian *Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Mottola 1964). They all employ breathing techniques and suggest focusing the mind, some use specific forms of visualization. The *Visuddhimagga* in *Theravada* (early) Buddhism, for example, suggests forty subjects of meditation (*kammatthana*). All of these meditation techniques prescribe certain body postures, too (see also, Goodman 1986, 1990).

When mental and spiritual health is the purpose of meditation techniques, do we find similar ultimate goals? The *Abhidhamma* speaks of 121 different mental states which can be cultivated through meditation until practitioners reach *nirvana* (complete extinction of material attachments) while Hindu, Sufi and Hasidic masters talk about the union with the Divine. The latter would indicate the surrender of control which forces us to plot this state in the upper left quadrant while the former indicates a consciously controlled expansion of the practitioner's mind.

Shamans usually maintain that they communicate with the world of spirits, closer to our human world. Only a few speak of a High God (e.g., *Wakan Takan* among the Sioux or *Huang-ti* among Chinese). Chinese shamans prefer to communicate with mediators between the High God and the human world, e.g., Kuan Yin or, even better, deified generals of the Three Kingdoms, etc. That means, they prefer a controlled, moderate expansion of their mind or seek 'spirit possession' and dissociate.

(9) *Ritualization* – Access to alternate states of consciousness is facilitated by ritualization which, after all participants agreed on the purpose of the ritual, requires the following seven steps:

- i. *creating a sacred space*: since time memorial, it has been the task of shamans and priests to create a safe place where the 'unusual' can happen. Visible boundaries are established in world religious, e.g. by placing *sima* stones around the *bot* (ordination

hall in Thai monasteries) or by forming a circle in shamanic practices. Such preparations create a state of readiness and raise the expectations. They also prepare practitioners for the experience of the unusual, i.e., the meeting with the supernatural world.

- ii. *purifying*: the site and all participants (with incense, sage, salt, or water).
- iii. *separating*: the 'ordinary reality' has to be left behind and 'non-ordinary reality' is entered ritually.
- iv. *evoking*: after the state of "liminality" (van Gennep 1960) has been reached, ordinary rules are suspended and spiritual forces can be invoked.
- v. *experiencing*: participants come, indeed, 'into the presence of the Divine' and experience the mystical union of being connected with everybody and everything else.
- vi. *celebrating*: the presence of the Divine is celebrated with food and often dance.
- vii. *sending off*: After having expressed gratitude for the manifestation, the Divine is sent off and a ritual closure protects, on one hand, the spiritual world from pollution and, on the other hand, participants from emotional overload.

After participants have returned to ordinary reality, ritualists facilitate the integration of the experience into daily life (see, e.g., Heinze 1991a:178-184 and 1991b:1-17). In other words, it is the ritualists who control the mind expansion of the participants.

Conclusions

Despite their frequent excursions into other realities, masters of different states of consciousness function well in their community in contrast to individuals who have no control over the different states they are experiencing. The latter, therefore, fit the pathology suggested in the DSM-III (see, e.g., Heinze 1991: 169-173). We have to learn to distinguish pathological from non-pathological cases. The main criterium appears to be the faculty to consciously access and exit alternate states of consciousness and, in most cases, also be able to recall the experience.

Science has to establish new categories for those who are capable of accessing other realities at will. The conscious evocation of alternate states of consciousness has already proven to be beneficial in setting the self-healing process in motion and does, indeed, increase the state of well-being of the practitioners and their clients (see, e.g., Achterberg 1985).

This paper intends to offer a survey of preliminary research. It also was written to indicate the directions our research could take. More detailed results about alternate states of consciousness can be expected from ongoing and future research.

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EURASIA

Shamanism: Universal Structures and Regional Symbols

By

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"All true wisdom is only found far from men, out in the great solitude and it can be acquired only through suffering. Privations and sufferings are the only things that can open a man's mind to that which is hidden from others." (An Eskimo shaman to Rasmussen)

Cultural Tradition as System

Let me quote, as an introductory text, a relatively unknown traveller's account from the beginnings of the 18th century (1715-22), when John Bell met with Vogul and Ostyak shamans somewhere in Siberia:

"...The country, adjacent to VERCHATURIA, is inhabited by a race of people called VOGULITZ, who differ in language, dress, and manners, from any nation I ever saw. Their features and persons have a resemblance of the TZOOWASHIANS near CAZAN: They have some obscure notions of the Deity; and are very fond of a kind of wizards called SHAMANS, whom they hold in great esteem. I shall have occasion to speak more fully of these SHAMANS afterwards. The VOGULITZ know nothing of agriculture, but live in huts in the woods, and subsist by hunting and fishing" (Bell 1763, 1:173).

"The OSTEAIKS, I mentioned above, differ from all the other tribes of natives in SIBERIA, both in complexion and language. Many of them fair, resembling the people of FINLAND, and they have many FINNISH words in their language. Their manner of life is nearly same with that of the TONGUSE, who border with them to the eastward. In summer, they live in the woods, in huts covered with birched bark. In winter, they dig pits across which they lay stakes, above them spread earth, to keep them warm. They have a fire in the middle, and a hole the roof to let out the smoke" (Bell 1763, 2:144).

"As to their religion, they are ignorant heathens, like the rest of the natives of Siberia. They have many both male and female shamans, who are in great esteem among them. These shamans have many small images, or rather blocks of wood, rudely cut with a knife or hatchet, representing a human figure, dressed up in rage of various colours, by which they pretend to foretell future events, such as the good or bad luck of those that go ahunting" (Bell 1763, 2:146).

It is quite interesting that John Bell in his book, *Travels from St. Petersburg in Russia to Diverse Parts of Asia* which was published in Glasgow (1763), consciously used, the term SHAMAN (even with capital letters) denoting the

wizards of the pagan Siberians. His description of the culture of the Ob-Ugrians, however it is a very brief one, gives a fairly good outline of the life style and the cultural traits, including some details of their shamanism.

This sketchy description includes some features of their material culture, and of their language and at the same time these notes are prototypes of the early and almost vague (but important) ethnographic descriptions. Those travellers' journals attempted to give systematic descriptions of a given culture as we – anthropologists or scholars of comparative religion – try to do so in our days.

Besides of the basic similarities in the contemporary anthropological descriptions and the old travellers' accounts there are differences as well. The some segments of culture (material culture, spiritual culture – including religion and shamanism, language, etc.) have been described but recently the cultural traditions are understood in terms of ethnosemiotic analysis.

What does it mean ethnosemiotic in the context of analysis of culture? In ethnosemiotics the basic presupposition is that every culture in general, and each cultural phenomena in particular can be seen as a system of signs (Hoppál 1988). A description and/or analysis of culture means the description of the different sign systems operating within the given culture. It must be clearly seen that in culture it is always the multiplicity of sign systems (or codes, or texts) which contain and transmit the information. This so called multicodality, in other words the simultaneous use of more than one code, serve to ensure the transmission of the cultural message. For instance, a shaman during his/her seance uses songs, incantations (natural language), movements (gestures, dancing), and the shaman-costume also can be seen as a system of symbols or signs. Generally speaking ethnosemiotics, as a method of understanding tradition, has to deal with the mechanism which creates these different codes (or texts), or sign systems. In other words these theoretical (ethnosemiotical) notions make more simple the definition of a given cultural phenomena, for instance shamanism.

So far shamanic traditions have been understood either as a part of the ecological system (Hultkrantz 1978), or as a part of the religious/ideological system, or as a kind of (psycho) therapeutic technique of ecstasy (Eliade 1964).

However, there are some neglected aspects as well, the Eurasian shamanism can be seen as a sign system of its own right, and the cultural traits of shamanism could be defined as a set of distinctive features in the course of description. This ethnosemiotic approach hopefully will help us to solve the problems of definition. Signs and symbols on shamans' dress and drums will lead to understand the symbolic meaning of the constituent elements of the system in the context of the whole cultural complex. So, my paper consists of two parts:

– *in the first part* a new type of definition of shamanism will be presented which seem to be significant yet unnoticed, and

– in the second part I will deal with the symbolic aspects of the shamanic traditions, since it was surprisingly disappointing how this aspect has been neglected even by the best studies.

Actually “the symbolic perspective of shamanism” seems, to be, an extremely important one as Jean Langdon states in her article (Langdon 1989:59-63) which appeared in the first volume of *Shamanism: Past and Present*.

On Definitions

It is an endless task to enumerate the definitions of shamanism. Or put it in a more simple way, to define who is a shaman? It is true that everybody who dealt with the problem of shamanism has his or her own vision or version on this delicate topic, has his or her definition of *the* shaman! Of course, it is hopeless to find or create *one* (eternal) definition since up till now some dozens of papers have been prepared on shamanism. It seems even more hopeless to make consensus among the definitions found in the literature concerning shamanism.

But still there are some points, which seem to be solid and fixed, and recurrent in the definitions given by different scholars. Let me enumerate some of these definitions, or at least some of their basic ideas. Interestingly enough that most of the attempts which wants to define shamanic phenomena started with the understanding of the social roles of the shamans. Most of the authors of those basic works on shamanism usually gave a list of “the functions of the shaman” (Lommel 1967). Those definitions have been concentrated on the understanding of the social status, and the “role-taking of the shaman” (Honko 1969). Even, most recent works and definitions were more interested in what the shamans do? or what were their tasks?

As Åke Hultkrantz said:_____

“The shaman establishes contacts with the supernatural world. [...] The shaman's role as a mediator is founded on the idea that he alone is equipped to, serve the interests of the society on the ecstatic level” (Hultkrantz 1978:31,94).

As he defined the shaman is a doctor, a diviner, a psychopomp (who escorts the souls of the dead to their new realm in the other life), is the hunting magician of the group, and the sacrificial priest (Hultkrantz 1978:35-38). We can quote as Louise Bäckman has made a list of the Saami shamans' activities, as follows:

“The *noaidie*'s task was to get information from remote places (in a state of trance), to find out where game or lost reindeer was to be found (by divining with the drum), to predict future, to diagnose illnesses, and to act as a healer, [...] to correspond with gods or spirits, [...] to rescue a dying or seriously ill member of his group by fetching his 'lost soul' [...] to act as a sacrificial leader” (Bäckman 1986:258).

László Vajda enumerated the following main characteristic of shamanism ritual ecstasy (without which there is no shamanism) theorioomorphic helping spirits, initiation of a special kind (so called 'calling'), journey to the other world, battle between shamans, shamanic paraphernalia (Vajda 1959). These features are much more phenomenological in nature than Å. Hultkrantz action-oriented definition: "shamanism as the complex of beliefs, rites and tradition revolving around the shaman" (Hultkrantz 1978:46) and his activities. – Our own definition is based on the presupposition that the belief system is of central theoretical importance:

"Shamanism is a complex system of beliefs which includes the knowledge of and belief in the gods and helping spirits of the shamanic pantheon, the memory of certain texts (chants, shaman-songs, legends, myths, etc.), the rules for activities (rituals, sacrifices, the technique of ecstasy, etc.) and the objects, tools and paraphernalia used by shamans (drum, shamans staff, bow, mirror, costume, etc.). All these components are closely connected by beliefs given in the shamanic complex" (Hoppál 1985:135).

There are four main domains of shamanic traditions which are basically identical with the main cultural codes. Namely (1) the world of objects; (2) the rite technique, or activities (the gesture language); (3) then the real texts in a natural language (or the linguistic code); (4) and finally the ideological system (belief system) which is usually labelled as "system of symbols" (Geertz 1966:4).

In terms of ethnosemiotics these above domains represents four different codes or languages of culture. Here the well known good old method of structural linguistics could be used. Put it very simply: we have describe each phenomena of every shamanic complex in terms of distinctive features. To do so one has to follow how was it done in linguistics, when the distinctive features were used to describe the differences between the different sounds. These features could be seen as elementary signs which form a system.

So, we have at least two tasks: the first is to make a list of the cultures where shamans could be found (or even the new pseudo-shamans); the second task is to make a list of the distinctive features by the help of which we may characterize those shamans,

wizards, medicine men

Saami - *noaidie*

Buryat - *böö* or *ütegen*

Hungarian - *táltos*

Korean - *mudang*

Altaic - *kam*

Eskimo - *angekut*

and even the Russian - *skhomorokhy*

Southern Slavic - *zduhač*

and the Italian - *benandante*.

Let us take a closer look of these features, just start with the most simple ones:

- male/female – which one are was in majority
- hereditary/non-heredity (learned) type of shamanic ability (Choi 1989:286)

In Hungarian folk beliefs the *táltos* has sign at his birth = a little tooth, as a real distinctive feature!

An other set of feature could describe the trance is it an ecstatic type/or possession type of trance which is used by the shaman or shamaness. Ian Lewis (1984) published an excellent article on this problem presented in *Shamanism in Eurasia*. But the problem of trance which is commonly labelled as an altered state of consciousness is not a very simple one!

Since most of the definitions of shamanism agreed without ASC there is no shamanism, however, Erika Bourguignon, in her basic article on the *World Distribution and Patterns of Possession States* (1968) pointed out that according to ethnographic data almost 90 percent of the world population use some kind of ASC (in one form or an other) in the context of ritual (or religious) behaviour (Bourguignon 1968:3-34, cited by Lex 1979). But most of the definitions forget how it is was induced.

- by using drug / or without drug
- what kind of drug used in ASC / or trance
- plant or mushroom / among the Voguls
- peyote – Mexico
- ayahuasca – South America (Amazonia).

Table 1

Drug	mushroom peyote ayahuasca others, tobacco		Voguls, Hungarian, etc. Mexico South America			
Non-drug use	sonic	drum jewsharp rattle sticks clapping ...	Altai North American Indian Buryat Pomo			
	Motion	dance	alone			
			group	circle		
				in line	Buryat	
No-motion	meditation hiperventilation fasting etc.					

Table 2

features	cultures	EURASIA										AMERICA				SOUTH ASIA		AFRICA	AUS- TRALIA
		S	V	O	Ya	K	Ng	Bu	E	Ma	Nir	Tli	Hu	Jiv	Java				
BELIEFS	soul dualism	-	+				+	+	-	-	-	+	-						
	drug use		+	+			/				-		+	+					
	sonic		+				+	+				+							+
	trance		+	+			+	+	+	/	-	+							+
	possession						/				-		-				+		
	hereditary		+				+	+	+							+			
	learned						/						-						
PARAPHERNALIA	helping spirit			+			+	+	+										
	drum	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-						
	head-horn			/		/	+	+				-							
	dress			/	+	/						-							
	feather							+		+		-							
	bells	-	-	-	+	+	-	+		+		-	-						
	mirrors	-	-	-	+	+	-	-		+		-	-						
TEXTS	staff	-	-	-	-	-	-	+				-	-						
	costume	-	-	-	+	+	+		+			-	+						
	myth on the origins of shaman	-					/		/			+	-						
	own song	+					+			-			-						
	heroic epic						-						-						
	calling spirits	+					+					+	+						
	prayer						/			+			+						

S = Saami

Ng = Nganasan

Tli = Tlingit

K = Kazakh

Na = Nanai

Ya = Yakut

Ma

O

E

= Manchu

= Ostyak (Khanti)

= Evenki

V

Bu

Jiv

= Vogul (Mansi)

= Buryat

= Jivaro

If there were no use of drug than some instruments were used as sonic indication of ASC, for example:

drum – almost everywhere! (Central Asia)

jewsharp – a very powerful instrument in the Altai Mountain

rattle – Central and North American Indians.

Since, the drum was used worldwide we have to make clear what it essential, or not, so we have to include all distinctive features or every shamans into our list. If there is a peculiar thing on a shaman's costume (for instance a bell on his belt, or a mirror on his chest) it can be a distinctive feature which can differentiate a shaman from another religious specialist (within in the same culture or in general).

So after analysing a fairly big number of descriptions of different shamans in different cultures one can put together a fairly long list of distinctive features.

The cluster of these features will show us the structure of a particular shamanic complex. These set of features or basic elements as meaningful structures could be used in the comparative and/or contrastive studies of shamanism since by the help of their patterns (or structural differences) we can decide which people (tribes) belong to the same cultural areas, we can say something about their relatedness in historical perspectives, as well.

And finally one can agree how many distinctive features will be enough to define a shaman or a religious specialist to be labelled as a shaman.

Symbolic Aspects

What we can learn from the above methodology which is ethnosemiotic in orientation based on systems theory since no signs stand alone but rather in deep interconnectedness?

What we have as a result: a great number of distinctive features will define the *local* versions of shamanism, the cultural variations of shamanism.

But at the same time the basic elements (trance techniques, drum, helping spirits, etc.) may give us a hint about the universal (not culture dependent) but the *general* model of shamanism.

There is no agreement on the definition among the students of shamanism, but most of them have agree in the importance of the further research on the symbolic aspects of shamanism as a cultural complex. Put it very briefly: this symbolicity reveals itself in the forms of local features, and these features turned into and used as relevant symbols.

We are agreed in the following statement that

"recent studies on shamanism have demonstrated [...] in many societies that shamanism provides the central symbols of the culture as well as organized the society" (Langdon 1989:59).

Or as Lola Romanucci-Ross puts it even more boldly:

"the shaman (and the anthropologist) enjoy the status of interpreter of symbols" (1989:35).

Ritual is preeminently a symbolic action and shamans, all over the world, always tried to reach the desired state of affairs by symbolic enactment (Skorupski 1976:58). For instance, curing a sick person based on symbolic healing which means

"restructuring of a disorder modelled in a mythic world [...] all symbolic healing methods involve an ontological shift for the patient a particularized mythic world. Symbolic healing becomes possible when a mythic world exists for both the therapist (shaman) and the patient" (Dow 1986:150).

The shamans used special objects in their rites which had symbolic significance both as a whole and separately. Although most of the records of the shamanism of the various nations were published by neglecting to examine the symbolic aspects of shamanism, however, it is relatively easy to reconstruct the symbolic system.

Costume was one of the most important attributes of the shaman, the form of which depended, from among other things, on the shape of the power animal of the shaman, as a helping spirit. Thus the symbol of a stag, bear or bird could be found on the shaman's costume.

Among the Tungus the bird type costume is the most common, because the bird aided communication with the upper world. The novices had bird costumes because they were simpler and lighter to wear. The shamans wore heavier metal accessories on their clothes when they went down into the lower world. A shaman could have two types of costumes. The meanings of the two types did not indicate the opposition of black/white shaman but rather one type was worn for certain rites (e.g. searching for the chosen child, or to ensure the success of the hunt) while the other was used during the curing of the sick (e.g. reclaiming the spirit). The two types are not the same for all ethnic groups, so for example the bird is commoner among the Yakuts, while the stag is found in the areas above Lake Baykal. Among the Yakuts stag costumes are necessary for the healing of the sick and for costumes are adorned with many metal accessories, while the bird costumes have various kinds of bells. The bird type has many fringes and tassels which represent wings but the form is not always the same, the iron skeletal parts are attributable to the supposed wing bones, while the stag costume contains a set of ribs, these appeared on the shaman clothes of the Yakuts.

The clothes had distinct symbolic meanings not only in their entirety but in their various parts. For example on the back of the Yakut shaman's cloak were metal symbols of the sun and moon, they lit up the shaman's way during

his/her journey to the dark other world. The skeletal like depictions and pendants on the initiation clothes signified the experience of ecstatic death/rebirth.

In his paper "The Shaman as Representative in the World Beyond" Ivan Kortt dealt with the motif of 'dismemberment' and with the symbolism of the skeleton represented symbolically on the shaman's attire. In initiation rituals the dismemberment of the shaman-to-be seems to be a symbol of temporary death followed by rebirth. This means simply that initiation is closely connected with death and bones of the skeleton symbolize the whole clan or lineage. According to Kortt's analysis the shaman serves as the representative of his clan in the other world. In Siberian shamanic rituals there is an important hidden meaning connected with symbolic rebirth. Mainly in ecstatic initiation, which takes place in the other world (i.e. in the world of the spirits) the shaman candidate acts as a symbolic mediator between the two worlds (Kortt 1984).

After the symbolic death the chosen shaman is naturally reborn or rather after the so-called 'shaman sickness' he/she is healed. This also means that they heal themselves (with the help of helping spirits) and this at once signifies the strengthening of personality and the restoration of spiritual balance, which makes them capable of healing others. This is also a new type of teaching of the ancient universally valued curing technique.

As the shaman's clothes were touched with the power of the helping spirit they were thus endowed with magic forces and were buried along with the shaman. The shaman's headdress in Eurasia is generally similar to a crown and has the same symbolic value. We are familiar with feathered and antlered headdress which referred to the bird and stag forms of the helping spirit. The crowns of the Buryat shamans were highly worked hand wrought ones. Other pieces of costume also had meanings, for example the aprons were very important, especially in places where the shamans were not fully clothed like the Manchurians, which I myself saw in August 1991 in China. This ritual costume is mentioned in a manuscript written in the 1770s:

"the shaman women tied a flower patterned skirt around herself, she tied it on with a shaman belt hung with small bells, in her hand she held a small drum and a drumstick, then she bowed before the spirits" (*Nissan shamaness...*)

The drum was the most important of the shaman's instruments. The making of which was a part of the initiation, learning period, it formed part of the ecstatic technique. The frame of the drum was made from special rough timber, from wood which symbolised the cosmic tree in the belief system of the shamans. From the form of the drum it is possible to establish exactly who made it, that is to which ethnic group it belongs, because it was a truly traditional instrument added to which it belongs to the class of sacred objects, so its form conserves both tradition and belief. Drawing on the work of Russian researchers we put together a general map of the Eurasian drum types.

Each part of the drum has symbolic significance, but for now we will simply say that the drum was seen as a means of transport. The Buryats, Yakuts and Sojots saw them as symbolic horses, while the Nomadic Evenks called them ships. It is clear this refers to the fact that the monotonous beat of the drum helped the shaman on his/her journey to ecstasy. Before the seance the Altaic Turk shamans 'animated' the symbolic enlivening of the drum, they held the drum above the fire in order to tighten the skin. This also symbolised the animation of the animal from whose skin the drum was made, only then could it serve the owner of the drum as an animal spirit. The spirit of the drum was also the helping spirit of the shaman. The sound of the drum called the spirits to the ceremony, it is not accidental that the ever-quickening drum beat resembled the drumming of horses hooves. Apart from the drum the shamans used horse-head tipped sticks during their 'journeys'.

On the drums, on the outer and sometimes inner part of the hide, were enigmatic symbols, recognisable images and depictions. Especially significant were the Altaic Turks' drums and the ancient Saami drums. It is clear from the various depictions that the images of the shaman world, sometimes constellations (cf. Jankovics 1984), which recorded important mythological themes, were related in the system of the stars and served the shaman's spiritual orientation during their symbolic journeys between the worlds, being mediator in a symbolic way.

The shaman as a mediator is placed at those very critical points where the human sphere and the suprahuman sphere do overlap. His activity covers the liminal spheres of the world which are dangerous for ordinary human beings and for shamans as well. His or her mediating activity relies on beliefs in taking all the difficulties (pain, sickness, responsibility of decision/making, etc) upon him or herself, symbolically. All these observations and data do stress the utmost significance of the symbolic aspect of the mediation process. Most recent publications agree on the fact that this mediation is a central part of shamanistic ideology. Here shamanism as an 'ideology' is understood not as a religion, but rather as a special system of beliefs centred around symbolic meditation as discussed above. A.-L. Siikala paid a special attention to the symbolic aspect of shamanism and she rightly stated that

"the shaman's function as mediator between the normal and the supranormal worlds is based on systems of beliefs according to which difficulties threatening the even pace of life are caused by representatives of the spirit world, and they can be eliminated with the help of benevolent spirits" (Siikala 1978:319).

In line with Siikala's opinion the main task of the shaman is to create a direct and reciprocal state of communication directed at the spirit world, and the very structure of the shamanizing seance reflects this symbolic communication.

The same opinion is held about the shamans of North and South American Indians because they have been seen as those who "served as mediators

between the sacred and profane worlds" (Bean 1976:110). As Barbara Myerhoff puts it: "The shaman is above all a connecting figure, bridging several world for his people, travelling between this world, the underworld and the heavens" (Myerhoff 1976:99). As a mediator, the shaman is the restorer of balance. In other worlds, they keep up shamanic equilibrium of power relations within their groups and with the outside worlds. Those who have access to the channels of communication have more power within their community.

The shaman taking the role of a mediator is a specialist in ritual communication and in keeping up the fragile state of social/psychological equilibrium by symbolic mediation between world of ordinary and non-ordinary realities. They have special symbols which give power to them, and all in all shaman ceremonies symbolize the process of eliminating ordinary reality to get access to another state of consciousness, or to put it even more shortly: symbols make a shaman.

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The Transmission of the Shaman's Position in South Siberia

By

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To specialists on shamanism it is a commonplace that the position of a shaman is inherited in some particular families through countless generations while in other families no shamanship occurs. This could easily be explained so long as shamanship as a whole, not only the initial phase of it, was looked at as a form of psychic illness. This illness was diagnosed according to the generally discussed mental illnesses at the time of these hypotheses. Thus, Russian investigators at the beginning of the 20th century, for instance Rychkov and Bogoraz, looked at shamans as highly 'nervous' people. According to the hotly discussed theories of Freud, shamanism was also interpreted as a special form of hysteria, 'arctic hysteria'. Others explained the altered states of consciousness of the shamans as epilepsy. Western books on shamanism echoed these opinions, e.g. Nioradze (1925:50f) and Ohlmarks (1939:7-39). Silverman used shamans as examples of schizophrenia even in the 1960s and an as important ethnopsychologist as Devereux gave reports on shamans as people with mental disorder.

I don't want to dwell any further on theoretical approaches to convince readers that shamanism is a psychic illness. But even recent important specialists on shamanism as G.M. Vasilevich (1963:373) and V. Diószegi wrote in the same vein:

"The Buryat shaman Khadi is an introverted person; he gives the impression of a nervous man... The behaviour of the Beltir Chibadaev is eccentric and misanthropic. He too is very uncommunicative and probably insane... Borgoyakov has a nervous complaint (his mouth is always open, his tongue hanging out of it nervously twitching). The Karagas Kokuev is taciturn, he withdraws from other people and is quite unable to concentrate; additionally he suffers at every full moon from headaches. Bolkhoev evidently has a psychic defect, he also seems to be physically in bad condition (when I lived in his house, he had often nose-bleeds)... Among the former shamans whom I knew best a large number doubtless have to be looked at as abnormal (nervous, insane) persons. These abnormalities are obviously inherited in the family-(tribal) line" (Diószegi 1959:64).

The symptoms enumerated in this dilettante list of signs of insanity, which I quote only in part, are introvertedness and taciturnity, the impression of

eccentricity and misanthropy to a traveller who didn't know the language of the people, 'nervousness' and an 'evident psychic defect', whatever this may mean, headaches and nose-bleeds. I don't need to disprove Diószegi's opinion in detail. Psychological tests of American investigators, especially by Ackerknecht and Klopfer and Boyer, showed clearly that shamans are autnormal. Their trance can be better explained by role-taking, such as Siikala (1978) does.

The above quoted illnesses were thought of as inherited, although only epilepsy is in reality. If we reject these obsolete explanations of physical inheritance of shamanism within certain families, we must look for other explanations. This demands, as a first step, that we analyse the hereditary successions of shamans in different Siberian ethnic groups. There are not many detailed reports on shamanistic succession in prerevolutionary or early Soviet Siberia. Radloff (1893, II:16), for instance, wrote simply: "The ability and science of shamanizing is [...] hereditary and passes from father to son, but also in special though rare cases from father to daughter."

I found the most detailed shamanistic genealogies in the publications of four 1920s and 1930s Russian authors, based on thoroughly collected materials during a long period of fieldwork just before or after the Revolution. Besides, such fieldwork was usual in Tsarist Russia long before Malinowski's, though this is less well-known in the rest of the scientific world. These authors are A.V. Anokhin, who wrote *Materials on Shamanism among the Altaians* in 1924, G. Sanzheev with his work on 'Weltanschauung' and *Shamanism among the Alar Buryats* in 1928 and S.M. Shirokogoroff, whose famous *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* was published in 1935. Additionally I should mention the materials of G.M. Vasilevich, who spent the years between 1925 and 1935 mostly among the northern Tungus, the Evenks, whose language she spoke fluently.

Sanzheev was a Buryat anthropologist, who had the opportunity to watch Buryat shamans already in his childhood and to interview them without the slightest language problems. He didn't write of illness but emphasized that the main condition for becoming a shaman is that shamans are among the ancestors whose spirits elect a person (1928:977). This is the reason why all Buryat shamans have to know their genealogies to at least 9 generations. Sanzheev experienced that they all indeed had this knowledge.¹ The heredity of shamanism continues in the male line. But if there is no male offspring, even no small boys, the spirits elect a girl. After her marriage the spirits switch over to the lineage of her husband. Therefore shamans have to know their genealogy, not only in the male but also the female line (1928:979). Sanzheev gives the example of a shamanistic genealogy known from the beginning of the 17th century. The shamanistic spirits were brought in by the marriage of a female

shaman (see note 1) and inherited by one of her grandsons. The latter died without grandchildren and handed the spirits down to his brother's grandson. Sanzheev noticed that shamanistic heredity does not pass regularly from one generation to the next, but jumps one generation more or less regularly. The inheritance passes 'in a zigzag', as Sanzheev puts it (1928:978).

In his booklet on the Darkhat of 1930 he noticed nevertheless an example of direct inheritance from mother to son. But this shaman was given to a monastery in his early childhood, where he lived till he got a call from his late mother's spirits already in the age of 31 (1930:56f.) and he had obviously missed his mother.

Shirokogoroff, who lived from 1912 till 1918 among the Tungus groups of Manchuria and the Transbaikial deals amply with the forms of transmission of shamanship in these regions. He states:

"The shamanship is transmitted from grandfather or his brothers to the grandchildren – males and females – from the grandmother (father's mother) to the grandchildren. However, the shamanship may also be transmitted to other young members of the clan, usually missing one generation" (Shirokogoroff 1935:345).

"Doubtless the learning of shamanistic methods requires a long time, so that the shaman must spend several years, before he can treat people and be a good shaman. But the theories may have a great influence also: for instance, the idea that the candidate can appear only among every second generation" (*Ibid.*, 349).

Shirokogoroff was especially interested in the forms of transmission to females and recorded a shaman genealogy from the Tungus of Manchuria. This genealogy shows a regular inheritance from a male shaman to his daughter who left the clan by marriage, but may act to the profit not only of her husband's clan but to her own clan (see note 1). After her death or her inability in old age to master spirits, the spirits regularly pass from her husband's clan back to her natal clan, to one of the male children of one of her brothers. Transmission takes place, as Sanzheev has already stated, in a zig zag. This form of transmission is preferred by those exogamic clans who have marriage alliances (cf. Shirokogoroff 1929:212f.), especially through an interchange of women. The shamanistic spirits practically remain inside one marriage alliance (1935:345f.), which may help to hold the alliance together. But he continues:

"[...] the tendency of keeping shamanship in lines, [...] the clan specification of spirits, and the intrusion of new spirits do not leave much space for the elaboration of a rigid system of transmission of shamanship" (Shirokogoroff 1935:346).

I have found the best data on transmission of shamanship in the 25 genealogies of shamans in the ethnic groups of the Altai mountains, collected in 1910 by Anokhin and controlled by him again in 1912 over a longer period of fieldwork. Alas the form of noting the genealogies by the anthropologist

and his helper, Nikiforov, in these early years gives rise to some uncertainties, because in the matrilineal fathers and brothers of a female are not always clearly discernable. Nevertheless these data allow a tentative form of statistics. All the shamans whom he interviewed remembered the names of their ancestors and whether they were shamans or not in 4 to 6 ascending generations. Two of them even gave the names of their ancestors to 8 or 9 generations, but these genealogies show stronger signs of fictiveness than the others. 11 shamans out of 21, whose dates can be accepted as relatively reliable, named their grandfathers or other ancestors of the F2 generation as the last shamans before them. Three mentioned ancestors of the F3 – and two even of the F4 generation. In contrast to these 16 shamans only 5 gave names of persons in the generation before their own: in 4 cases these were the names of their mother's brothers and in one case a female shaman mentioned her early-deceased mother as the last shaman before herself within the lineage. There was no single case of transmission of shamanism from father to son, which Radloff, travelling in the same region 30 years before but visiting each group only for some days, in his Europocentrism thought to be the rule.

The special tutelary spirits of the shamans were even more seldom spirits of shamans from the generation immediately before the presently practising one, as the Altaians had told Anokhin. Only one shaman said his late mother's brother was such a spirit, and the young woman whom I already mentioned called her deceased mother's spirit as her special help. Most of the others mentioned the spirits of dead shamans in the F3 to F6 generations as their special tutelage. Three named even those from F7 and two, one each, from F8 and F9 generations respectively.

In those generations the shaman's genealogies however change significantly. A shaman appears in this remote period in every generation, not only in every second one, as in the time more familiar to the Altaians. Obviously a telescoping has taken place, omitting all non-shamanistic, that is less famous, ancestors. Only a noble lineage was an exception of this rule. The shaman of this lineage remembered his non-shaman ancestors as well. Many of the shamans of these early generations – having lived 150 to 200 years ago – were said to possess miraculous powers and to have done marvellous deeds in their lifetime, the stories of which enrich the special mythology of the group, while the core of reality in them becomes smaller from generation to generation. Most of the shamans prefer tutelary spirits who are far enough away to be imagined as very powerful, but not so far as to become quite unrealistic, that is, as mentioned, in the F3 to F6 generations.

Vasilevich collected the genealogies of 48 shamans, of whom 42 claimed to have inherited their spirits from ancestors. She published her findings in 1963. Only 11 cases of inheritance from father to son and 2 from father to daughter

or mother to son were known, but 26 from ancestors of the F2 to the F4 generations, among them 20 from grandfather to grandchildren. In 3 cases the transmission took place between brothers, that is in the same generation, after one brother, who had inherited the spirits from ancestors in one of the generations before, died prematurely (1963:374f.).

Other reports on transmission of Siberian shamanism are less exhaustive. Diószegi, who emphasizes that shamanism passes from father to son (e.g., 1959a:272) gives only one detailed genealogy, that of the shaman Kyzlasov from the ethnic group of the Sagai-Turks. This includes 9 generations (1959:61), and shows, despite his assertion, the passing from grandfather to grandson with full regularity. Others of his examples also indicate this regularity of inheritance (1959a:273). Karal'kin has learned the same rule from a shaman in northeastern Tuva (1966:48).

Even so remote an example of shamanism as Dayals from Hindukush, who were interviewed by P. Snoy at the end of the 1950s, gives a hint to the effect that the same conditions may be operative here: four of them told the anthropologist that they were following their grandfathers as Dayals. Only in one case a member of the preceding generation, the mother of a male Dayal, had been a shaman too (1975:189ff.)²

What is the reason for these regularities in the transmission of the position of the shaman? As I stressed at the beginning, and as I have tried to show by analysing the forms of transmission, the reasons should not be sought in physical inheritance, which is for the most part erroneously believed to keep mental disorder in particular families, but in social rules of inheritance. In all Siberian societies from which I have given data, these rules stress the male line. In the same way shamanism is transmitted preferentially in the male line, though, as in other matters of inheritance, women may be inheritors, when able males are lacking. Among the exogamic clans of the Tungus additional conditions concerning marriage alliances can be noticed. These similarities of property- and shamanship-transmission give further evidence that the heredity of shamanship is not a physical one. The difference from the rules governing property inheritance lies in jumping one generation in the majority of transmissions of shamanship. The reason for this seems obvious: the normal time of the vocation of a shaman is puberty, between the age of 13 and 17. In his twenties a shaman is in most cases already fully active, though it must be admitted that there are many later starts. When a young man is about twenty, his father has normally reached the age of 40 to 50. This is not yet the time for him to resign. But his father, the grandfather of the young man, was usually already senile at this period in the life of his grandchild given the conditions of life in prerevolutionary Siberia. That means, he loses the ability to master the spirits or is even about to die. Shirokogoroff gives additionally an economic reason so far as the Tungus are concerned:

"the son is usually looking after his father-shaman, because [...] the shaman cannot do two things – the hunting and a regular carrying out of the shamanistic performances – so the shaman usually needs support of the junior groups, and therefore both the father and the son cannot be shamans" (Shirokogoroff 1935:345).

As I analyse the data given by the authors quoted, it seems there is a psychological reason, too. Shamans are initiated usually during puberty and the first years thereafter, during the phase of intensively searching for one's own identity among young people, of trials to loosen oneself from the overwhelming influence of parents. Grandparents are usually seen from a greater distance and are often less demanding. This is just the time when the roles of parents are seen most critically by children. Studies from different parts of the world have shown that this is not only a European problem, but is connected with the development of human personalities all over the world. Without being able to discuss detailed examples here, I can only remind of the well known East African social organizations, within which there are strict relations between parents, specially fathers, and young people, but relaxed and joking relations with grandparents (e.g. cf. Leakey 1977:85, Sigrist 1967:114). In the material presented here I found two cases of young people who lost their parents early and felt a vocation indicated by their spirits thereafter. These exceptions to the prevailing form of jumping one generation in the transmission of the shaman's position can easily be explained: by early death or early parting from the mother-shaman the conflict with the generation immediately before obviously could not occur. That meant for those shamans themselves that their mother's spirits were calling them, that is of a person belonging to the immediately preceding generation. But the most shamans did not feel a call from the spirits of their fathers or mothers to whom they might have had a critical relationship during the phase of their life in which shamanistic vocation takes place. The relations to their mother's brother or father's sister seem less affected by critical distance as Anokhin's materials show.

Notes

1. In contrary to Sanzheev, S.P. Baldaev collected not detailed but more or less legendary genealogies, among them 16 genealogies in which shamanship occurs (1970:58, 77f., 129, 141f., 164, 173, 216f., 222, 231, 265, 288, 296, 302, 305, 317, 346).

They show that despite the rule of heredity

in the male line the most powerful shamans were females.

2. R. Vossen from Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde, as a specialist for witchcraft-studies in Europe, told me that German male witches often inherited their abilities from their grandfathers.

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Shamanism and Pragmatism in Siberia

By

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This paper is devoted to the problem of relations between shamanism and power. There are two kinds of problems. One concerns the shaman as a specialist and the other one shamanism as a symbolic system. Both problems arise from the evidence of limitations as to the extension of their socio-political power. As everyone knows, shamanism is present as a symbolic all-embracing system only in non-centralized societies, whereas in centralized, state societies, shamanism is present only in the form of isolated, marginalized phenomena carried out by more or less marginal individuals. In other words, shamanism acts as a central religion in non-state societies, and is unable to act as a state religion, whereas it may combine as an inferior constituent with world religions. In short, the shaman's position is not found to be evolving towards the position of the head of a centralized Church and clergy, and shamanism is not found in the position of a state religion, organized as a Church based on a doctrine. There is no centralized shamanistic society as such, and shamanistic practices in centralized or state societies are peripheral and scattered.

The question therefore is twofold: what is the kind of power associated with the shaman's function? And is there a structural or ideological reason why this power should be politically limited, unable to be transformed into state power?

The purpose of my paper is to describe the nature of the shaman's power and to try to account for its limitation. I shall propose, first, that the political limitation of shamanism results from its very structure and ideology, and second, that it is balanced by its capacity for revival, which is also a basic feature of its structure. The argument will be that shamanism requires pragmatism as a basic principle of action, and therefore is opposed to any kind of dogmatism and codification. I shall try to show that this pragmatism is not to be seen as a deficiency, but on the contrary is the condition for efficiency.

The ethnographical basis of my propositions is the situation of shamanism in Siberia. The data have been collected from both Russian and Soviet sources and personal fieldwork in Buryatia and Mongolia. To begin with, I shall briefly present the principles of shamanism based on the analysis of its most archaic form. This archaic shamanism is found among the native societies of the Siberian forest. They live by hunting, fishing and gathering, but I shall speak of them

as hunters' societies, for hunting is the most prestigious activity, with reindeer and elk as favoured game; whatever its economic importance, it has a strong ideological bearing on shamanism.

The hunters' societies of the Siberian forest believe that the animal species used for food (game and fish) are animated by spirits – in the same way as the body of man is animated by his soul. It is necessary to make an agreement with the spirits in order to hunt animals or to fish, that is, one must act upon supernatural in order to take resources from nature. This making of agreements is the main function of the shaman. In other words, the shaman is in charge of establishing and maintaining the relationship between the hunters' community and the spirits of game animals. More precisely, his task is to obtain from the spirits good luck or fortune for the hunters, that is promises of game for the coming season; this task is performed during a large collective ritual, which is sometimes the only regular one in these societies. Thus, the shaman's action on the spirits is a prerequisite for the hunter's action on the animals.

Relationships with animal spirits are conceived of as similar to relationships within society. Taking resources from nature must accordingly occur in the framework of a formal exchange relationship and be balanced by a compensation. The exchange relationship is conceived of on the model of an alliance, which is expressed in the ritual marriage of the shaman with the daughter (or sister) of the game-giving spirit. This symbolic marriage makes the shaman a rightful husband in the supernatural world, and not an abductor; therefore, as a husband he is entitled to perform his symbolic hunting, that is, to obtain good luck or promises of game. The notion of exchange further implies giving back as a balance for taking, which is expressed all over Siberia in the following belief: in the same way as human beings feed on the flesh of game animals, the spirits of these game animals feed on human flesh and blood – that is, they make them fall sick and die. Thus sickness (experienced as a loss of vitality) and death are understood as a just payment for successful hunting in both the past and future; the flesh and blood of man himself are the only possible compensation in such a way of life as hunting where there is no food produced by man. In other words the exchange law between mankind on one hand and the world of natural and supernatural beings on the other hand makes them partners as well as game for each other.

This conception explains why the spirits are considered to be ambivalent: they give life, but must take it back sooner or later. So is it with the shaman, who must carry out the exchange process with the spirits: he is ambivalent as well: he takes vital force from the animal spirits, but must ensure that finally the human vital force will return to the other world, in order that the exchange relationship may continue. His art only consists in temporizing for turning this exchange in the favour of his community, that is in taking as soon and as much as possible, and giving back as little and as late as possible. Thus there is

a delay, a time-lag period within reciprocity and it is possible to take advantage of this delay. Such is the nature of the shaman's mediation. It may be analysed as introducing a subjective hierarchy into the objectively reciprocal exchange with the supernatural beings. In other words, although man must strictly respect the principle of exchange, he may play upon its applications or realizations.

All this accounts for the characteristics of the shaman's practice: it is not a liturgy to apply, it is an art to exert, and it implies seducing, negotiating, and even tricking. This is a practice that is altogether ambivalent, pragmatic and personalized – personalization being a necessary companion to pragmatism. This is why the aptitude for becoming a shaman is always attributed to a personal gift or talent; this personal gift or talent is interpreted as the ability to seduce the daughter of the game-giving spirit, as far as it is supposed to consist in the full possession of a male's qualities. He will be a good shaman on the earth, first, insofar as he is a good husband in the supernatural world, because he needs his in-laws' support for performing his actions, namely for obtaining good luck in hunting. Secondly, he will be a good shaman for his people, to the extent that he makes good use of the place reserved in the exchange process for his mediatory action.

Thus the shaman has a potentially prominent and powerful position: first from his being the one who has personal relationships in the supernatural world, which distinguishes him from ordinary people; second from his being invested with a function dependent on his own qualities, which may distinguish him among the shamans; and third, from his being the one in charge of the largest collective regular ritual, which makes him central in society. It is well-known that this type of ritual, which goes by different names according to societies and observers ("ritual of renewal, prosperity or fertility, or life-giving ritual"), is the most significant from the political point of view. Mastering this type of ritual means a prominent position and therefore constitutes a source of power. However, in the case of the Siberian shaman, the power arising from this prominent position remains only potential and does not become actual and fixed. For three reasons: the control of the community, the requirement of efficiency, and the connection with the structure of society itself. Let us briefly examine these reasons. The first two go together.

As a matter of fact, the shaman's action is controlled by the community. The community considers the results of the shaman's action as the proof of his being supported or not by his supernatural in-laws. So the shaman is rejected or abandoned when he proves to be no longer efficient, the loss of efficiency being interpreted as a consequence of his being rejected or abandoned by his supernatural wife who is supposed to consider him no longer good as a husband. This is clearly the case in the Siberian forest for the shaman who performed the collective ritual aiming at obtaining good luck: if the hunting season has been unsuccessful, the shaman is replaced by another one at the

following ritual (and this is why a community always try to have several shamans at its disposal). On the contrary, if hunting proves successful, the shaman who obtained good luck will be given new ritual ornaments or implements by the community before performing the next ritual, so that he will become more powerful in the supernatural world. But again he may be deprived of his position in case he fails or looks too old or tired. Thus, efficiency is the basis for the shaman's position in society. He does not enjoy authority simply by being a shaman but by proving himself to be efficient and useful as such.

The community's control is expressed by the rule that the shaman does not make himself his paraphernalia, which are absolutely indispensable for performing the ritual. This rule makes the shaman always dependent upon his community for acquiring and keeping the material means of his action. Thus one neither becomes nor remains a shaman without being concretely supported by the community, which thus enjoys a permanent control over him. Combined with the necessity of being efficient, the shaman's dependence on his community for his ritual outfit precludes him from concentrating power in his hands by making use of his position as the master of the fertility ritual. In other words, even though a shaman may derive some power from his position and mediatory action, this power is prevented from becoming institutionalized.

The third reason for the limitation of the shaman's power is sociological and is, for this reason, outside the scope of this paper. Let me only say that the social structure remains of a tribal type as long as society relies upon shamanic action for obtaining its symbolic source of life, that is, in the case of hunting societies, for obtaining good luck in hunting. Thus, in a way, shamanism and tribal organization are associated with each other and are jointly associated with a natural type of economy. In such words, this last proposition certainly sounds caricatural, and I regret I have no space here to account for it in detail. Let me yet only specify that the notion of alliance and exchange with the natural and supernatural world, which characterizes the original shamanic world-view, is consistent with a way of life where relations with the natural environment are more important than relations with the social environment.

The pattern is slightly different in the pastoral societies that live in the steppe region on the borders of the Siberian forest. In these societies, the shamanic function is transmitted from generation to generation within definite lineages, according to a hereditary right; the principle of inheritance reflects the belief that the supernatural wife of the first ancestor shaman is inherited as a supernatural wife by his descendants and thus makes them shamans. In spite of this evidence of inheritance, the function is considered to be based on a personal gift: if a candidate shaman is allowed to make use of his right to become a shaman, it is because he is as talented as were his ancestors, and as worthy of the supernatural wife's love. This also means that the only inherited right – that is, belonging to a lineage of shamans – is not sufficient to have

access to the function: personal aptitude also is necessary. Although such a requirement is not always satisfied, it ideologically prevents the law of inheritance from operating automatically. From a different point of view, it is noteworthy that the shaman's function in these pastoral societies is not the same as in hunters' societies: the shaman is no longer the only one in charge of the collective regular fertility rituals, he shares this task with the clan and lineage authorities, while he is more incited to perform healing and other occasional rites which imply relations between him and the souls of the dead.

However, in spite of all these changes, the main principles of shamanic action are still present, that is exchanging and negotiating with spirits. Whereas the shamanic ritual for the dead now contains invocations (which, being verified, are more or less codified), the efficient part of the shaman's action is still marked by pragmatism and personalization: it is still an art dependent on the personal talent of the shaman, in opposition to a liturgy fixed in advance and likely to be carried out according to a fixed rule. A free space is still preserved in the ritual for the shaman's action, which will make the decision of the healing cure. The other constituents of the ritual are only meant to establish the framework within which the ritual action will be efficient. They only switch on the ritual situation appropriate for the shaman to act as such.

Pragmatism is not to be considered as a lack of rules or a deficiency inherent in shamanism. We have seen that there are rules and regularities in the most archaic state of shamanic society, that is in the hunting type: as examples, let us recall the rule of exchange with animal spirits, which is cruel to man since it requires his death, or the regularity of the fertility rituals, which is strictly periodical (or rather without the performance of which no one would dare undertake hunting). Rules and regularities, although less conspicuously, are still present in pastoral societies; thus, in appearance, the shaman intervenes only on someone's request, in order to repair some disorder; however, on analysing the cases, sickness or other disorders appear as being often mere pretexts for shamanic intervention; shamanic intervention is considered necessary *per se*, and is carried out on any opportunity when too much time has elapsed since the previous ritual.

Thus, shamanic pragmatism is not a lack of rule, but a particular understanding of the notion of rule. Rule is considered in its principle, not in its possible content, which is not definite and may change with every opportunity. Taking again as an example the exchange between mankind and animal spirits, shamanism implies respecting the principle of exchange, but excludes any definition of a possible content, manner and timing for this exchange. This precision helps understanding why shamanic practice is always personalized, adaptable and renewable. It also help to explain why shamanism does not resort to writing even in societies who do know and use a writing of their own; as a matter of fact shamanistic societies, and marginalized shamans in non-

shamanistic societies, reject the use of writing for strictly shamanic matters. And this rejection of writing goes together with the absence of a church or a clergy. In this, pragmatism appears as a deliberate refusal of dogmatism. It is also consistent with the fact that emphasis is laid on the result of the shaman's action, whereas other religions will pay attention first to the conformity of the performance to a given model. This is also consistent with two properties usually attributed to shamanism: one is that it gives way to personal expression, the other is that it is stamped with subversion and transgression, which is actually the case for shamans and shamanic practices in centralized societies following dogmatic ideologies or religions.

On the whole, shamanism seems to refuse its own codification, for this would hinder the play of partnership with supernature – a partnership always at man's disposal, always available insofar as it consists in turning imaginary entities into partners with whom to exchange and negotiate, and which does not *a priori* exclude from its scope anything related to human life.

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On the Origin of White Shamanism

By

Dashimina Dugarov

What is white shamanism? On this question scientists have not yet reached a common opinion. Until recently, the question concerning the origin was not raised.

It is known that shamans are chosen by spirits. But Buryat white shamans are chosen by the Heavens, by the Creator and Thunderer *Ai-Hayrkhan*. In most respects they are close to Yakut white shamans (*Aiyy Oyuna*), chosen by the brightest creator – His Majesty *Yuryung Aiyy Toyon*, the Supreme Divinity of the Yakut pagan pantheon. They are the ministers of his religion. As for Buryats, not everyone can be a white shaman, only those with ancestors or close relatives who had been white shamans, and who possessed the so-called *udkha*, a special hereditary gift of shamanism. The family received *udkha* from the supreme Divinity by the Thunderer. A man killed by lightning would be announced posthumously as one chosen by the gods and would be buried with all honours and rituals on the ritual hill by the tribal community. Henceforth his family would receive *udkha*, which is also called 'thunder root' (*neryer udkha*). There was another way of obtaining this: one chosen by God could find an 'heavenly' object. This object, as *udkha* would be called a 'decended root' (*buudal udkha*). This reminds we of the Scythian myth about Heaven's son Targytai and his three sons, who found Heavenly gold objects. They were set on fire when the elder approached the objects, but the fire died out when the younger brother, Koloksai, approached. The latter became the owner of these objects and, consequently, the whole kingdom. Thus, the finding of heavenly objects as a shamanic gift has a parallel in Indo-European ideas about the divine nature of a king's power. This is understandable when one takes into account the fact that Indo-European kings were also chief priests, just as the *kagan* of ancient Turks.

White shamanism is not by accident called 'white'. This was the main colour symbol of the ancient religion. That is why ancient Mongolian *becks*, Buryat, and Yakut white shamans wore white clothes and rode white horses. The main cult-tree was white birch, a symbol of the universe and the shamanic tree. White shamans made a baton from this tree. During an initiation ceremony a white shaman was placed on white felt and carried round the throne (altar)

three (or nine) times. The coronation ceremony of ancient Turkic *kagans* was similar. Gamkrelidze and Ivanov point out the special symbolic importance of the colour white in different ancient Indo-European traditions, correlated with the definite social structure of ancient Indo-European tribes. White was also the main colour symbol of priesthood in some Indo-European states: in ancient India (brahman), Iran and Celtic cultures (druids). We find the earliest reliable data about the ritual importance of white amongst Indo-European cultures in the Hittites. White was the main colour for the king's ritual clothes. The Hittite king, who was also the supreme priest, put on festive white clothes for ritual ceremonies. The symbolic value of white to signify the meaning 'ritually pure' was connected with the worship of the Thunderer (*Teshuba*), just as with the Buryats (*Aia*), Yakuts (*Aiyy*) and Oirats (*Uigen*).

The theonym *Aia* ('Creator') and its derivative *aianga* (thunder) are common to all Mongolian peoples. Consequently, they are of ancient origin. Nevertheless, this name is not etymologized in Mongolian languages, which leads me to believe it is a very ancient loan-word. In the Yakut-Russian dictionary *ai* means 'to create', 'to give existence', and the name of the Yakut Supreme God-creator '*Aiyy*', has this root. Linguists have tried in vain to find it in any Ural-Altaic language. The well-known Soviet Turkologist E.I. Ubryatova had to confess that the verb was lost in Turkic languages. It left a trace only in the Turkic word *aigyr* (stallion).

These findings lead me to believe that the verb *i*, or *aia* in Turkic, was not a proper Altaic word but loanword from a non-Altaic language. This existed in three ancient, closely related and now dead, Indo-European languages: Hittite, Luwian and Tokharian, with the meaning 'to make', or 'to create'. This explains why in Buryat the God-creator and Thunderer *Aia*, as in Yakut *Aiyy* and Lappish *Aie*, is not a proper name for this God, but only his attribute as 'creator'. The term was borrowed from Indo-Europeans by ancient ancestors.

Among all Indo-European and Indo-Iranian peoples the figure of the Buryat *Aia* is closest to the figures of North-Germanic and Scandinavian Gods, namely *Thor* – the God of Thunder and Harvest and *Odin* – The God of Storms, Victory, Creator of the Universe, the Father of Gods and people.

In Buryat religion, *Aia* had the functions of both these ancient German Gods. In the Bronze Age the same situation existed between ancient Indo-Europeans and Proto-Germans. The aristocratic worship of *Odin* (*Votan*) originated much later and was opposed to the original popular agricultural worship of *Thor*. In early times *Thor* might have been called *Aia* (creator). On the west coast of Lake Baykal, some 2-3 km upstream of the mouth of the River Anga, along a flat and fertile valley, there is a lonely hill enigmatically called *Yord*. This is famous for since in the past that, every year at the beginning of summer, Buryats from various families and tribes came to celebrate the coming season, to pray and sacrifice to *Aia* and his wife, the Goddess of Earth and Water.

May is a month when milk *kumys* and milk vodka are presented to the divinity. This ritual is known from old times to all Turkic and Mongolian peoples. It was followed with mass holiday games (*naadan*) which culminated in a dance around the hill. The one obligatory rule of the games was to circle the hill linked together. The hill had a circumference of 700 steps, therefore there had to be no less than 700 dancers. Usually there were two or three times that number and the games lasted for 7 days without interval. There is a saying: "*Yordyn naadan / Yorgoon khonog*" – "*Yordyn games / (last) 6 days*".

Yordyn games are similar to the circle dance, '*osuokhai*', lasting for several days on the Yakut spring holiday *ysyakh*, devoted to the Supreme God-creator *Yuryung Aiyy toiyon*. They are particularly similar to rituals devoted to divinities of Earth and Water (*Ukhan-khat*). As in Yakut *ysyakh* the main component of this rite was a round dance, *yokhor*, given by women.

Yordyn hill is situated not far from the center of Kurumchin valley, one of the sites of the Kurykan culture (6th-7th centuries A.D.). Kurykans were ethnic ancestors of Yakuts and Buryats. They were a Turkic people, close to Tele-Uigurs, and formed a unity consisting of three tribes (*Uch-Kurykan*).

Some Siberian people, including the Buryats, performed dances around a natural object, around fires, poles, trees, and sacred hills. The objects symbolized a mythical universe tree. Consequently, the hill also served a similar function. Through the hill, Buryats and their ethnic ancestors, Kurykans, made contact with heavenly divinities, by addressing prayers and sacrifices to it. Through the sacred hill, and in response to ritual actions, heavenly blessings of wealth, happiness, and children were assured.

But the hill was not the main place of worship at the mouth of the Anga river. In my opinion, a whitestone hill, *Ayaa*, marked with ancient writing and situated near this *Yord* hill (around 2-3 km to its North-East), would have been the main sacred place. Here, atop a high bank, ritual ceremonies were performed by white shamans in the presence of honoured people.

The area, with its two hills was not a place of worship confined to one family. It was a general Kurykan tribal center where major annual ceremonies in honour of *Aia* and his wife *Yord* (*Yer-Sub*), the Goddess of Earth and Water, took place. According to Yakuts, *Aan Alakhchin Khatyn* is the Goddess of Earth. She lives in a rich tree, *Aar Kuduk-Mas*, the top of which reaches to the ninth heaven and is above the palace of *Yuryung Aiyy toyon*. It is a tethering post, and its roots spread to the main evil spirit *abaasy Arsan Duolai*.

Aar Kuduk-Mas is the Yakut tree of the universe, an analogue of which is the *Yord* hill itself. That is why the hill is regarded as the dwelling place of the Goddess of Earth. The word *yord* is not Buryat or Mongolian, and cannot be etymologized on the bases of these languages. It is a loan-word. In Scandinavian mythology *Yord*, (Old Icelandic *iord* – 'Earth'), is a Goddess of Earth, a wife of the Supreme God-creator *Odin* and a mother of *Thor*. In my opinion, *Yord* hill, and *Yord* Goddess, are identical. They are Buryat-Kurykan-

Scandinavian isoglosses. This is confirmed by the function of the main form of the *Yordyn* game rituals, namely, a circular dance. The dance, then, has an ancient Asiatic and Pra-Indo-European origin. While excavating the settlements of ancient Mesopotamia, ritual vessels of agricultural and cattle-breeding tribes were found. There were eight-cornered images of the sun, and drawings of people joining hands to dance circular dances. Remember, that the Buryats called the sun their mother and drew it with eight rays known as 'feet'. A clay statue found in Cyprus portrays three women dancing round a stylized tree. The ancient Indo-European Goddess *Yord* can be traced not only to the name of a hill near Baykal. Ancient Turks worshipped the divinity *Yer*, second in importance after *Tengri*. We believe that this name goes back to the ancient Indo-European *Yord*.

How, when, and from where did this religious and mythological system come to Southern Siberia and the Transbaykal region? White shamanism as a social institution and, according to religious classification, refers to so-called tribal cults. These cults comprised religion that formed early in class societies as the result of two great developments in the history of mankind: the formation of the economy and metallurgy. Beginning in the 3rd millennium B.C., there existed great Eastern civilizations, the first slave owning states of the Asian Interior in ancient India and China. This period is characterized by the beginning and development of nomadic cattle-breeding, the decay of primitive communal systems, the formation of military democracies, and the creation of large alliances and still larger cultural and historical communities in the steppes and forest-steppes of Eurasia. The major changes were closely connected with the penetration into Central Asia and Southern Siberia of Europeoid populations from the adjoining areas of contemporary Soviet Central Asia and Kazakhstan, that is, from the area that at that time was inhabited by the nomadic Proto-Aryan and Saka-Scythian tribes. The later inhabited the vast territories of north-western China between the Gobi and the Huang-Ho river as early as the 12th century B.C. The Chinese called these blue-eyed, fair-haired people, *di*, *dili*, and *dinlin*. As a result of the consolidation and expansion of the ancient Chinese Shang state, they were forced to go north to the Minusinsk Valley where, in the 12th century B.C., they created the Karasuk culture. Then, one part of these Indo-Europeans, now strongly mixed with aborigines, migrated further north to the Transbaikal region and deeper into Central and Northern Siberia. There they later took part in the ethnic and cultural formation of some modern Siberian peoples, including the Buryats and the Yakuts.

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Does the Language of Spirits Influence the Development of Human Language?

By

Eugene Helimskij

The Metrical Pattern of Shamanic Verse

Northern Samoyedic shamanic verse is composed exclusively (Nenets data) or predominantly (Nganasan data) of isosyllabic lines with eight syllables as four trochaic feet in each, normally with a caesura after the second foot.

An Example from Nenets (after Lehtisalo 1947:469-471, No. 81, with modified transcription):

*mafēlawā rē°jēr°w°!
xunānānt° xāw°rān°°?
ŋāfetal°e mēfī°cun°!
salē māl° rē°jēr°w°!
ŋāfetal°e mēfī°cun°!
śīdēcāđū° rē°jēr°w°,
sōmtabīnī° mā°eŋgī°
ŋōb°° pintē śēŋkarmāmi°!
xunānānt° xāw°rān°°?*

Fee der Paarungsstätte!
Wohin bist du gegangen?
Noch näher herbei eile!
Fee der Landzungenspitze!
Noch näher herbei eile!
Fee der beiden steilen Anhöhen,
von der Zeit her, da ich erstarkte,
einmal von mir Genächtigt!
Wohin bist du gegangen?

An example from Nganasan (recorded in 1989; shaman: Tubiaku Kosterkin):

*ńerābtū°kū° mundā°ki°am°:
təŋə d°erd°ə ŋuə d°alj,
kūə h°aa bəđ°ajl°əmu,
ńirku h°aa bəđ°ajl°əmu,
śelu babi bəđ°ajl°əmu,
horəđ°ańə ślāmtjndə,
mađajit°ańə rājbīgətə
iməd°əi°
əmədalj t°iitjndə...*

Afore I-start-speaking:
(On a) midsummer heavenly day,
when a birch tree grows-well,
when an asp tree grows-well,
when a bare-horned wild-reindeer
grows-well,
when-became-perforated my-leaf,
my-guests, who-came from-distant-land
on-this-day when-they-entered...

NB: The isosyllabicity of lines is absolutely transparent in Nganasan. As far as Nenets is concerned, it is revealed through a non-trivial procedure of bringing a poetic text into its deep phonological shape by adding deep vowels (marked here with superlinear a) and thus eliminating the results of innovative processes that affect the vocalism and the general phonetic shape of Nenets words in colloquial speech, while sung forms and the norms of versification remain practically intact (see for details Helimskij 1989).

An added deep vowel in Nenets, just as any vowel in Nganasan (usually including each of the components of a diphthong also), corresponds to one mora and is taken separately when counting syllables.

The principle of eight syllables refers only to shamanic incantations – that is, to songs performed by a shaman and his assistants addressed to the world of spirits, or songs which are supposed to belong to spirits who come at the shaman's call and sing through his lips.

In contrast, poetic narratives on shamanic topics such as the life histories of celebrated shamans, descriptions of shamanic journeys, and mythological tales, belong to 'secular' poetry and, whenever metrical, follow a different pattern shared with epic, personal and lyric songs. This metrical pattern requires isosyllabic lines with six syllables, three trochaic or two dactylic feet, in each.

Thus, the metrical opposition 8/6 in traditional versification directly correlates with the opposition sacred/profane (or: language of spirits/human language).

The same metrical pattern of shamanic verse is also found in south Siberian Turkic traditions (see Kenin-Lopsan 1987).

Selection of Suitable Word Forms and the Shaping of Language

The metrical pattern of the shamanic verse determines the specific distribution of words of different length in syllables, with marked preference given to bi-syllabic and tetra-syllabic words. This is demonstrated by data for different types of texts in Nganasan (a fragment of a narrative text, a fragment of a tale, and two fragments of shamanic incantations – each containing 300 words):

Taking into consideration that:

- a) shamanic incantations are mostly improvised at a relatively high speed (even if they include standard portions), and the quality of versification is determined by previous individual experience rather than by a special preparation of texts;
- b) it is expedient to a Northern Samoyedic shaman to have at his disposal as many bi- and tetra-syllabic word forms as possible;
- c) it is necessary to be able to use traditional formulae for making whole lines or groups of lines while singing;
- d) a shaman, as the spiritual leader of a community, ranks as its higher authority in the issues of poetry and language (cf. Revunenkov 1989)

It can be assumed that:

- a) shamanic activity must be an important or even leading factor for enriching Northern Samoyedic languages with bi- and tetra-syllabic word forms and, consequently, with bi-syllabic suffixes and suffixal combinations (as long as pure stems in these languages are for the most part bi-syllabic).
- b) shamanic activity must withstand trends of linguistic development which are potentially dangerous for the structural (syllabic) integrity of words and poetic formulae, especially the reductive processes.

Length in syllables	Narrative text		Tale		Incantation I		Incantation II	
	Number of words	%	Number of words	%	Number of words	%	Number of words	%
1	8	3	5	2	4	1	4	1
2	60	20	69	23	101	34	109	36
3	89	30	97	32	37	12	20	7
4	91	30	96	32	140	47	140	47
5	30	10	24	8	9	3	19	6
6	19	6	9	3	8	3	8	3
7	1							
8	1	1			1	0		
9	1							

These assumptions appear to be useful in evaluating Northern Samoyedic linguistic evolution (or conservatism) for instance:

- suffixal enlargement of personal pronouns, such as Nen. *mańa* 'I', Enets *mod'i* 'I', *tod'i* 'thou', Ngan. *məna* 'I', *təna* 'thou' (PSam. **mān*, **tān*, cf. Selkup *man*, *tan*);
- presence of 'co-affixes' in some case suffixes, such as suffixes of the locative: Nen. *-xVna*, Ngan. *-tənu* (PUral. **-na/*-nā*);
- abundance of bi-syllabic verbal suffixes, mainly of secondary origin, such as Ngan. *-suə-* (Praet.), *-sutə-* (Fut.), *-batu-* (Latentive), *-bahu-* (Dic.), *-ki'ə-* (Inchoat. Praes.), *-katu-* (Usual), *-bi'ə* (Ger. Cond. Perf.), *-'muə* (Nom. Act. Perf.), *-d'amu* (Nom. Loci) etc.;
- existence of parallel – monosyllabic and bi-syllabic – forms of the same suffix, which 'fit' correspondingly stems with odd and even numbers of syllables, such as *-tu* and *-tuə* (Part. Praes.), *-hū* – and *-hünū-* (Ger. Cond.), *-gə* and *-gəə* (Elat. Sg.) in Nganasan;
- ideal preservation of vocalic 'skeletons' of words (including diphthongs) in Nganasan; the same phenomenon in Enets (despite the fact that this language was subjected to profound reductive processes in the domain of consonants; but *nota bene* that there are no records of Enets shamanic incantations, though the principles of versification here were hardly different from those in the Nenets and Nganasan traditions); the same phenomenon in Nenets songs as distinct from colloquial Nenets (see above and Helimskij 1989).

Common Uralic Framework

The similarity between the metrical pattern of Northern Samoyedic shamanic verse and the metre of Kalevala (and of Balto-Finnic traditional poetry in general) is obvious; the differences are hardly relevant or primary (for examples, monosyllabic treatment of long vowels in Balto-Finnic metrics is probably due to the fact that these vowels originate mainly from the lengthening of short vowels).

The discovery of Northern Samoyedic octo-syllabic verse sheds new light on the much-discussed problem of the Finno-Ugrian origin of the Kalevala metre (see Papp 1955) and places this problem on the Common Uralic level.

In view of recent research stressing the probable shamanistic background of the Kalevala, where charms as transformed shamanic incantations occupy about one fifth of a whole text (Oinas 1989:277; Pentikäinen 1989), and the role of shamans as possible creators of epics (Siikala 1986), a hypothesis can be suggested according to which the metre of Kalevala was originally the metre of shamanic incantations, distinguishing sacred language from ordinary discourse.

There are also many common features in Northern Samoyedic and Balto-Finnic ways of adopting language to metrical requirements (see for example, the morphological peculiarities of Kalevala, which enlarge the share of metrically suitable word forms [Evseev 1960:165-167, 285-292] or the tetra-syllabicity of the names of many epic heroes: Ilmarinen, Väinämöinen, and Lemminkäinen). There is hardly any doubt that the influence of poetry – and therefore, according to the above hypothesis, of the language of spirits – should not be disregarded when viewing the linguistic evolution in Balto-Finnic.

Last but not least, it is interesting to remark that the octo-syllabic verse – if it is really of common Uralic origin – is best preserved exactly in those traditions where linguistic evolution did not result (at least until recent times) in the systematic reduction of final vowels and in other major changes of the syllabic structures of words (Balto-Finnic, Northern Samoyedic, partly Mordvinian). To what extent was the preservation or loss of the original linguistic structures related to higher or lower activities of shamans?

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Spirit Possession and Shamanism Among the Ladakhi in Western Tibet

By

Takako Yamada

Introduction

In the study of shamanism, the definition of shaman has been most problematic ever since Mircea Eliade stated that the basic stratum of shamanism is not the embodiment of 'spirits' by the shaman, but the ecstasy induced by his ascent to the sky or descent to the underworld (Eliade 1964:499-500). In fact, disagreements among scholars as to the essence of shamanism have remained until recently, witnessed in the debate as to whether shamanism is restricted to Siberia and neighbouring areas, or if it is found in a larger, more general global context. For example, one opinion from Eliade and de Heusch considers that shamanic trance should be restricted to the characteristics of soul loss or soul journey (Gilberg 1984:23; Eliade 1964:499-500; see also Lewis 1984; Peters 1982:21-22). Other researchers such as Shirokogoroff and Firth regard the mastery of spirits as the most basic attribute of shamans and hence shamanic trance can include the state of spirit-possession (Firth 1964:248; Loeb 1929:62-63; Shirokogoroff 1935:268-271; Lewis 1971:56; 1984; Peters 1982: 21-22).

However, Hultkrantz (1978:42) points out that the concept of shamanic trance must be widened to include two distinctive experiences. First, there is an extra-corporal flight of the shaman with the assistance of helping spirits and second, on-the-spot information passed to the shaman by helping spirits (cf. Hoppál 1985; Hultkrantz 1989). In fact, in a cross-cultural survey of 42 cultures in which shamanism is reported, Peters and Price-Williams (1980:418) discussed these two elements of shamanic ecstasy. They found that possession trance was evident in eighteen cultures and magical flight in the cultures, both magical flight and possession trance in eleven cultures and trance only (neither magical flight nor possession trance) in three cultures (1980:418). This shows that shamanic phenomena cannot be well understood unless the concept of shamanism is inclusive of trance phenomena from more than one interpretation.

Recently a wider, more universal concept of shaman has prevailed. Reinhard (1976:16) states that a shaman is a person who at his will can enter into a non-ordinary psychic state (in which he either his soul undertakes a journey to the spiritual world or he becomes possessed by a spirit) in order to make contact with the spirit world on behalf of members of his community. Heinze (1989:355) refers to a shaman as one who can access an alternative state of consciousness at will, who fulfils the needs of their community which otherwise are not met, and who is a mediator between the sacred and the profane. In addition, Hultkrantz (1989:46) defines a shaman as a social functionary who attains ecstasy with the help of guardian or helping spirits, and who through ecstasy creates rapport with the supernatural world, all on behalf of members of his group. Such universal concepts of shaman may provide us with a better understanding of the world-wide phenomenon of shamanic trance.

Shifting my topic to a people living in the north-western part of India, the Ladakhi people in Western Tibet strongly believe in spirit-possession. They consider a non-ordinary psychic state, an altered state of consciousness, a result of possession by some spirit. Spirit-possession is generally considered an illness to be treated. However, it is sometimes considered a calling to become a religious specialist known as *klu-gyar* or more commonly *lha-mo* (female) and *lha-ba* (male). These specialists hold social functions for curing disease, divination, finding the lost, and exorcising evils.

Through an examination of the Ladakhi view of illness, their belief in various spirits, the phenomena of spirit-possession, and the recruitment of *klu-gyar*, my presentation explores the cultural background for their interpretation of altered states of consciousness, non-ordinary psychic states, as possession by a spirit. I will show that the Ladakhi interpretation is closely connected to their belief system and their world-view, especially how their belief in spirit possession is integrated into the Tibetan medicine system and Buddhist system. I will also point out that their belief in *lha-mo/lha-ba* performance is consistent with Tibetan Buddhist tradition and that *lha-mo* and *lha-ba* play important social roles in co-operation with other religious specialists.

Belief in Spirits and the View of Illness

The Ladakhi believe in various spirits, and live in dread of goblins, demons or evil spirits who may cause misfortune, harm and damage. Some guardians such as *rgyal-po*, who are considered to be controlled by Pabmasambhava, a well-known tantric ascetic in the eighth century, and have become the guardians of Buddha's doctrine, occasionally become harmful to humans. Buddhist Scriptures describe 360 kinds of *bdid* devils who act as antagonists of Buddhism and continually attempt to cause harm to men. Besides these, there are other kinds of evil spirits according to folk belief. *Btsan* are a species

of demons residing in the air or high rocks. Evil spirits such as *gdon* and '*dre* are feared especially for causing sickness. People also believe in the existence of nature gods who need to be treated well, including a serpent-like demi-god *klu* (the Indian Naga), a god of the ground (*sa-bdag*), a god of fields (*zhing-lha*) and a god of ovens (*thab-lha*). People believe that these deities may bring happiness and fortune to them if treated well, but otherwise may cause damage and sickness.

Belief in evil spirits who cause sickness is integrated into the view of illness and the practice of curing in *am-chi* Tibetan medicine. In the theory of *am-chi* medicine, the human body is compared to the micro-cosmos, while nature is compared to the macro-cosmos. The condition of each is maintained according to the same principles which regulate the whole system of nature. Sickness is generally considered an imbalance among three humours in the body: *rlung* (wind), *bad-kan* (phlegm) and *mkhris-pa* (bile). Disorders in the balance of the human body are often caused by the imbalance in the elements of the macro-cosmos.

Am-chi medicinal texts also mention 101 kinds of sickness caused by *gdon* evil spirits. In one chapter on pulse examination, the method of examining the pulse of *gdon-rtsa*, the devil pulse, is described precisely. Eleven kinds of evils which cause sickness – *gdon*, *rgyal-po*, *klu*, *bdud*, *btsan*, *sa-bdag*, *dam-sri*, *dri-mo*, *dri-pho*, *gnyan*, *mtsho-sman*, and *klu-bsen* – are identified and distinguished by the state of a person's pulse. In other chapters there are descriptions of fifteen kinds of *byis-gdon* (children's evil) causing childhood illnesses, and five kinds of *gdon-nad* (sickness by evils).

Supernatural agents which affect the human body are diverse in *am-chi* medicine. Malignant stars or planets in astrology are considered to cause a sickness called *gza'-nad* which corresponds to epilepsy. Evil demi-gods like *klu*, *sa-bdag* and *gnyan* cause skin diseases like leprosy, boils and pimples. *Bdud*-type evil spirits such as '*byung-po*, *smyo-pyed*, *dri-mo* and *dri-pho* are allied to mental sicknesses like half-madness, instable and abnormal psychic states, or to altered states of consciousness. The latter, which induce a so-called trance state, are especially attributed to possession by certain supernatural beings. The possessing spirits include *gson'-dre* (*dri-mo* female or *dri-pho* male), part of the soul of a living person that has possessed another person, *shin'-dre*, the soul of the dead, and *lha* a god without form or body.

Thus, in *am-chi* medicine, some sicknesses are considered to originate from the mal-actions of supernatural beings. Based on this theory one *am-chi* admitted that on certain occasions it is insufficient to cure a patient by only applying herbal medicine. That is, to cure such sickness, it is commonly considered necessary to perform some religious ritual or exorcism.

One religious specialist called *om-po*, a diviner and exorcist stated that there are two kinds of sickness. One is caused by an individual's *karma* and the other comprises common sudden diseases such as headaches, stomachs and

food poisoning. An *om-po* usually divines by performing *mö* by conferring the age of a patient and the date when he fell ill according to astrology. If the *karma* of a patient is proved to be the root cause, then the *om-po* performs rituals or suggests that the patient may perform rituals.

Thus, among the Ladakhi, the causes of sickness and other physical, mental or psychological disorders of the body are interpreted from various viewpoints. Fundamentally, sickness is considered to break out from disorder in the balance among the elements together constituting the human body. However, disorder is thought caused not only by meals, daily activities or life style, but also by *karma*, the interferences of supernatural beings and astrological disorders. It can be pointed out that such a concept is based on the Ladakhi idea that supernatural agents work directly on the human body. The intrusion of supernatural agents into the body is an essential motive in the folk concept of sickness.

Such concepts result in medicinal pluralism. Various social functionaries exist who are called upon on case of illness. Those consulted by villagers at the beginning are doctors of western medicine working in public health centers or *am-chi* who may prescribe appropriate herbal medicines. If this treatment is not effective, then people will appeal either to an *om-po* to divine what is the ultimate cause of the sickness, or the type of supernatural agent affecting them, to a monk (lama) for the recitation of mantras to purify a patient's body, or to a *lha-om/lha-ba* possessed by *lha* and so seek the help of its supernatural power in order to divine cause or remove the defilement from the patient's body. It is considered quite effective to rely on supernatural power against evil agents, and it is at this point that *lha-om* or *lha-ba* can play an important social role as healers.

Belief in Spirit Possession and Supernatural Power

The phenomena of spirit-possession vary due to different possessing spirits. Only a few individuals who have experienced spirit-possession can become religious specialists such as *lha-mo* or *lha-ba*. Spirits considered to possess humans involve some '*dre* (evil spirits) and *lha* (minor gods). '*Dre* is a general and common term for and includes *gson-'dre*, the soul of a living human who may enter another person, and *shin-'dre*, the soul of a dead person who may possess humans. Spirit-possession by '*dre* is considered a 'sickness' to be cured, while possession by *lha* is ordinarily considered as a calling for the possessed to become a religious specialist.

One kind of '*dre*, *gson-'dre*, is mentioned in Buddhist scriptures as *dri-mo* (female) and *dri-pho* (male). However, among the Ladakhi the term '*gong-rkyal* is more popularly used and, moreover, generally signifies an individual

who possesses others rather than a soul itself. Ladakhi people say that '*gong-rkyal* can be both woman and man. However, they point out that '*gong-rkyal* is usually a woman, and that they hardly know any examples of a man's soul possessing others. Both possessor and possessed are usually women. People believe that a woman can more easily become possessed since she generally has a lower *spar-kha* than a man. *Spar-kha* originally signified the eight diagrams of Chinese divination, but is now commonly understood by villagers as something like one's astrological star.

Ladakhis will say *gdon* (evil spirit) is the same as '*gong-rkyal*, and that they do not know well other *gdon*. '*Gong-rkyal* not only possesses others, but also brings misfortune or harm. It causes cattle sickness, making cattle produce less milk, lets people fall down from a tree and makes others children sick. '*Gong-rkyal* is much dreaded.

The high spiritual incarnate lama, Rin-po-che, states that possession by '*gong-rkyal* can be recognized by its frequent occurrence in the evening, by repetitive yawning, weird grinning, trembling and changes in facial colour. Further, those possessed may spit out sacred blessings (*bying-rlabs*) given to them for eating by the Rin-po-che. They seldom talk about their possessing spirit. However, people also believe that if they tie saved string tightly around the middle finger of the possessed, or make her smell the smoke of burned cotton, she will begin to tell who she is, why she is possessing someone, or what she wants. A '*gong-rkyal* seldom reveals her own name, but can be identified by the context of what she narrates.

People generally believe that possession is caused by strong jealousy or anger. They explain that a '*gong-rkyal* talks from the possessed with words such: "You are more beautiful than me"; "You have better children than me"; "You are rich while I am poor"; "You attend school, while I have to work in the field"; "Why did you divorce my brother."

A second kind of '*dre*, *shin-'dre*, not only possesses humans, but prevents villagers from gaining more desirable conditions in their life. This may include lack of fertility, continuing poverty despite hard work, low milk yield from a hers, poor crops, low quality wine, or accidental death. Harm is suspected from *shin-'dre* when misfortune and accidents continuously occur. Ladakhis ask a lama or *om-po* to divine the cause and, a *shin-'dre* is detected, the lama is asked for rituals directed against that spirit.

Those possessed by *shin-'dre* behave like a madman, beat themselves violently, jump from the top of tall trees, jump into a river, or hang themselves. Some recall that they felt stiff finger joints, head and heart, and experienced pain or repeated yawning. Another characteristic is that it tells who it is. *Shin-'dre* will possess an individual initially to prevent them from possession by *lha*, but they are likely later to become possessed by *lha*.

Among the Ladakhi, then, supernatural beings affect humans not only by

inducing sickness but also by bringing misfortune, causing physical and mental sickness, by possession, by generating early family death, repeatedly inflicting cattle sickness, causing infertility, poor crop yields and low milk production. The belief in spirit possession is thus not only integrated into the Ladakhi view of illness, but also into a world view in which the human world exists in close contact with the supernatural.

From Patient to Healer

Klu-gyar denotes Ladakhi religious specialist. The term actually signifies one who can permit a spirit to possess oneself at will. A possessed *Klu-gyar* becomes a *lha* in a *séance*. *Lha-mo* and *lha-ba* hold rituals while in a trance, in response to client requests to extract defilement out of the body as a cure to divine reasons for losses or to foretell the future.

Life-histories of *klu-gyar* show they experience possession-illness for a long time before they are acknowledged as a novice by senior *lha-mo* or *lha-ba*. In fact, one *lha-mo* said she had been ill in bed, unable to do anything, for three months. Although she consulted an *am-chi* and western medicine doctor, this brought no results. She became restless and uneasy, felt like climbing to the top of a mountain, and smelt nonexistent incense sticks. Her condition improved after she obtained sacred blessings from a spiritual oracle in Matho Monastery. However, after a while she began to experience spirit-possession again. Finally, she was told by a high spiritual incarnate lama, Rin-po-che, that her illness was caused by *lha* and that she was destined to become a *lha-mo*. She trained herself under a senior *lha-ba*.

Another *lha-mo* said that her initial uneasy, unstable psychic state was the result of possession by *gson-'dre* (*'gong-rkyal*). She spoke just like another woman was speaking. Her possession-illness was cured by an exorcism by lamas. She remained calm for a few years, then was possessed by another spirit confirmed to be *lha* by *rin-po-che*. He advised her to begin a thorough training under a senior *lha-ba*. She became a disciple to one *lha-ba* in Thigse.

One *lha-ba* narrated he felt a sense of oppression in his joints. He frequently had bad dreams, in which he was thrown from high cliffs or flew on horses in the sky. He was almost driven to running wild, and once he actually woke up at night roaming about. He got angry suddenly. This psychic state continued for so long that at last he consulted a *rin-po-che* who replied him that his illness was caused by *lha* and that he was doomed to become a *lha-ba*.

Almost all *lha-mo* and *lha-ba* recall they were ill for a long time before training. They were certified by *rin-po-che*, and only then could they ask a senior *lha-mo* or *lha-ba* for training. Those experiencing spirit-possession have to ask someone for divination to determine the type of spirit involved, since possession is an illness which requires certain rituals for curing.

A Rin-po-che observes a patient's condition, observing what occurs while reciting mantras, divination *mo* so on. Where possession is proved to be caused by 'dre, the *rin-po-che* himself performs a purifying ritual to prevent an evil spirit possessing the patient again. Where caused by *lha* and if the *rin-po-che* thinks that the welfare of villagers will be served if the patient becomes a *klu-gyar*, then the patient is advised to become a *lha-ba/lha-mo*.

Most *lha-mo* and *lha-ba* emphasized they were immediately possessed in the presence of a *rin-po-che*. When a *rin-po-che* performs an invitation ritual (*spyan-'dren*), good spirits possess a patient easily while evil spirits hardly ever do so. Sometimes an evil spirit will possess a patient even in the presence of *rin-po-che*. Then the *rin-po-che* will ask the patient to foretell the future and examines whether the spirit is good or evil. If his prediction is right, the possessing spirit is considered a good *lha*. Advice will then include the practice of asceticism, meditation, or prostration thousands of times or recitation of mantras thousands of times.

To settle a possessed state caused by an evil spirit, the *rin-po-che* performs a *khrus* ritual, which is purification through washing with holy water, or occasionally performs a *kabugo* ritual, a ritual for driving away evil. Some patients can completely recover but others may be possessed repeatedly even after the rituals. This is considered a sign that an evil spirit is strongly trying to prevent possession by a *lha*, and is, therefore, considered the same as a good spirit eagerly attempting to possess the patient. In such cases the *rin-po-che* will advise patients to undergo a rite called *lha-phog* conducted by a senior *lha-mo* or *lha-ba*. This is a sort of initiation, intended to separate *lha* and 'dre and force possession by a good *lha*.

A *khrus* ritual, and ascetic practices such as meditation, prostration and recitation of mantras, are not only performed for curing but also for purifying defilement and sinful lives to obtain virtue. Specifically, the purpose of the *rin-po-che* role is essentially to lead people to accumulate virtuous deeds for their future life, that is, according to Buddhist doctrine. Since a *lha-phog* rite is considered different to rituals performed by Buddhist monks, however, it is assumed that it can be performed only by *lha-mo* or *lha-ba*.

Actually, a *lha-phog* rite is considered unnecessary for those whom *lha* possess easily hence it is said that formerly potential *klu-gyar* had no tradition of undergoing it. More recently, few *klu-gyar* were apprenticed to a senior *lha-mo* or *lha-ba* until they underwent a *lha-phog* rite. It may take one month to complete a *lha-phog* rite, after which a patient is acknowledged as a novice of *klu-gyar*. He is no longer considered a patient. Gradually he is to be trained to be possessed by his own volition. The ability to make a god *lha* enter oneself is considered equal to the ability to control the god.

However, not all who complete a *lha-phog* rite become *lha-mo* or *lha-ba*. One woman after completing her rite was able to let a good *lha* possess her after performing an invitation ritual but she could not become a *lha-mo* since

no one understood what her *lha* spoke. To become a real *lha-mo* or *lha-ba*, it is necessary that the speech of the *lha* can be understood. Novices also have to obtain clairvoyance and complete training in the techniques for a *séance*.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have described folk concepts of sickness, beliefs in spirit possession and the process of becoming a religious and social functionary, *klu-gyar* (*lha-mo* or *lha-ba*). I have shown that according to the Ladakhi world-view misfortune can be attributed to affliction by supernatural spirits. The Ladakhi view of illness is closely related to their view of the world so that they attribute abnormal and unnatural psychic states to spirit possession. Once the possessed is given an initiation he is no longer a patient but becomes a neophyte *klu-gyar*. As a religious specialist, the *klu-gyar* is one who is able to control his possession and is trained in shamanic techniques. *Klu-gyar* in their possession trance are considered to be *lha* and possess powers of vision and control over malevolent forces. Thus, *klu-gyar* are shamans.

The cultural context surrounding belief in spirit-possession among the Ladakhi indicates that the Ladakhi way of interpreting the phenomena of non-ordinary psychic states as spirit-possession is related to cosmology. This is to say, as Jones (1976:2) points out, the manner of assigning altered states of consciousness to either a state of soul-loss or spirit-possession is a matter of conceptualization and verbalization. The shaman is therefore "a social functionary who attains ecstasy with the help of guardians or helping spirits, and who through his ecstasy creates a rapport with the supernatural world..." (Hultkrantz 1973:34; 1989:38). And the ecstasy of the shaman can include both soul-loss and spirit-possession.

Secondly, I have shown that the Ladakhi belief in spirit possession is consistent and syncretized with the religious system of Tibetan Buddhism. In fact, Aziz (1976:344-345) points out that "if the incarnate system can be considered spirit possession by 'the descent of the gods to man', then the incarnate lama can be considered in the context of a wider definition of shamanism". And Jones (1976:3) indicates that the incarnate system can be assumed to be a form of spirit possession. The institution of the incarnate lama itself, which originates not from the nature of Tibetan Buddhism but from traditions related to folk beliefs, was generated by the political situation in more recent times (Yamaguchi 1987:147). Despite the political and historical conditions which produced this institution the Ladakhi people's belief in the incarnate lama which is inseparable with the belief in Tibetan Buddhism is vivid and strong. The idea of incarnation actively functions to motivate a system of folk belief in 'the descent of god to man'. Thus, the belief in the incarnate lama can be considered a basis for spirit possession (as *lha-mo/lha-ba*).

Finally, following Hultkrantz's definition (Hultkrantz, 1978:29-30) that shamanism is a belief system to establish a means of contact with the supernatural world through the ecstatic experience of a professional, inspired intermediary, Ladakhi traditions of *lha-mo/lha-ba* can be regarded as shamanism. Therefore, as my study shows, it is best to understand shamanism as universal phenomenon derived from a culture's world-view of the interrelationship between the natural and supernatural.

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Further Travels, Further Trials: Mortuary Ceremonies of Nepali Shamans

By

Gregory Gabriel Maskarinec

If any minimal definition of religion involves some sense of release from the mundane world, an achieving of some sort of disengagement, whether of salvation, otherworldly residence, or even an extinguishing of the self, then shamanism, as actively practiced by *jhākrīs* throughout Western Nepal, is emphatically not a religion.

Activities surrounding a shaman's death underline this point. For shamans, their personal death ceremonies mark the abandonment of neither world nor profession. Rather, the career of a successful shaman, once begun, never ends, least of all with death. Death instead provides the outstanding opportunity to measure a shaman's success, to reveal that one has really obtained control over spirits, especially one's own life force. Events following death allow a conclusive demonstration of a shaman's ability to postpone crises, to manipulate unseen forces, and to deflect the ongoing deterioration of the material world.

How? I will try, in these few selections from a much longer paper, to illustrate these aspects of shamanic death, to show how these powers are displayed and measured. To collapse my methodology into one phrase, I concentrate on using what it said at events as a key to understanding what is done at those events.

The death ceremonies for a shaman have two parts. The first part, called the Disappearance of the Shaman, begins with physical death. A shaman should predict the moment of his own death, which can then take place at his home, with his former pupils summoned to attend it. Dressed in his full costume, he dies sitting up, cross-legged. The corpse is tied to a board to support it, and is carried outside in this posture, upright, by his pupils. A piece of bitter aromatic root [Nepali: *kacur*] is put under the tongue, a staff in the left hand, a drumstick in the right. Ashes which have been treated with a *mantar*

seeing near, seeing far,
binding the stomping feet,
binding the striking hand,
binding the speaking tongue,
binding the seeing eye,

binding the tricks of village witches,
binding (their) tricks,
binding (their) deceits,...

are applied across the closed eyes, which are then blindfolded. The head is wrapped in a new turban of white cloth, which also holds the headdress in place. The former pupils, in full costume, sit facing their guru and sing the first half of a text called the "Recital of Tilīkarmā," which includes episodes from the life of the original shaman, Jumrātam. It describes the events leading up to his marriage with one of several sisters, another of whom marries the king. Later, in an detailed scenario, the shaman seduces his sister-in-law, infuriates the king, is persecuted by him and curses him through an act of sorcery. Sought by the king's soldiers, Jumrātam hides in the level of the underworld known as Tilīkarmā, where metalworking originated. As this passage describing the departure for the underworld is sung, the former pupils dance around the body, counterclockwise. Next comes the instructions which the first shaman gave to his beloved wife. These are now addressed to the widow of the deceased *jhākri*:

Examining, consulting,
Imagine, dream,
how much have I brought you, dear *jhakrenī*,
who will give you skirts, who will give you blouses?...
Put a tomb for me in the valley,
put a monument for me on the hill,
cry a fountain of tears,
wear your blouse inside out,
wear your skirt inside out,
I am going, to Tilīgramā.

The text also instructs the widow to break her bangles, remove her necklaces, and wear her hair dishevelled, as is expected of any Hindu widow. She follows the directions which it provides:

Jhumā Jhākrenī took off her gold earrings,
took off her nose jewel, took off her finger rings,
wore her blouse inside out, wore her skirt inside out,
took off her finger rings, took off her pointed bracelet,
took off her necklace...
She was really colourless,
she was really without colour.

Distraught, she asks where he will go, and Jumrātam replies:

I am going, to Tilīkarmā.
On the trail I take,
there may be marks of a walking stick,
may be a loosely spun thread,
may be a line of turmeric.

On a trail for withches,
 there may be a spun thread of nettles,
 may be a line of ashes.
 The path the cremation ground spirits walk,
 (there) may be charcoal, ashes.
 The path the lost souls walk,
 may be a row of lumps, rice mixed with blood.
 The path the forest spirits walk,
 may be fragments of gourd, streaked with white clay.
 The path the shamans walk,
 may be from the crossroads, with rubbish, dried leaves.

Every version of Tilikarmā includes this riddle, always suggesting that a dead shaman resembles other potentially malevolent forces, that he walks the same secret paths used by those who cause harm to the villagers. That is, he too travels as the marginal areas of the spirit, at the borders of the cultivated fields and the untamed forests, within the intermediary spaces between multiple worlds.

Following the riddle, male relatives (sons, grandsons, brothers, and nephews) pick up the shaman's body, and the former pupils, dancing and drumming, lead the way to a shallow, round grave, which has been dug at a spot selected by the shaman before his death. The recital is continued to the point at which Jumrātam takes up residence as a blacksmith in the underworld. The body is placed waist deep in the hole, facing north, and most of the costume is removed, "returned to its owners," explains the text:

The shaman went, returning his pledges.

"Take back the pledge of matted locks of hair, to the *syālī* tree,
 take back the pledge of pheasant feathers, to Chārkhābhot,
 take back the pledge of fragrant leaves, to Kālā Pātan,
 take back the pledge of a tie string, to the *puwā* grove,
 take back the pledge of cowrie shells, to the merchant's store,
 take back the pledge of *kacur* root, to the *kacur* garden,
 take back the pledge of charcoal ashes, to the sandalwood tree,
 I am going, to Tilikarmā."

(and so on, explicitly naming each piece of equipment).

A pole – identical to the one climbed skyward during initiations, and in some cases actually the original one saved for this purpose – is mounted in front of the corpse by his sons-in-law, aligned between his crossed legs. One of his hands is wound around this pole, a staff or drumstick held by the other. The tomb is then built up as high as the shaman's head and filled with clay. A flat stone is aligned over his head. Centered on this stone is a bamboo basket, in the center of which is placed a wooden jug of home-distilled alcohol, along with food offerings. Another flat stone is set on top of this, and then the top of the tomb is built up into a room-like cubicle. Above this, the tomb is tapered

to a point, and the entire cone is then smeared top to bottom with a mixture of clay and cow dung by the deceased shaman's daughters and daughters-in-law. On the protruding pole are hung the deceased shaman's long top-knot (*laṭṭā*), some of his feathers and bells, and his drum, which is first shattered. A chicken is sacrificed, and the pupils dance around the completed tomb, beating their drums. Finally, all the funeral goers return to the dead shaman's house, where they are fed.

For nine days, oil lamps and incense are kept burning at the base of the tomb. On the ninth day, the second part of the ceremony, called the Raising of the Shaman, takes place. The former pupils of the shaman gather around the tomb, sing the "Recital of Offering to The Messenger of Death and The Time of Death". Given particular prominence is a section of the creation cycle, when, denied a dowry which she demands of nine suns and nine moons, a descendant of Indra cremates herself, becoming the very first case of death. Out hunting in the middle of the forest, two relatives, Bhagavan and Narayan, see the pyre burning and wonder whose funeral it could be:

"At our Rānī Sagar, what corpse is that,
the pyre begins to burn,
is it Annakeli's daughter Candrā?"
"It may be father Bhagavān's descendant,
let's put out the fire, she'll live."
The went to put out the fire,
they scattered the ashes,
they blew through a tube,
they found the ring finger.
They gave the body blood,
the arms pith, the legs marrow,
put in breath, put in a soul.
They struck her with a sandalwood staff,
struck her with a cane staff.
They brushed her with a black yak tail,
brushed her with a white yak tail.

That is, they perform the gestures of creation, which are exactly reenacted when the first human is formed and animated, a procedure which is carefully imitated by shamans when treating patients who have been touched by the messenger of death.

Finally, the former pupils sing the second half of the Tilikarmā recital, resuming at the point which concluded the first set of ceremonies. The king's messengers are sent to capture Jumrātam. They ask his widow where to find him, but she shows them the signs of mourning and the tomb. Convinced that he is dead, they return to the court with one of his pupils, who correctly diagnoses the situation:

He danced and drummed out to the crossroad,
he danced and drummed back from the crossroad,
was seated in the underworld,
rose from the underworld.

"Having been cut, O king, be cut.
Having been killed, O king, die.
I am not your *jhākri*.
Your *jhākri* is in Tilikarmā."

Again the king's messengers return to the shaman's widow, but now they approach in humble supplication rather than in anger. They promise the *jhakreni* that the shaman will be given half the kingdom, and she finally instructs them of the path to Tilikarmā, which they follow. The recital reaches the point where they identify the original shaman (now disguised as a blacksmith) and they throw fragrant leaves into the forge, causing several distinct classes of subordinate spirit entities to possess him:

He began to tremble lightly,
began to tremble more heavily,
with twelve *vīr*,
twenty-two *māphī*,
twenty-two *barāṅ*,
the fields shook, the forests shook,
Rammā Jumrātam began to be possessed.

As these lines are sung, the pole protruding from the tomb shakes – the spirit of the dead *jhākri* has returned from the underworld. He possesses his successors and chants along with them the conclusion of the recital (the curing of the king and the receiving of rewards). His spirit, now genuinely a 'tutelary' one from whom instructions may be received, is added to the diverse spirits whom his successors summon whenever they perform, assuring that his career as a shaman continues and that he will always receive a share of any blood that is sacrificed and a portion of any offerings that are made.

The pupils open the top of the tomb and take out the container of alcohol. Were it to be dry, it would mean that the shaman was really dead and gone, but a few drops are inevitably found. They dip their drumsticks into the alcohol and sprinkle drops on the tomb, saying:

Honduras to you, *guru* father,
tell us where, tell us what's left.

They drink the remainder, and all become frantically possessed by their guru, the dead shaman. He now tells them where he would like his permanent monument to be constructed, and what direction it should face (usually north). The stone which covered the alcohol is removed from the tomb and the top knot of hair is removed from the pole. These become the foundation for a permanent monument, which will now be constructed. Dancing and drumming,

the pupils lead the way to a hill top or some prominent place along a trail. They set down the flat stone, and relatives build up a four-walled solid box, about four or five feet high. At the top, a triangular window is inserted into each side. The daughters and sons-in-law of the departed shaman smear the monument with white clay. Finally, a few branches of a tree

approved by the spirits,
approved by the powers

are erected on top of the shrine by a male relative, who also ties a few strips of red and white cloth to the branches. Other relatives next hang such strips as well. The pupils dance around the monument, and finally a ram is sacrificed at the foot of the stones, explicitly offered to the King of Death and the Messenger of Death as a substitute for the dead shaman:

Blood measured out for blood,
flesh measured out for flesh,
sense measured out for sense,
breath measured out for breath.

Everyone returns to the shaman's home, where they are feasted on rice and meat.

The parallels and inversions between these ceremonies and those of an initiation are extensive, though space constraints force me to mention only a few details in this abbreviated paper. Each time, the shaman is blindfolded and suspended on a pole between two worlds – the sky and the earth in one, the earth and the underworld in the other. Food offerings and the container of alcohol, placed beneath his feet in the initiation, are now put over his head, and each time the liquid contributes to forecasting the future. Possession occurs at the same points in both ceremonies, accompanied by precisely the same lines of the recital. Clearly emphasized in both initiation and death ceremonies is a careful but deliberately equivocal positioning of the shaman. Spatially, he finds himself literally straddling worlds – as the text puts it:

his head is in heaven, his soles are in hell.

Socially, his position is equally ambiguous, inferior by caste, equal to the king in marriage, superior to all by the powers of his profession. He is not only an intermediary between the world of humanity and the world of spirits, a participant in both the world of life and the world of death, his kinship ties cut across those worlds. He intervenes in both, with cures and with curses. Each ambiguity is underlined within the *Tilīkarmā* text, which poises the shaman, at death, for a triumphant return, a welcoming as the king's acknowledged older brother, a return and recommitment to the world of humanity in which he will continue, in enigmatic ways, sometimes good, sometimes evil, to take part.

The Secret 'Handbook' of a Sibe-Manchu Shaman

By

Giovanni Stary

A Few Words of Introduction

The Sibe people (*Xibo*) are one of the 55 national minorities officially recognized in the People's Republic of China and belong to the Manchu-Tungus branch of the Altaic family. According to the last census of 1982 it comprised 83,629 people – 53,560 of whom lived in the three provinces of Manchuria (Liaoning, Heilongjiang, Jilin) and 27,364 in Xinjiang. Regarding to latter, 17,362 people were concentrated in the 'Sibe Chabchal Autonomous County' situated in the Ili valley, on the border with the Soviet Union.¹

This subdivision into two groups dates back to the end of the 18th century, when a part of the Sibe was transferred, for strategic and military reasons, from native Manchuria to the 'New territories' (i.e. Xinjiang) just conquered by the Qing dynasty.

In Xinjiang the Sibe were linguistically and culturally isolated and, in this way, were able to preserve, up until today, their language and their ethnic characteristics. The Sibe remaining in Manchuria have, on the other hand, like the Manchu, undergone the prevailing Chinese influence and have abandoned the use of their own language in favour of Chinese.²

The Sibe living in Xinjiang thus give us the possibility of studying a culture and a language that have both long since disappeared in their homeland.

The ethnic and geographical isolation that we have already mentioned has obviously favoured for longer the preservation of shamanism – according to official sources,³ the last shaman died in 1976 – but up until now little news has reached the West. In fact, until recently, the only source available for the study of the Sibe shamanism was the testimony of a Russian scholar, published in 1912.⁴

Only recently a few Sibe and Chinese scholars have turned their attention to the Sibe shamanism, considered to be an integral part of the culture of these people and thus worthy of being remembered – even if it is officially extinct.⁵

At first however, the shamanism of the Sibe people became an object of study for Chinese researchers not for its religious content, but rather its literary content. In fact, in the publications dedicated to literature of ethnic minorities

in China, with regard to the Sibe, they often mention their 'voluminous' work with the title *Saman ge* or *Saman ucun*, that is 'Shaman Song'.⁶

As far as I have been able to discover a few passages in the original language, that is Sibe, were published only at the start of 1989,⁷ while a complete Chinese translation was published at the end of the same year.⁸

But the complete version in the original language was only published in 1990 with the title *Saman Jarin* ('Shaman Prayers'),⁹ and from that moment for the first time we have had the possibility to analyse a precious shaman source in its original language.

The 'Secret Handbook' of a Sibe Shaman

The work *Saman Jarin* reproduces a manuscript of 124 pages with more than 1500 verses, written in 1884 by the shaman Elsi of the Nara Clan of the third company (*niry*).¹⁰

The definition 'secret' is justified by an 'exhortation' on the part of the same shaman, and from this we can see the obvious value of the manuscript:¹¹

erebe jalan jalan asarafi
ume tucibure ya gese
sabi tacibuci be damu
hing sere emken de bu
gūwa se ume bure
mergen waka de ume ulara

After having handed it down for generations
it must not be made public.
Only if an apprentice shaman is taught
give it to him, as long as he is serious.
To another it is not to be given.
Do not speak of it to one who is incapable.

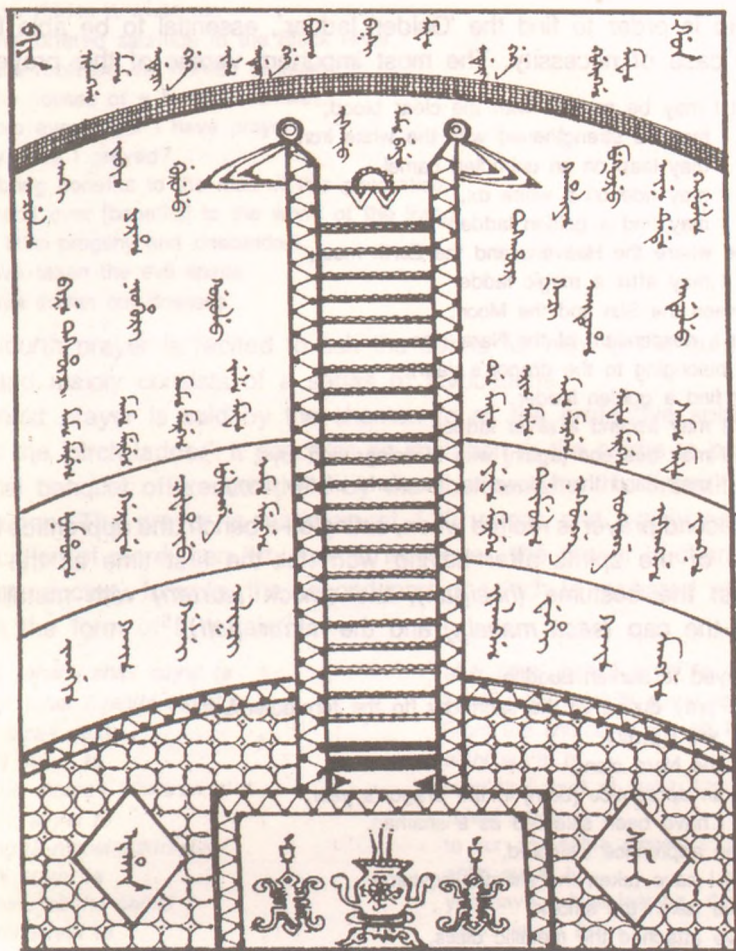
Amongst the many things to be handed down exclusively to a shaman, there is revealed for the first time even the magic formula with which he is able to defend himself against evil spirits (*saman beyebe karmatara tarini gisun* – 'magic formula with which the shaman protects himself'):¹²

om basar batma
daring basuruda
hayang kiruwa
holt holt hom pat

And, once for the first time, the rite is revealed that the shaman must carry out so that this formula may have effect:¹³

erebe tanggū inenggi
erde erde
etuku eture onggolo
etuku be nerefi
cashūn forome tefi
weshun fosihūn ilan mudan omšofi
beyebe fulgiyembi
niyalmai emgi gisurerkū

This [is recited] for 100 days,
early in the morning,
before dressing.
After having dressed,
one withdraws and sits down;
one bows three times
[and] blows upon oneself.
In the presence of [other] people it
is not pronounced.



The whole manuscript is divided into two parts by a drawing that represents the cosmological world of the shaman: at the bottom, on the right hand-side of the table with an incense burner and two branched candlesticks (?) we find the shaman (*saman*), on the left the word *ihan*, that is 'ox' (destined to be sacrificed). At the top of the ladder we find the *Isanju Mama*, the supreme shaman divinity. In the top corner on the right there is the word *šun* – 'Sun', on the left *biya* – 'Moon'. All the other names refer to shaman spirits or divinities, evoked during the shaman sessions. (See the drawing.)

The first part comprises a series of prayers that characterize the most important stages of the shaman apprenticeship: the first is the 'Shaman prayer during the apprenticeship' (*saman tacire erinde jalbarime baire jarin*), with which the apprentice turns to the protective spirits and finally invokes

their help in order to find the 'Golden ladder', essential to be able to reach them in case of necessity. The most important verses of this prayer are:¹⁴

That I may be purified with the clear blood,
that I may be strengthened with the white iron,
that I may leap on an unbridled camel,
that I may ride on a white ox,
that I may find a golden ladder,
there where the Heavens and the Earth meet,
that I may affix a magic ladder
between the Sun and the Moon.
That I, descendant of the Nara clan
and belonging to the dragon's year,
may find a golden ladder,
that I may ascend a silver ladder,
that I may descend [again] with blessings and joys,
that I may hand them down to the world of the living.

The second prayer is recited when, sitting on a bench, the apprentice requests the help of the spirits after having worn for the first time all the shaman garments: the costume (*hosigan*), the smock (*surten*) with metallic discs (*hajun*), the cap (*saca mahala*) and the mirror (*toli*):¹⁵

I prayed to Burkan Buddha,
I will pray during all the sacrifices [to the forefathers].
Why will I pray?
I, of the Nara clan,
was an apprentice [born] in the dragon's year,
now I have been selected as a shaman.
As an apprentice I studied,
[now] I have taken the shaman costume,
I have taken the smock,
I have attached the metallic discs,
I have put on the [shaman] cap,
I have taken the silver mirror.
Spreading the voice of the drum
I will leap on the square threshing-floor,
I will wander round the corners of the houses.

The third prayer is recited after the ceremony of the 'Ascent of the birch-ladder' (*cakūra[n]*), that is, the well-known ceremony of the real and proper investiture of the shaman. The so-called 'birch-ladder' (formerly, it seems, a simple birch tree) was formed of two birch trunks joined to each other by sharp knives that served as steps; to ascend by way of these knife-steps, to reach the heights and have contact with the spirits and descend again without injuring oneself meant consecration as a 'true' shaman (*iletu saman*):¹⁶

The clear blood has purified me,
the white iron has strengthened me.
I have leaped-on an unbridled camel,

I have ridden a white ox.
 I have offered sacrifice to the Black River,¹⁷
 I have received the Korean divinities.¹⁸
 In the houses of a hundred families,
 before every door I have prayed.
 Why have I prayed?
 To bring benefits to the men of this generation,
 to hand over [benefits] to the world of the living.
 I, a little progeny and descendant,
 I have taken the evil spirits,
 I have driven out illnesses.

The fourth prayer is recited to ask the spirits for help in the curing of an illness and mainly consists of a series of invocations.

The next prayer is said by the shaman to all the protective spirits while he is on the 'birch ladder'. It concerns an invitation to the spirits to participate in a ritual banquet offered to them by the shaman after his investiture as a true shaman. The prayer is made up of 110 verses and mainly consists of an invocation of more than fifty spirits. Moreover, the prayer is characterized by an introductory formula, the second part of which is repeated after each verse in the form of a refrain:¹⁹

ahai jahai / ahihi suyal te
jahai juhai / jahihi suyal te
ijili bira-i cekin /
ahihi suyal te
isanju mama-i kūwaran ci /
jahihi suyal te
icangga musei sarin de /
ahihi suyal te
nikeme ebuhe sembi /
jahihi suyal te
etc. etc.

ahai jahai / ahihi suyal te
jahai juhai / jahihi suyal te
 From the source of the Ijili River
ahihi suyal te
 from the court of Isanju Mama
jahihi suyal te
 to our agreeable dinner
ahihi suyal te
 you have, whilst leaning, descend.
jahihi suyal te

The next prayer is recited by the shaman's helper. In fact, the shaman, after having recited the previous prayer, goes into a trance and falls (or jumps?) down the ladder – and his helper now repeats the invitation to the spirits in briefer form (56 verses).

The first part of the manuscript concludes with the description of the first journey made by the shaman to the Isanju Mama, the supreme shaman divinity of the Sibe, to whom he must present himself immediately after his consecration as a true shaman in order to be bureaucratically 'registered in the deeds' as such and receive her blessing.

The description of this journey, made up of 210 verses, is very schematic and consists of the list of 18 'sentry posts' (*karun*) guarded by demons, that the shaman must overcome, mindful of the teachings of his master, with the help of benevolent spirits:²⁰

I went and I walked
and I reached a greenish steppe.

Six wolves blocked the road,
they did not let me pass and I stopped.

How should I pass? The words of the master:

Let the demon Niohuri let me pass, I, born in the dragon's year,
through the first sentry post called 'Greenish Steppe'.

I went and I walked
and I reached a black wood.

Five wild pigs

lay in wait on the road.

They blocked the way, they did not let me pass and I stopped.

How should I pass? The words of the master:

Let the demon Aiduha let me pass, I, born in the dragon's year,
through the second sentry post called 'Black Wood'.

I went and walked
and I reached a great river.

Four wild horses came

and lay in wait on the road.

They blocked the way, they did not let me pass and I stopped.

How should I pass? The words of the master:

Let the demon Surulu let me pass, I, born in the dragon's year,
through the third sentry post called 'Nisiha River'.

etc., etc.

The complete list of the 18 sentry posts, of the demons that block the way
for the shaman and of the demons who come to his aid, is the following:

Sentry post	Guardians	Helper demons
1. <i>Niohūn tala</i> 'Greenish Steppe'	six wolves	<i>Niohuri Manggin</i> 'Demon-Wolf'
2. <i>Sahaliyan bujan</i> 'Black Wood'	five wild pigs	<i>Aiduha Manggin</i> 'Demon Boar'
3. <i>Nišiha bira</i> 'Nisiha River'	four wild horses	<i>Surulu Manggin</i> 'Demon White Horse'
4. <i>Bongko alin</i> 'Bongko Mountain'	a man on a white horse	<i>Selei Sain Janggin</i> 'General Good-Iron'
5. <i>Fulahūn tala</i> 'Red Steppe'	a man on a white horse	<i>Wehei Sain Manggin</i> 'Demon Good-Stone'
6. <i>Uli moo bujan</i> 'Prune Wood'	a large hawk	<i>Anculan Manggin</i> 'Demon Owl'
7. <i>Nun bira</i> 'Nun River'	a yellow-coated animal	<i>Ayulu Manggin</i> 'Demon Ayulu'
8. <i>Jongko alin</i> 'Jongko Mountain'	a man with yellow hair	<i>Kurulu Manggin</i> 'Demon Kurulu'
9. <i>Sohon tala</i> 'Yellow Steppe'	a man with black hair	<i>Sahaliyan Manggin</i> 'Black Demon'

10.	<i>Šulhe moo bujan</i> 'Pear Wood'	a large eagle	<i>Daimulja Manggin</i> 'Demon Eagle'
11.	<i>Semur bira</i> 'Semur River'	a large leopard	<i>Yarhai Manggin</i> 'Demon Leopard'
12.	<i>Yehur bira</i> 'Yehur River'	a man armed with a lance	<i>Aine Dede Manggin</i> 'Demon Aine Dede'
13.	<i>Šahūn tala</i> 'Pale Steppe'	a male tiger	<i>Tashūr Manggin</i> 'Demon Tiger'
14.	<i>Nimalan moo bujan</i> 'Mulberry-tee Wood'	a tiny man	<i>Šaci Manggin</i> 'Demon Šaci'
15.	<i>Sehur hada</i> 'Sehur Rock'	a man armed with a sword	<i>Aki Manggin</i> 'Demon Aki'
16.	<i>Sunja šeri</i> 'Five Springs'	a snake 90 <i>li</i> long	<i>Mušuru Manggin</i> 'Demon Musuru'
17.	<i>Sumbur golo</i> 'Sumbur Valley'	a python 90 <i>li</i> long	<i>Jabja Manggin</i> 'Demon Python'
18.	<i>Ijili bira</i> 'Ijili River'	a female tiger	<i>Biren Tashūr Manggin</i> 'Demon Female-Tiger'

The second part consists of a series of prayers that the shaman recites when he exorcises certain illnesses with the help of three paper figures (*urhu*): the first represents the supreme shaman divinity (*Isanju Mama*), the second the 'Lord of illnesses' (*Nimeku Ejen*), the third the 'Old woman of the variola' (*Mafa Mama*). In total it comprises 850 verses, each of which is alternatively followed by the refrain *hūwan dari* and *inekun dari*. More than in the previous prayers, the rhythmic structure is very accentuated and the characteristic alliteration appears more elaborated.

The single prayers are classified according to their well-defined contents. The first group comprises the prayers intended to obtain a happy marriage, a future of well-being, the much-hoped for birth of an heir.

The second group comprises the exorcising of certain illnesses (not indicated) and follows a fixed pattern, for example:²¹

I went to the city of Tungjeo
and I stole a camel.
I threw the camel's flesh
on the bare steppe.
The spirits of the steppe gathered it up.
I broke the camel's bones
and I ground them with a mill.
I mixed the powder of the bones
with the water from the river Ijili,
and I made a container.
In the container I placed the spirit of the illness,
the divinities of the three paper figures
will carry it away.

I went to the Mongolian steppe
and I stole a camel.
I threw the camel's flesh
to the demons and the spirits.
I broke the camel's bones
and I ground them with a mill.
I mixed the powder of the bones
with the water of the river Nišiha,
and I made a cup.
In the cup I placed the spirit of the illness,
the divinities of the three paper figures
will carry it away.

I went to the city of Ijeo
and I stole an ox.
I donated the ox's flesh
to the demon Alhūji Jolo.
With the ox's bones I built a chair.
I made the spirit of the illness sit on the chair.
The divinities of the three paper figures
will carry it away.

The prayer – or rather the description of the exorcism – continues with a list of similar episodes with a sheep, a goat, a cock and a duck. Later, the shaman lists a series of ointments called *Ijuyan* necessary for the curing of certain illnesses: for example, millet flour mixed (literally 'cooked') with the fat of an ox cures the tongue, the crushed seeds of certain herbs mixed with the fat of a pheasant cures the nose, rice flour mixed with the fat of a squirrel cures the heart etc.

The manuscript concludes with the text regarding exorcism against evil forces in general:²²

When you pass through the gate
let your heads be cut off.
Let them be put on a plum tree.
From the plum tree let them be taken and carried to a safe place.

When you pass through the window
let your liver be cut out.
Let it be hung up at the fork in the road.
From the fork, let [the liver] be taken, cut into pieces
and carried to the *Fahai* Gate.

When you pass through the door
let your gut be opened.
Let it be scattered across the garden of melons.
From the garden of melons let it be taken
and carried to the North Sea's borderland!

When you climb over the wall
let your stomach be cut open.
Let it be buried in the garden of pumpkins.

From the garden of pumpkins let it be taken up
and carried to the West Sea's borderland!
[Let these parts of your body]
be thrown into eight springs!
Above them, let there be stacked stones weighing 80 *gin*,
for all eternity.
[Let these parts of your body]
be thrown into nine springs!²³
Above them, let there be stacked pieces of iron weighing 90 *gin*!

* * *

This brief presentation can but give a very superficial idea of the characteristics of the Sibe shamanism.

The whole translation of the manuscript can however open a window onto the religious world of these people which, due to lack of sources, has remained hidden, up until now, for the most part.

Notes

1. *Minzu yanjiu* 6 (1984):72. According to newest information, in 1990 the total number arose to 172.847 people: see *Minzu yanjiu* 1 (1991), third cover page.
2. For a history of the Sibe people and their transfer see Stary (1985a), for a general bibliography of the Sibe see Stary (1990).
3. See *Sibe uksurai an tacin* (1989):210.
4. See Krotkov (1911-1912). For an annotated translation see Stary (1985b). A small collection of Sibe shaman-prayers is found in Stary (1985c).
5. For example Mandurtu – Xia Zhiqian (1984).
6. For example: *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu wenxue*, I, (1983), Changsha.
7. *Sibe uksurai an tacin* (see note 3), 211-229, where the manuscript is called *Saman biŋhe* – i.e. 'Shaman book'. This excerpt has been the subject of my paper presented to the 33rd "Permanent International Altaistic Conference", Budapest 1990, entitled *Das 'Schamanenbuch' des sibe-mandschurischen Nara-Clans* (now in print).
8. Tong Keli (1989).
9. *Saman jarin*, (1990).
10. *Sibe uksurai an tacin...*, 211.
11. *Saman jarin...*, 31.
12. *Ibid.*, 38.
13. *Ibid.*, 39.
14. *Saman jarin...*, 2-3: *genggiyen senggide getukeleki / ŝayan sile de ŝataki / ŝaldan temen de tengnebuki / ŝayan ihan de yalubuki / abka na-i acan de / aisin wan be ayabuki / ŝun biyai siden de / siren wan be ilibuki / nara hala-i boigon ni / muduri aningge enen be / aisin wan de ayabuki / menggun wan de mukdebuki / urgun sebjen-i wasibuki / yang jalan de ulabuki.*
15. *Saman jarin...*, 4-5: *burkan fucihi de jalbiraha / geren jukten de jalbiraki / ai jalin de jalbiraha / tere aningge jalin de / hala mini nara kai / muduri aningge geyen bi / saman seme sarkiyafi / geyen seme tacifi / hosiha seme hosifi / surten seme ashafi / aisin hajun be ayafi / saca mahala be ashafi / menggun toli be munggilefi / imcen jilgan be guwendeme*

/ferhengege falan be fehuki / hošonggo
boobe horgiki.

16. *Saman jarin...*, 6-7: genggiyen sengg
getukelehe / šayan sile šataha / šaldan
temen de tengnehe / šayan ihan de
yaluha / [...] / sahaliyan ula wecen be
aliha / solhoi weceku be unuhe / tanggū
hala-i boigon de / uce duka de geguhe
/ ai jalin de geguhe / ajige omolo enen
bi / jalan niyalma de tusalafi / yang-i
jalan de ulaha / in-i weceku be unufi /
nimere yangšara be ilgaha.

For a detailed description of the ceremony
of the "ascent of the birch-ladder" see
Krotkov (1911-1912), and Stary (1985b):
276-278.

17. 'Black River' (*Sahaliyan ula*) indicates the
Amur river; the Sibe of Xinjiang see in this
mentioning a link with their places of origin
in Manchuria.

18. Also the reference to the vague mentioning
of the 'Korean divinities' reveals, accord-
ing to the Sibe, ancient connections with
Korea.

19. *Saman jarin...*, 16-20.

20. *Saman jarin...*, 21-29: yabuhai genehei
/ niohūn tala de isinaha / ninggun niohe
jugūn be / heturefi dulemburkū ilihabi /
adarama dulembi sefu gisun / niohuri
manggin muduri aningge de / niohūn tala
ujui karun be dulembuki.

yabuhai genehei / emu sahaliyan bujan
de isinaha / sunja bigan-i ulgiyan / jugūn
be dalime ilifi / heturefi dulemburkū
ilihabī / adarama dulembi sefu-i gisun /
aiduha manggin muduri aningge be /
sahaliyan bujan jai karun be dulembuki.

yabuhai genehei / emu amba bira de
isinaha / duin sula morin jifi / jugūn be
dalime ilifi / heturefi dulemburkū ilihabi
/ adarama dulembi sefu gisun / surulu
manggin muduri aningge be / nišiha bira
ilaci karun be dulembuki.

etc. etc.

21. *Saman jarin...*, 41-75. (The translation
that is presented here of a few selected
verses is deliberately free):

tungjeo hoton de - hūwan dari / genehe
sembi - inekun dari / temen hūlhame -
hūwan dari / dosiha sembi - inekun dari
/ [...] / temen tere - hūwan dari / yali
be sembi - inekun dari / tala bigan de
- hūwan dari / waliyaha sembi - inekun
dari / bigan weceku - hūwan dari/
bargiyaha sembi - inekun dari / temen
tere - hūwan dari / giranggi be - inekun
dari / mokso mokso - hūwan dari / foriha
sembi - inekun dari / aldungga tere -
hūwan dari / hurujuku de - inekun dari
/ ufa nayan - hūwan dari / obufi sembi
- inekun dari / ijili bira de - hūwan dari
/ mukse suifi - inekun dari / tebsi
weileme - hūwan dari / [...] / dekdehe
tere - hūwan dari / nimeku be - inekun
dari / weilehe tere - hūwan dari / tebsi
de tebufi - inekun dari / ilan šayan -
hūwan dari / urhu ejen bargiyafi - inekun
dari / ten-i bade - hūwan dari / isibume
beneki - inekun dari.

monggo tala de - hūwan dari / genehe
sembi - inekun dari / morin hūlhame -
hūwan dari / dosiha sembi - inekun dari
/ [...] / morin tere - hūwan dari / yali be
- inekun dari / bušuku yamji de - hūwan
dari / šelehe sembi - inekun dari / morin
tere - hūwan dari / giranggi be - inekun
dari / mokso mokso - hūwan dari /
meije buhe sembi - inekun dari / aldungga
tere - hūwan dari / hujurku de - inekun
dari / ufa obume - hūwan dari / moselaha
sembi - inekun dari / nišiha bira - hūwan
dari / muke suifi - inekun dari / moro
weileme - hūwan dari / [...] / mohoho tere
- hūwan dari / nimeku be - inekun dari
/ weilehe tere - hūwan dari / moro be
tebufi - inekun dari / ilan šayan - hūwan
dari / urhu ejen bargiyafi - inekun dari
/ mohobume bošome - hūwan dari /
beneki sembi - inekun dari.

ijeo hoton de - hūwan dari / genehe
sembi - inekun dari / ihan hūlhame -
hūwan dari / dosiha sembi - inekun dari
/ [...] / ihan tere - hūwan dari / yali be
- inekun dari / alhūji jolo de - hūwan
dari / šelehe sembi - inekun dari / ihan
tere - hūwan dari / giranggi be - inekun

dari / ise weileme - huwan dari / [...] /
icaku tere - huwan dari / nimeku be -
inekun dari / weilehe tere - hūwan dari
/ ise de tebufi - inekun dari / ilan šayan
- hūwan dari / urhu ejen bargiyafi -
inekun dari / isebume ichiyame - hūwan
dari / beneki sembi - inekun dari.

22. Saman jarin..., 73-74: ucebe tucire be -
hūwan dari / uju be meite - inekun dari
/ uli moo de - hūwan dari / ulifi sinda
- inekun dari / alime gaifi - inekun dari
/ unenggi bade - hūwan dari / isibume
beneki - inekun dari.

fa be tucirede - hūwan dari / fahūn be
faita - inekun dari / fasilan jugūn de -
hūwan dari / gamafi fašabu - inekun dari
/ fasilan jugūn ci - hūwan dari /
faksalame gaifi - inekun dari / fahai duka
de - hūwan dari / isibume beneki -
inekun dari.

duka be tucire be - hūwan dari / duha
be sari - inekun dari / dunggen yafan

de - hūwan dari / gamafi sinda - inekun
dari / dunggen yafan ci - hūwan dari /
tunggime gaifi - inekun dari / dung hai
jecen de - hūwan dari / isibume beneki
- inekun dari.

hecen be dabara be - hūwan dari / hefeli
be seci - inekun dari / hiri umbi - inekun
dari / hengke-i yafan ci - hūwan dari /
hedereme gaifi - inekun dari / si hai
jecen de - hūwan dari / isibume beneki
- inekun dari / jafame gamafi - hūwan
dari / jakūn šeride makta - inekun dari
/ jahari wehe - hūwan dari / jakūnju gin
be - inekun dari / jalan jalan de - hūwan
dari / gidafi sinda - inekun dari / ušame
gamafi - hūwan dari / uyun šeride umbi
- inekun dari / ešhun sele - hūwan dari
/ uyunju gin be - inekun dari / ujube
tuwame - hūwan dari / gidafi sinda -
inekun dari.

23. 'Nine Springs' is also a periphrasis of
'Underworld'.

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The Worldview of the Manchu Shamanism

By

Fu Yuguang

Sky deities always play an important role in the pantheon of shamanism in northern China, particularly among the Manchu people. One may well say that the primitive worldview formed in the early stage of shamanic practice is the foundation of the religious thought. Many studies have been done about shamanism both in and outside China, and many experts have made contributions to the special characteristics of shamanic culture. But some scholars in China, following a unilinear stage model, argue that "sky deities as a complete concept was born later" (Qiu 1985:19). And they specifically said that "because the Mongolians and Manchus had entered class societies and established their own empires with emperors, thus the belief in a single deity appeared in their shamanic tradition. Among these peoples, the natural and social attributes of multiple deities of shamanism thus gradually shifted to a single sky deity" (Wu 1991:235). They even stated that "Manchu shamanism had become a religion with a chief deity (monotheism) in the early Qing dynasty" (Mo n.d.:175). The above arguments explicitly regard the Sky Deity as parallel to the emperor or king on earth. They imply that the chief deity of shamanism could only appear in a class society. Such arguments are far from the true worldview of those peoples who believe in shamanism. The present author attempts to introduce a different view based on the ethnographic material obtained from the Manchu and other minority peoples in northeastern China.

I

More than two thousand years ago, the known Chinese poet Qu Yuan posed the following questions in his work, *Asking the Heaven*: "Where does the Heaven come from? Why is a day divided into twelve parts? Whom does the sun and moon belong to? And where are the stars lying?"

These fundamental questions about the creation and celestial body movement were initially answered by northern shamanistic worldview at its early stage of development.

Among the Jürchen people (ancestors of the Manchu) who lived in the middle and lower reaches of the Heilong River (Amur River), there was a shamanic

myth, 'The War in Heaven,' which goes: "Long, long ago before the sky was formed, it was like flowing water and flying clouds." It describes a chaotic world before the sky and earth were divided. Such concept is similar to that of other ancient peoples. The same idea can be found in Nordic myths, in which there were no sky or earth or the sea in the beginning (Mao 1929:17). A parallel ancient Chinese record, *Tai Ping Yu Lan*, goes that "the sky and earth mixed together just like an egg". These early thoughts were the basis of the worldview of shamanism. They reflect a direct, simple and dialectical view of beginning shamanism.

As a Manchu shaman's scripture say, "The blue sky (Heaven) is high and boundless," expressing an ancient view of the vast expanse of the universe. Some shamanic scriptures refer Heaven as the residence of *Shun Molin* (solar horse), where the 'solar horse' can run freely. Here, the 'solar horse' is employed to explain the ever changing celestial body. Other shamanic scriptures refer Heaven as '*Ang-a-e-dun*' (mouth of wind), indicating that the gigantic mouth of wind could swallow everything in the world. This implies that the ancient people were fearful of the celestial body that they could not control. So, the wind became the symbol of Heaven, and the fear led to the worship of Heaven. The sudden appearance of colourful light in the sky is called 'god's trace,' which is consulted for divination. This demonstrates the ancient people's worship to the mysterious nature.

Fire played an important role in bringing the early human beings out of the animal world as well as in the early shamanic worldview. According to the Manchu shamanic scriptures we collected, we find that many natural phenomena (i.e., the sun, the moon, stars, thunder, clouds, snow, fire, water and mountains) have become supernatural beings or forces, and received human worship. These forces cannot control one another, but certain sky deities are more powerful than others. Because the Fire Deity controls light and heat, brightness and darkness, and the four seasons, he becomes the embodiment of a high deity, and his importance matches the Sun Deity and Star Deity. He is believed to live at the highest cosmological level and follows *Shun Molin* to travel across the earth everyday. In the shamanic rituals of many Manchu clans (Nimacha, Sakeda, Wuzhala and Nayeale), Fire Deity is placed before all other natural deities when they are invited for help or for ceremonious occasions which often involve the performance of fire play and fire-walk. The Manchu epic *Wubuxiben Mama* says, "Fire comes with a smile; fire comes with a bounce; fire descends from the tree; and fire falls from the rain." The Manchu ancestors used such poetic language to express their worldview that the earliest fire gave life to all things.

The above examples demonstrate that the worship of the sky and nature. Therefore, the idea of the earliest form of shamanism is a cosmological concept of multiple deities. This concept is animistic in nature, perceiving no definite boundaries between the Heaven and Earth, and between deities, human beings

and animals. Some Manchu shamanic scriptures record that there are as many deities in Heaven as there are human beings on earth. From their perspective, the universe is full of deities and spirits, the human world is but one level among many. Each of these dish-shape levels has a hole at the centre, through which the spirits or deities can freely travel.

Supported by this cosmological concept, the shaman can represent his folks to ascend to the Heaven to express their loyal wishes and ask for protection, and then return to the earth bring with him the oracles and blessings to energize his people with inspirations. For believers of Christianity, Buddhism and Islam, their souls could return to the other world (Heaven) only after their death. But the shamans can communicate with the deities and ascend to Heaven in their lifetime. Thus they become the messengers between the people and deities.

The archaic meaning of the word 'shaman' is closely related to the Heaven. 'Shaman' comes from the Tungus language, meaning 'knowing,' as interpreted in the Manchu epic, *Wubuxiben Mama*. It implies that the shaman best understands deities' ideas and can communicate with them. Most of the early studies generalize the shaman as *wu* (a Chinese shamanic figure) or those who are 'in trance' or 'dance with excitement'. These are insufficient definitions. Some Manchu shamanic scriptures call shaman as *abahan* or *wuhan*. *Wuda* was also used by the Manchu ancestors to refer to the shaman, as recorded in a 12th century publication, *San Chao Bei Meng Hui Bian*. *Wuda*, *aba* and *wuhan* are actually variations of the Manchu word *abuka* (sky), meaning the sky servant and messenger. The Manchu myths tell that the first shaman (or shamaness) was sent, or transformed from an eagle, by the sky deities. Therefore, the shaman is the son of the universe and descendant of the Heaven, and his relation with the Heaven is uniquely close.

The initiation of a clan shaman is also directly linked with the cosmological concept. According to our investigation, in order for someone to become a qualified shaman, he has to experience several *aoyun* (three trances) and devote himself to the study of shamanic scriptures and techniques. The word *aoyun* was often mistranscribed as *wuyun* (number nine), but our studies prove that it is a specific term of shamanic tradition, and means 'three' or 'three trances'.¹ It is believed that, during a trance state, the shaman's soul can fly out from his body and ascend to the sky. Only after three trances (the ability to ascend or descend three times) can a shaman become qualified, and be accepted by the deities as a messenger, representative, knower, and someone who can serve his clansmen. Three trances (one *aoyun*) are the basic qualification of a new shaman. The most respected shaman of a clan is capable of doing three to nine *aoyun*, so his soul can fly longer in the Heaven and ascend to the highest level of the sky.

The theme of shamanic flight is also recorded in many myths. In the Manchu myth "Xi Lin Sefu",² the big shaman Xi Lin flew ten days in his trance and

finally reached the "Golden Tower above the Cave" where *Wuli Seli* (Goddess of the East Sea) inhabited in the universe. In the Manchu epic *Wubuxiben Mama*, the big shamaness sat on a sacred drum in her dream and flew up like a goose, and fought with clouds and thunder above the East Sea.

The above clearly shows that shamanic practice goes hand in hand with the worship of Heaven from the beginning. To be more specific, the cosmological concept of the 'primitive' men is the foundation for shamanism, upon which the beliefs in animism, totemism and ancestral heroes grow.

II

Along with socio-economic development, the human beings become increasingly capable in conquering the nature, and therefore, personified factors of the deities increase accordingly. Some shamanic scriptures describe an image of the cosmological world just like the real world on earth, with good and evil deities. In addition, the division of labour of the human world seems to be reflected in the upper world. Many wandering deities gradually came to form a system that is embedded in shamanism. But these deities were still group oriented and enjoyed equal status. The collective concept was and is still an important feature among the deities. The clan shamans believe that the earth and sky are full of all kinds of deities or spirits. Each clan has its own chief deity, guardian spirit, natural deities, animal deities, and ancestral deities. They function independently and have not formed a hierarchical pantheon. Like human beings, they have emotions, hobbies, specialties, personalities, love and hatred and everything existing on earth. The Manchu and other peoples in northern China who believe in shamanism think that the deities and spirits are like numerous stars in the sky,³ forming multiple layers.

Variations of the cosmological concept exist among different ancient peoples in northern China. A Manchu shamanic scripture goes that "mounting the sky for 99 layers, each with numerous deities." The Turkish and Siberians also think that the sky consists of 33 layers. But number nine is the utmost and vital in shamanism;⁴ it is most often recorded in the shamanic scriptures of the Manchu and other ethnic groups in northern China. Thus there are 'nine skies' and 'nine layers'. The Manchu ancestors "often lived in deep caves and used nine ladders" (*Hou Han Shu*, Vol. 115). In the Manchu myth "The War in Heaven," the symbol of nine is interpreted as follows: When the Sky Deity Abukai Hehe fought with the demon Yeluli, a row of monstrous caves appeared in the horizon. Whoever fell into the caves could never return to Heaven. Grabbing several goose feathers, the Sky Deity jumped over the nine dark caves and flew to the top layer of the sky; while the demon was blinded by the ravens and fell into the seventh cave. Therefore, in rituals, the shaman must dance nine circles so that he can pass by the evils and misfortunes, and climb to the ninth sky to communicate with the deities. Apart from the concept

of nine layers, the idea of five or seven layers exist among the Nif and Chukchee peoples.

Among the Manchu and surrounding peoples, the universe is often depicted as 'cosmic tree,' 'sky tree' or 'shamanic tree'. This tree is believed to grow at the centre and cut across the universe. Its roots form the earthly world; the trunk is the middle world; and its seven (or nine) branches constitute the heavenly world. Even today, the Manchu clans set up sky poles to make offerings to the deities, which naturally results from the concept of the cosmological tree. When a shaman dies, his body is either placed upon the tree branches or in a hut-shaped coffin, covered with willow leaves and painted sacred trees. The significance of this is that the shaman's soul could return to the Heaven by climbing the sky tree.

After entering the feudal society and due to external contacts, the shamanic concept of cosmology was challenged and influenced by Buddhism (Lamaism) and Christianity. Chinese and foreign deities were introduced into the pantheon of the Manchu. Rituals were standardized by the Qing imperial court, and the 'primitive' way of thinking began to fall. But the rural Manchus still followed the idea of the nine skies or multiple cosmological layers.

The concept of the 'three worlds' is firm in shamanism of the Manchu and other peoples in northern China. The idea of paradise as the upper world, human world as the middle world, and hell as the underworld probably comes from the Yakuts with Christian or Orthodox influence. This differs from the archaic worldview of shamanism. The Manchu shamanic scriptures and myths have retained the 'nine-sky' concept with its version of the 'three worlds'. They believe that the universe is divided into nine layers. The upper three layers form the upper world where the Sky Deity *Abuhaenduri* and other natural deities live. The middle world also have three layers for human beings, animals, birds and lesser spirits. The three layers at the bottom constitute the earthly world or dark world – residence of *Banajimu* (earth mother), the female deities governing dark night, as well as of the demons. This is different from the idea of hell in Buddhism and Christianity. The shaman is a messenger of the nine skies. He can fly up to communicate with the deities, or descends to the lowest layer to destroy the demons. The concept of the 'three worlds' and 'nine skies (layers)' of the Manchu contains the archaic philosophy of a linkage between the Heaven and earth. Shamanism as a 'primitive' religion has retained its longstanding traditional characteristics.

III

Religious beliefs and myths coexisted and were intermixed during the early age of human development. Religious ideas evolved into myths, and myths stimulated more religious ideas. A typical example is the cosmological concept

of shamanism and creation myths, which play an important role in shamanic culture. From the shamanic myths it is evident to see the worship of animal deities, totems, and ancestral heroes, which developed on the basis of nature worship. Although the former have different focuses, they are closely related to the cosmological concept. Some Manchu shamanic scriptures record that certain birds and animals created the world. An example of these is the creator and deity of White Water Bird, or *Shanyanmukgasha* in Manchu language. She saved mankind from the flood and became their deity thereafter. As the myth of the Kang-aili clan of the Manchu goes, the White Water Bird changed from a white-skin girl. In the distant past, when the earth was torn by the great flood, a kindhearted shamaness took the risk of fishing to feed her clansmen. One time, she mistook a white rock for a fish and smashed onto it, thus turning into a white-feather bird. Albeit the bird is personified, it is different from deities of human nature developed at a later period.

The theme of birds and animals creating the earth and saving humankind can also be found in the myths of the peoples in northern and northeastern Asia as well as in many parts of the world.

The emergence of such mythological concept is determined by the modes of economic activities of the early modern humans - hunter-gatherers. The peoples in northern China and northern Asia were (some still are) hunters, fishermen and nomads. Therefore, animal deities have played a major role in their 'primitive' worldview.

As the animal deities were worshipped and became ancestors of the human beings, there appeared totem worship. The Manchu myths also tell that humankind descended from six brothers who came from a bird egg, or descended from the mating between a white bird and a common ancestor, or between a serpent and a woman.

At a certain period of human history, women dominated the positions in clan societies, and this is supported by the Manchu myths. These female deities were beautiful, intelligent, and powerful, and became the object of worship. Shamanesses were common, and the later shamans often depict a sense of womaness in performance.

However, the female deities in Heaven do not represent queens or emperresses on earth. They usually appeared as a group, often several female deities combined as one entity. There is hardly any myth attributing to a supreme single female deity, although one myth tells one goddess with the cosmic power of three heads, eight arms and nine feet, capable of shaking the universe and flying freely across nine layers in the upper world.

The earliest sky deities in human form in Manchu myths are the three goddesses. They always emerge and disappear together. Their three pairs of eyes look into all directions, governing the peace of the world. The Manchu myth of the three goddesses is verified by our discovery of a more than 200-

year old wooden idol consisting of three goddesses, which is preserved by Namudulu clan in Huichun of Jilin province.

Based on our research in recent years⁵ the three-goddess shamanic myth is the embryo for goddess myths of various ethnic groups in northeastern China. Examples are the later evolved myths and legends of the Manchu and other peoples, such as the "Three Heavenly Women," "Three Celestial Maidens," "Seven Celestial Maidens," and "Nine Heavenly Women." The Manchu ancestor's myth "The War in Heaven" records that the three goddesses are called by a joint name, *Abuka Hehe*, who was responsible for creating the first shaman on earth and leading other deities to fight against demons. *Abuka* means 'sky,' and *Hehe* – which may be defined as 'woman' – comes from the Manchu term *fefe*, meaning 'woman's genitals.' This implies a 'primitive' worship of woman's genitals in the distant past, which was regarded as the symbol for creating all lives. Some shamanic scriptures call the sky as Goddess Yase (eyes). When she closed her eyes, the earth was peaceful and weather beautiful. But when she opened her eyes, snow storms and hailstones befell upon the humankind. Therefore, female deities embody power and play an essential role in the world of deities. Along with the Sky Mother (*Abuka Hehe*) emerged another female deity, the Earthly Mother *Banajiemu*. *Banajiemu* was gigantic in shape, with belly and breasts as huge as mountains, and she was boundless with kindness. The dirt and hair from her ears turned into forests and mountains, and her sweat became crystal-clear rivers nurturing all living things on earth. Together with *Abuka Hehe*, they are the goddesses controlling the Heaven and earth. Reading behind the concept of mystical cosmology, one can infer that the myths reflect the dominating status of women in a matrilineal society, and suggest that women were the law of the past.

IV

The idea and practice of sky worship of the Manchu and other peoples in northern China were fragmentarily recorded in Chinese historical records (cf. *Hou Han Shu*, Vol. 115, *Tang Shu*, Vol. 20, *Oidan Guo Zhi*, Vol. 23, *Jin Shi*, Vol. 35, *Jilin Tongzhi*, Vol. 27) although the word 'shaman' was first recorded in a twelfth century publication, *San Chao Bei Meng Hui Bian*. During the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), the Manchu carried on their long tradition of sky worship and made it a popular practice. Sacrificial poles were set up in imperial palaces as well as in the yards of the commoners. Along with the worship of stars and ancestors, sky worship rituals became the top ceremonious event among the Manchu people, particularly by the 1750s. What are the characteristics of the Manchu's sky worship at a later date? First, the archaic form of sky worship (the worship of cosmological entities or phenomena such as the sun, the moon and stars) still play a vital role. This archaic concept symbolically remain on the sacred objects of the shamans whom we studied.

For example, the shaman's drum represents the universe; the shaman's skirt portrays clouds; the shaman's waist bells play the role of thunder and wind; the shaman's headdress and bronze mirror represent the sun, the moon and stars; the bird (raven) on top of the headdress indicates the ability to fly in the universe so that the shaman could act as messenger between the human world and the other worlds; the shaman's drum-stick becomes the 'cosmological horse'; and different beats of drumming symbolize the pace of the cosmological flying. In order to suggest that 'sky deities as almighty gods appeared at a rather recent date,' some researchers applied the Mongolian case and argue that different *tengeris* (e.g. *Daiqing Tengeri* or Warrior Deity, *Yidagan Tengeri* or Shamaness Deity, and *Balsi Tengeri* or Tiger Deity) are in fact a single deity and have nothing to do with the concept of sky worship (Cai 1985). But since the term *tengeri* embodies the meaning of 'sky' and 'deities,' the worship of deities should be associated with that of the sky. Secondly, ethnographic results of the shamanic rituals of the peoples in northern China show that numerous deities are still involved in practice, including animal deities, natural deities and ancestral deities. Even though the Manchu clan shamanic rituals were simplified and 'standardized' in 1747 A.D., names of animal and natural deities abound in the scriptures of the practicing shamans. This shows the vitality of the nature worship and the Manchu people's strong consciousness of inheriting their shamanic tradition. Sacrificial ritual in honour of the almighty deity *Abuhaenduri* is only part of the sky deities worship, which includes numerous other deities as well. Therefore, those who argue that Manchu shamanism has been "converted to the worship of a mono-god" (Qiu 1985:19) are groundless or simply based on the unilinear evolutionary model. If there is a trend in shamanism that the worship of polarized deities are evolved toward a mono-deity, this evolution in Manchu shamanism is nowhere near being completed. Today the number of deities worshipped by the Manchu ranges from a few dozen to over a hundred in each clan unit. These deities have no authorities over one another, even those powerful deities are also individual members within the pantheon community. All deities are 'sky deities,' which is the main characteristics of the Manchu's archaic belief system. The present paper suggests that, in order to have a sound understanding of shamanism in northern China, we should pursue more ethnographic work, make full use of historical records, and further explore the nature of shamanism practiced by each individual ethnic group in northern China.

Notes

Translator's Note: This article was originally published in a Chinese journal, *Shijie Zongjiao Yanjiu* [Studies of World Religions], 1987, 4:70-86. Due to technical difficulties, a few reference sources are not listed, including translations from Russian by Sun Yunlai. Translated by Shi Kun and Frank ZhangXu.

1. This is based on the scriptures of the Manchu Guang, Lan, Zhao and other clans collected in Yongji, Jiutai and Shulan counties of Jilin province.
2. Also entitled "*Xi Lin An Ban Mafa*." Like the epic Nisan Shamaness, it is very popular among the Manchu people.
3. Star worship is recorded in the Manchu clans' shamanic scriptures. The stars are regarded as substitutes of deities in the sky. Cf. Fu 1990.
4. In *Manzhou Ji Shen Ji Tian Dianli* (Book of Laws for Manchu Sacrifices and Offerings Established by Imperial Command), issued by Emperor Qian Long in 1747 A.D., number nine is regarded as the top number.
5. Most of the research results were published after the present article, such as Fu – Zhang – Sun (eds) (1988), Fu (1990) and Fu – Meng (1991).

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Social Functions of the Manchu Shaman

By

Guo Shuyun

Among the minority nationalities believing in shamanism in the North of China, the shaman is not only the officiate at sacrificial rites who fulfils an obligation to serve the gods, but also the creator and successor of his national culture, and defender of his national interests. So, the shaman's functions can be divided into religious and social functions. In this paper I focus on the social function of the shaman, in order to contribute to the overall understanding of shamanism.

The social function of the shaman is reflected by the activities of spreading national culture, defending national interests and serving the clan.

The shaman can be regarded as the representative of his clan culture, and the creator of culture. To be sure, a clan culture was created and recreated by all members of the clan in its production, but it was summed up and distilled with the aid of the shaman's intelligence and knowledge. It was added to, sorted out and enriched, in order for the clan to succeed and spread. Therefore, a clan cultural level depends on the level of education and knowledge of the shaman, and his sense of responsibility for spreading national culture.

In ancient times, the primitive cultures of the northern nationalities did not drop out of their religious swaddling clothes, but developed and succeeded by relying on their religion. Because of the strength of their religion, their tradition was maintained throughout succeeding generations.

In ancient times, before character writing began, the shaman with his own wisdom and creativeness created pictographs, picture writing and methods of keeping records by tying knots in order to record and keep his national culture. As we know, there are some pictures for ancient shamanic drums. Each pattern or animal figure has a special meaning. For example, a frog signifies a lake, a lizard a nest, a flying eagle the sky, an earthworm wet soil, the sun light, the half moon the slightly black, an arrow for fighting, an eagle without a head for being scattered, a star at dawn for the dark night, a tree lying on the ground for a hurricane, a black stone for starvation, and naked person squatting down for the bitter cold.

Ancient frescos engraved on rocks are the most representative cultural remains in Northeast Asia, Northern Europe and North America. They reproduce the production, life and belief of the ancient people of the North. They include

frescos at Lake Baykal from the Old Stone Age, the primeval forest frescos of Siberia, Sakachi-Alian frescos in Siberia, the Yinshan frescos in Inner Mongolia, the Jaolakedao frescos at the Greater Xing'an Mountains, and frescos at Alashan Left County. Together, they vividly portray birds and beasts, sun, moon and stars in nature. They also describe vast scenes of hunting, fighting, and religious rites with an artistic style of realism. At present, it has been recognized in academic circles that the reasons for creating frescos relate to primitive religion. According to the first volume of the *Chinese History of Civilization*, one of two reasons is to simulate sorcery and the other is to pray for high harvest yields. We can imagine that the ancients in the North would not have spent their amazing strength and energy to create the huge rock frescos unless they had been inspired by a religious consciousness. The drawing of worship to the sun in the Yinshan frescos, shamanic drums in the frescos at the Greater Xing'an Mountains, snakes, lizards and bears in the frescos at Lake Baikal and the portrait of a shaman's head in the forest frescos on the Amur River are all eternal themes of primitive shamanism. These frescos incorporate religious consciousness alongside an aesthetic consciousness as an embodiment of the wisdom and energy of the shaman, the cultural representative of the ancients in the North.

Northern shaman costumes, ornaments, decorative patterns, god images and pictures of ancestors are indeed ancient art treasures. They have a deep religious content and reflect ancient religious concepts, totemism and belief in the gods. Because of this, costumes are piously worshipped as sacred objects by the people in the clan to which they belong. Each ornament and pattern on the costumes are religious symbols as well as works of art.

Making costumes is very specialized work. In past times, costumes were almost always made from leather. Needles were made of the bone of elk, deer or fish, and thread was made of muscle from animals. Bone buttons of different shapes were sewed on and different patterns embroidered to give beauty. Evolving gradually, costumes changed in material, style, adornments and patterns. For example, the shaman costume of the hunting Evenki of Aoluguya consists of a vest, jacket and skirt. There are many models and patterns symbolizing worship, including the sun, moon, stars, thunder, wolf, bear, panther, eagle, duck, hare, swan, fish and so on. The representations look remarkably true to life. The shaman costume of the Olunchun was almost always made of elk or deer skin. Patterns of clouds, flowers, fish, deer and other birds were embroidered on the front, and patterns of peach blossoms on the back. Leather with patterns of the sun, moon and stars was sewn on the sleeves. A rectangular cloud pattern was embroidered at the waist. The whole costume symbolizes the heavenly conception of shamanism. In adornments, there are many models of animals and objects on the costume of the Evenki shaman, and many different patterns on the costumes of the Olunchun.

Painting and carving in shamanism developed gradually, maturing with the enlightenment of religious sense. With the emergence and development of the latter shamanism changes from early object worship to idol worship. People hoped that clan patrons and ancestral gods would always reside with them and bless them, so they made many different god idols for worship. Certainly, worship was the premise of the development of thinking in images.

There are many kinds of patrons and gods, carved on birch bark by the Manchu. Thunder gods are carved on wood by the Olunchun, star gods carved on wood by the Manchu, bird gods by the Dahur, squirrel gods are made of squirrel skins by the Evenki, and pottery tortoise and snake gods are made by the Manchu. The gods constantly changed posture as well as being deputed in many rich and varied materials. All are primitive in shape, but are intended to call the attention of the spirits.

Later, ancestor worship became an essential form of the cults. Ancestor idols were made from cloth, fur and wood and, with the development of ancestor worship, painting was introduced into shamanism. Up to this time, the portraits of ancestors are mainly directly related to clans. On the upper side of the pictures, the moon is to the left and the sun to the right, with the seven stars in the sky and bird on the tree of souls. All this reflects shamanism, while on the lower part of the pictures are portraits of ancestors, of attendants, and depictions of horses and fresh flowers. A series of shaman art works include four portraits of ancestors painted on silk, four pictures of god tables and two pictures of streamers used to call the spirit of the dead. These were from the Guan family in the Manchu, and were discovered in Yangmu Township of Yongji County in 1990.

There is no doubt that shamans concentrated their intelligence and mind on the birth and development of art. Although some works were not made by the shaman himself, the sources of their design, images and layouts came from shamans. It was not only because the shamans were leaders of the cult and the representatives of national civilization, but also because they inherited the ritual secrets. It is most appropriate for a shaman to decide how to make a costume and paint objects for a god; any other member in the same group has no right to do so. As to making statues of a god, the principles are consequently very strict, and must be carried out by a shaman or under his management. It is very difficult to obtain the initial form of the god. To do so, shamans live in mountains, far away from their clan, and take clean baths. Only an image dreamed of by one shaman several times, or by two shamans during the same night, can be used for the statue. So we can conclude that the shaman is the founder of art.

Music and dance are major parts of shamanistic arts. Shamanism, itself, is a kind of art, music and dance. Music and dance are performed from the beginning to the end of a ritual. Melody and rhythm and the pace and manner

of the dance depend on the content of the sacrifices offered to ancestors. Using music and dance, the shaman demonstrates the sacrifices offered to ancestors and his pleasure to both gods and men. Therefore music and dance cannot be separated from the offering sacrifices; they complement each other.

As the nationalities in the North are at various historical stages of shamanism and differ from each other in areas and production, music and dance also differ in style. The shamanic music and dance of the Evenki and the Olunchun is crude, bold, happy and lively, and is performed by groups. Manchu music and dance mainly imitates the sounds and actions of various animal gods and hero spirits. The Khorchin *Böö* (the Mongolian shaman) dance has characteristics of self-enjoyment, athletic ability and sport (Bai Cui-ying et al. n.d.:62), while *böö* music is famous for its dignity, simplicity and romantic charm. It is clear that music and dance in shamanic sacrificial actions have the functions of linking feelings between men and gods. Shamans of each nationality in the North, are themselves musicians and dancers. The arts of music and dance, created and carried on for generations, are pleasing to both the eye and the mind; full of praise, full of special stylization and mannerism, the dancer's dance is vigorous and musical composition is sonorous.

Shamans are the chief creators of oral literature because, as representatives of national culture, they are in contact with the gods and link heaven and earth, men and gods. Shamans created folk oral literature, as is shown by the shaman's role in it and the shaman's impact on its development but also by the shaman's creation of and preservation of oral myths such as the creation myth and national origin myth.

A shaman is the most important transmitter of clan culture. Early cultures in the northern nationalities, with elementary science, medicine, astronomy, geography, divination, music, dance and myth-making are preserved in shamanism. The most important way in which this is done is by oral transmission. Old shamans, being of noble character and high prestige, tell something useful, in secret, to favoured disciples. During festivals and sacrifice periods, the shaman talks to all members of his clan about the national history, the creation myth, principles of nationality and religious etiquette. Generation after generation, in prayers for happiness, the elimination of disaster, in divination, in the practice of medicine, and in sacrifices offered to gods, shamans directly pass on music, dance, divination, and medicine. Shamans also supplemented oral culture and made it more accurate. With their god-stick, some shamans carved patterns of grains all of different sizes; in caves and rooms where the shamans lived they piled rocks and stones of different colours, shapes and sizes; on shirts, hats and shawls, they hung ropes and bars woven with animal hair, bark, rattan and straw. These recorded sacrificial actions that engraved national history and stories of the nation's rise and fall while also reflecting the religious law.

Shamans are clan doctors. In the clan areas natural conditions are very poor and medical treatment primitive. In order to keep the clan alive, to expand power and strength, it is very important for the shaman to treat diseases and keep the people strong and healthy. That is why shamans enjoy high prestige and enjoy the love and esteem of the people.

In the treatment of disease there are two main procedures: religious magic arts and traditional methods of local medicine. The former is achieved through the sorcerer's dance in a trance and drives out the evil spirits, therefore it is classified as a religious function. The latter was created through long experience of everyday life, and can be classified as social functions.

To shamanism, the reason why men fall ill is because evil has taken his spirit out of his body. So shaman treatment of disease involves dancing in trance in order to drive out evil and recover the lost spirit. However, the concrete methods and processes are distinct in different nationalities. During religious rites, Mongolian shamans recite scriptures and ring a bell to create catharsis. A strange impression then appears on his face, as if the devil is manifested. Meanwhile, he begins to dance, sings an incantation with foam coming out of his mouth that shows unusual power. This mad state is said to indicate the action of the devil being transferred from the sick man to the shaman so that the disease can be driven away. Tungus shamans drive off the devil to recover a sick man's soul with a magic fight and sword play with evil spirits. With the help of patrons, shamans of the Guoerte nationality, suffering a lot, can only find devils who have stolen the soul, and make a deal with them or fights. If the shaman win, they carry the soul back to the sick man to make him recover. Sometimes a patient falls ill because of some unjust behaviour and bad etiquette which hurts ancestors. In order to make such a patient recover, the shaman tries to please the divinity and asks for forgiveness by means of a ceremony and sacrificial offerings.

A very interesting common phenomenon existed among the chief shamans we visited in each northern nationality. This was that they all possessed special medical skills and could treat diseases to varying degrees. Some were especially experienced. As they were familiar with over onehundred different kinds of herbs growing in the mountains and forests and had acquainted themselves with the medical characteristics of each kind of animal and plant, they could make medicines such as pills, powders, plasters and pellets by baking, roasting and grinding with many kinds of rocks and animal bones, using these to dispel specific disease and pain. For example, spring water mixed with Chinese ephedra could be used for indigestion; powders made from the root of langdu could be plastered on an infected wound to prevent tetanus being caused by poisonous fungi; willow leaves roasted and slightly fried could be used for external application to cure women's dysmenorrhoea; boiled hawthorn could cure diseases such as rheumatism; burning bitter wormwood to produce smoke could

drive the rotten smell of decayed flesh away; pike's bile could treat eye disease; pigeon soup could cure coughs. There were many others too numerous to mention, but each had its own character and curative power. The shaman took charge of prenatal care and the delivery of children, because they understood what kinds of wild eggs and animal meat could safely eaten to keep the pregnant woman and fetus healthy. So it can be said that shamans are the nurses of clans.

In a long period of practice, shamans have tried to find and master simple methods of massage and moxibustion. While dancing, shamans continually point and touch a patient's body all over with a hammer, a whip or a spear to excite local parts of the body as an anaesthesia for the treatment of rheumatism. This is really an initial stimulation method for treating the main and collateral channels by touching acupoints. Dystocia fainting and limb paralysis can be cured by nipping a patient's forefinger, one of the acupoints. Pricking a patient's body to let blood out can bring down a fever. It should be pointed out that shamans in each clan, in their treatment, gradually obtain their own special skills. The Pingguo shaman of the Dahur is good at massage therapy and the setting of broken bones. Old man Meng Jinfu, the famous Olunchun shaman, is good at using local medicine to treat some diseases. It may be accepted that well-known chief shamans in the northern nationalities are good doctors with unique skills.

As doctor to the clan, the shaman mainly treats disease by dancing in trance. Treatments, however, are really obtained by medical skill. Dancing shows the religious aspect of shamanism, and is therefore an important part of religious rites; but medical skills are crystallizations of the intelligence and experiences of the northern people. Religious actions perform a psychological function on a patient's spirit, and with the help of medical skills are able to cure some. However, it is medical skill that actually treats the disease. It is clear that, in the North where shamanism is popular, shamans have for generations developed their medicinal experiences and knowledge. In ancient times, when living conditions were very bad, disease and pestilence were dangerous to clans. At that time, shamans, as the most intelligent men, took charge of mother and child care, and prevented and treated diseases. This tradition continues today.

The shaman is an adviser from whom the clan receives the stimulation essential for survival.

In ancient times it was very difficult to survive, because the ability to control nature was low. Natural calamities often occurred. Good nutrition and food production were difficult if not impossible. So clans travelled across mountains and rivers in order to pick plants or to hunt food. Meanwhile, each clan vied for water sources, hunting grounds and living space. As a result, the strong won and the weak were defeated. In order to safeguard the clan's interests, each clan needed a wise leader and adviser to organize food production, to

help withstand natural disasters, to drive out pestilences, and to withstand invasions. The shaman took charge of this social duty because of his knowledge of geography, astronomy, animals and secret religious arts. In this way, he became an important member who could not be absent even for short periods. Just as one Manchu shaman said: "A clan without a shaman is like a bird without wings, a deer without legs and a man without a head".

Primitive men, however, did not hunt without principles, but they hunted according to special codes and strict organization. The code prescribed what animals to hunt and how to distribute hunters, who should take main duties, who should be assistants, who should lay an ambush and who should kill beasts. All these actions were skilled and special ritual were carried out by shamans.

Shamans played a leading and organizational part in such hunting, especially in ancient times.

For generations, the shamans sense of responsibility for clan members caused them to carefully watch nature, do their best to master knowledge and skills, and to continuously accumulate experience. And because of the secret transmission system, shamans obtain more knowledge, techniques and methods than any other members of a clan. From what they obtained shamans served the clan members in many ways. They decided when and where to hunt and fish; they decided where to live by watching changes of the mountains and the surface of the earth; they warned clan members what rocks were dangerous, where the earth's crust might easily alter, what colour of water is good and what colour of water should be avoided, what kinds of insects and snakes could be eaten and what kinds were poisonous. Also, they advised clan members where to build quarters without danger, they noted the reasons why animals around them lived and died to deduce the tendencies of disease and pestilence. Shamans have for generations summed up and drawn on the experiences and achievements of ancient man to understand the nature of the universe. Depending on the patterns of the stars which appear and move from east to west shamans determined the seasons, directions, time, temperature, wind power and the growth of plants and animals. The correspondence between such astronomical phenomena determined clan actions, misfortunes and happiness.

Shamans are important policy makers in a clan's politics, military affairs and everyday life.

In primitive societies, the leaders of the clan were both experts of sacrificial rites and wizards (Frazer 1987:18). They had political power, military power and spiritual power, with political and military power determined by spiritual power. Shamans possessed the same functions and characteristics. They had a hand in deciding political and military policy. In joint meetings they held the most important position, and by using spiritual powers they could decide actions such as when to launch war, the selection of leaders, the distribution of hunting

fields and moving a clan. In times of war, they guided the tribe's members and sometimes dominated political and military activity. Consequently, they enjoyed high prestige and position. In the war for Chengis Khan to unify the individual tribes of Mongolia and to unify political power, *Kököchü* was a very famous shaman who played an important role in policy making. *Kököchü* was known as *tebtengri* the name of a Mongolian god, and called himself a prophet. Therefore he was much trusted by Chengis Khan.

In 1206, *Kököchü*, in the name of the god's representative, gave Temüdzhin the name Chengis Khan, giving his government a mysterious coat. *Wanyanxiyin*, a founding father of the Qin dynasty, was good with pen and sword and gained the position of minister. He was authorized to create Nuchen's writing characters and participate in organizing ceremonial systems. In military affairs he took part in the war to attack the Liao and Song states, and he performed 'immortal' feats for the Qin dynasty. Meanwhile he was a shaman, who was treacherous and intelligent, who created laws and writing characters with which the Nuchen formed an independent state. A shaman could become "a god, and no one but Nianhan can match him" (*Investigation and Correction* ..., n.d.). Even Wanyanzonghan, the famous Qin general who attacked Liao, could not match him. Nurhach, a Manchu hero and a chief shaman who was also an astronomer, selected beneficial opportunities and predicted the future. In the war for unity, he governed the army and ruled clan members, relying on his divine powers for guidance. This is recorded in the *Han Kings Biography of Two Dynasties*. Wubuxiben Mother, the Manchu shaman epic extolled Wubuxiben's praises. She is said to have united every tribe of the East Sea, and to have had martial power and skill.

Many examples of shaman participation policy making and military decisions are vividly described in the public documents which have been recorded in ancient times.

A shaman's participation in clan policy making was mainly expressed in his mediation of disputes and arranging of everyday life. There were recurring disputes concerning hunting fields, hunts and graveyards. Once decisions were made by the shaman, no one could refute them, and shamans had more rights than mukun clan leaders.

During memorial ceremonies and festivals, or before a war, a shaman would tell clan members legends of their origin in order to strengthen and unite clan power. Thus the morals and behaviour of the clan were first established and then strengthened. For example, the standard of clan exogamy was carried out under a shaman's supervision. In spring and autumn of each year, a shaman would tell the youths to hang something on their houses as a sign they were looking for spouses. Shamanism as an institution undertook the important task of maintaining and developing the clan. Shamans performed each social function and merited higher prestige and position. Thus, shamans have long been

accredited as keepers of clan culture and perhaps one of the most highly esteemed members of a clan. Without a shaman, clans possibly would have gradually deteriorated and become extinct.

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Studies on Eurasian Shamanism

By

Mihály Hoppál

Introduction

In 1957-58, Vilmos Diószegi, a prominent figure in Hungarian research on shamanism, spent extended periods in St. Petersburg and Siberia. Thirty years later, in the winter of 1987, I was given an opportunity to do some research in the Institute of Ethnography of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg and to study the recent literature published in the last couple of decades. Diószegi (1923-1972) left behind a very substantial library, which can now be used as a separate part of the library of the Ethnographical Research Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Naturally enough, the literature he had collected contains primarily older publications (which are, admittedly, impossible to obtain today), issued practically up to the beginning of the 1970s.

I was told in by Dyakonova that Diószegi's appearance and fantastical work style played no small part in giving a major impetus to research into shamanism among the Russian colleagues. Consequently, after his death in 1972 a great many important works were published. It is these I now wish to review.

Reviews of this kind are not a particularly popular genre, as some works will inevitably be omitted; at the same time, they are important from the standpoint of the internal development of a subject, because one has to look back from time to time to appraise what direction research is moving in, and what the new results are. In the past decade, no such survey has been made of research on Siberian shamanism, although occasional bibliographies have appeared, listing several hundred items (Swienko 1978; also separately about Buryat shamanism, see Mikhaylov – Horoshikh 1973; Novik's work also contains a very good bibliography 1984:280-293).

It is mainly works published in the past two or three decades that I will survey, and this means approximately 100 papers, including a dozen monographs and an equal number of volumes of studies. It is important that all these, without exception (either original works or xerox copies), can be found in my private library. In arranging the material, two criteria offer themselves: one is regional classification according to peoples; the other is exposition according to topics. It should be noted that our Russian colleagues tend to organize publications

according to the former criterion, which is simpler, with any comparative approach pushed into the background (see Snesev – Basilov 1975, Vdovin 1976, 1979, 1981).

Since I have tried to circumscribe my topic, I will present the works of only Soviet authors – and above all Russian-language publications difficult to access –, but naturally I will sometimes refer to Western responses and critiques as well (e.g. Caroline Humphrey, who has carried out fieldwork on the Buryat and has provided a very good survey of Soviet researchers' theories of shamanism. See Humphrey 1976). I.S. Vdovin also published an article in English, which he prepared for the Ninth International Congress of Anthropology and Ethnological Sciences (ICAES); it too reviewed research, although literature quoted by him is rather limited, since in 1973 few new publications had yet appeared (Vdovin 1973). Another theoretical survey also presented older works (Basilov 1984).

It should be noted that recently the scientific literature published in the West – including Hungarian works – receives review after review. The volume *Shamanism in Siberia* (Diószegi – Hoppál, eds. 1978) received one review that could more appropriately be described as a full-length study, called "The current problems of research on shamanism" (Revunenkova 1981). A fellow of the Institute of Ethnography, Revunenkova is one of the few intimately acquainted with Western anthropological literature; indeed, she frequently quotes from it (Revunenkova 1974, 1979). She has devoted a special study to evaluating the work of the excellent Romanian historian of religion and ethnologist Mircea Eliade (Revunenkova 1979), whose standard work on shamanism (Eliade 1951) is not quoted by Russian colleagues even second-hand, although it could have provided a theoretical background and some typological parallels for their mostly descriptive works. (I note that in 1980, she published a monograph on the shamanism of Malaysia and Western Indonesia. Her book is a typical example of Soviet ethnology, since its author had never been to South-East Asia [Revunenkova 1980]). Naturally, travel restrictions no longer apply to researchers of Siberia. In recent decades, they have carried out considerable fieldwork, and the materials of these trips are beginning to be published frequently. It is these that I shall discuss in the following pages.

Theoretical Aspects

Prior to beginning, however, it may not be without interest to discuss three theoretical articles prepared by Soviet colleagues for the conference on shamanism held at Sárospatak (Hoppál ed. 1984). V.N. Basilov started from the idea that the new field trips – especially observations carried out at the

beginning of the century – enable us to view religious phenomena, including shamanism, from a historical point of view in their evolution (Basilov 1984:49).

Earlier, that approach imagined the development of religion along the lines of a simplistic theory of rectilinear development, distinguishing early and subsequent forms even in shamanism, whereas simple and elaborate forms existed side by side, as attested by historical facts. Soviet research on the history of religion, hallmarked by Tokarev, regards shamanism as a function characterizing the phase of development following simple magic, tribal cults and hunting magic – one, moreover, that follows immediately after totemism.

One of the main problems of Basilov, and of Soviet researches in general, is distinguishing presumably earlier and later elements of shamanism. Thus, for example, the available data suggests that the collective forms of shamanism predated individual forms; or that the world-tree/shaman-tree, as a central symbol, must go back a very long way since it is part of the shamanism of nearly all Siberian peoples. In the third chapter of his 1984 paper, Basilov scrutinized the range of questions relating to the social embeddedness of shamanism. On the basis of research carried out by this time, he assigns this form of social consciousness to classless social formations – more precisely, to the organizational forms of clan society, based upon family ties. This view is well supported by data which shows that, for instance, in the Altai district, the making of the drum is the corporate affair of the narrower community, the clan. Certain scholars (e.g., Zelenin and Zolotarev) put the appearance of shamanism at the time of the matriarchate, because a whole string of elements (including myths about the role of women in the emergence of shamanism, and the characteristically feminine function of healing) betoken a female shamanism that may have existed in the past. It was with the disintegration of clan ties that shamanism, as a cultural phenomenon, started to become individualized; others maintain that this process already began before this with the appearance of the patriarchy.

There were two studies that set out to list the characteristic features of Siberian shamanism. One used material on the Paleo-Asian Ket people (Alekseenko 1984), the other material on the Turkish and Mongol people (Mikhaylov 1984). Both scanned the development of religious ideas and forms. Two theoretical articles can be found in the more than a dozen English-language volume *Shamanism in Eurasia* (Diószegi – Hoppál eds. 1978). The two are from the two most renowned Russian researchers of shamanism. Both essentially try to typologize Siberian material on the basis of shaman's drums and their terminologies (Ivanov 1978, Popov 1978).

In addition to the representative English-language volume, edited by Diószegi, which included Nenets (Khromich 1978), Ket, that is, Yenisei Ostyak (Alekseenko 1978), Uzbek (Basilov 1978), Tuvinian (Kenin-Lopsan 1978, Vainstein 1978, Dyakonova 1978), Yakut (Zhornitskaya 1978), Nivkh (Taksami 1978),

and Nganasan (Gracheva 1978, Dolgikh 1978) data – a few years later a Russian-language work was published. In this latter, the same authors each wrote an article about the shamanism of their respective peoples. This volume, with the misleading title of *Problems of the history of social consciousness among the original inhabitants of Siberia* (Vdovin ed. 1981), belongs to the series that the director of the Northern Department of the Ethnographical Institute of Leningrad organized about the beliefs and cults of Siberian peoples (Vdovin ed. 1976-1977, 1979). In his postscript to the 1981 volume Vdovin distinguishes three main types of shamanism: the magician-type; the shaman performing the role of religious leader, and the shaman preserving family and collective cults. This latter type, which has been described in great detail in the past 100 years, has been found primarily among Siberian peoples with more advanced economic and social conditions (e.g., the Tuva, Yakuts, and Buryats). Having said that, Soviet research does not consider shamanism to be a religion, but only a given phase of development of social consciousness. However, in an interesting development in the latest Soviet researches, it has been noted that specialists on religion have found the so-called 'priestly' function – such as that of the shaman – to be conspicuous among Siberian peoples. It is the function that is filled by the head or the oldest member of the family. Unfortunately, it is impossible to see the issue clearly, because the descriptions, prepared by professional researchers, use the most diverse Russian synonyms (such as equivalent to magus, magician, soothsayer, priest, sacrificer, etc.). This contributes to chaos in the terminology.

Samoyed Shamanism

Let us now see some examples of concrete investigations. In *The Ethnography of Northern Asia*, the Tomsk researcher G.I. Pelikh (1980) furnished some incredibly detailed descriptions of the fetishes of Selkup shamans. These can be eagle-, swan-, or human-shaped, but they may assume the form of a small piece of fur, a piece of wrought-iron or the figure of a bird-man. Pelikh also presents pictures of the fetishes, on the basis of his own fieldwork. A lengthy study reports some fascinating conversations from which it appears, among other things, that there were two kinds of shaman active among the Selkups: one performed his ritual by day, the other at night and by fire. The detailed descriptions of the shamans' activity are extremely vivid, and at the same time they enrich the earlier picture with a great many new details and data. In the final section of the volume, the author, using a group of objects collected in 1959, gives a picture of domestic spirits. These puppets, called *lozi*, command special reverence in the family. They include one that was held to preserve the soul of the dead. It is interesting to note that Pelikh associates all these beliefs with shamanism, calling them collectively the 'shamanistic cult'.

Between 1969 and 1978, G.N. Gracheva herself went on collecting trips to the Taymir Peninsula, where she met shamans. On several occasions she managed to tape-record shamanic rituals among the Nganasans (Gracheva 1981). Her recordings, along with the accurate Russian translations, at last provide authentic materials for textual analysis.

Among the observations she made in the field one that especially deserves my attention is the fact that each shaman had a song (or melody) which belonged to him only, and which no one else was allowed even to imitate. And since, in the Samoyedic language, the concepts of *thought* and *soul* are denoted by the same word, if someone sings the melody of another person with different words then, according to the belief of the Nganasans, he steals the other's brain or thoughts. Every person, even the shaman's helping spirits, have their own distinctive melodies, which the shaman has to sing during the shamanistic ritual (mostly at the beginning and end). During a séance, the appearance of the helping spirit – according to local informants – was signalled precisely by the start of a particular melody or a change in the rhythm of the drum. All this points to the close relationship that exists between rhythm, words (often with no meaning), melody and ritual context, which – according to a later paper – together presents the world-concept of the given culture (Gracheva 1984).

Buryat Shamanism

Buryat Mongol shamanism is perhaps is one of the most intensely researched compared with other peoples' religion. This has a very long tradition, as is amply illustrated by a bibliography published in Ulan-Ude over 15 years ago, a list containing about 500 titles from 1774 right up to the early 1970s (Mikhaylov – Horoshikh 1973). One man who actively builds that tradition further is T.M. Mikhaylov, who has devoted all his activity to researching Buryat shamanism. He started collecting data back in the late 1940s. In the early 1960s, he published many articles on the continued survival of Buryat shamanism (1962, 1979, 1980, 1980a, 1980b), and the influence of Lamaism and Christianity on Buryat shamanistic belief (1979). Particularly intriguing are passages dealing with the activity of the 'lama-shamans' (*dzhochi*), whose ritual objects completely coincide with the equipment of shamans (Mikhaylov 1979:132-133). A remarkable new phenomenon is the recording of shamanistic rituals, which are also seen to be in complete syncretism with the Lamaistic form (see also Zhukovskaya 1969, 1970). The latter study analyses typological parallels between Buddhism and shamanism).

Special mention must be made of Mikhaylov's monograph about the history of Buryat shamanism. The first volume appeared by 1980: in it, he surveyed the available data from the beginnings up to the 18th century. The first chapter

is a review of the history of research and of sources. Particularly interesting are pages reviewing the first descriptions and the highly rich literature of the past century. As regards the types of data, he distinguishes written sources, pictographs and archaeological finds, folklore and linguistic materials, and finally archive and individual collections of which he himself began in the early 1950s. During his trips, he travelled all over the Buryat region. The second chapter, in the absence of data, is essentially a collection of hypotheses. Relying mainly on the work of Zelenin and Zolotarev, as well as A.P. Okladnikov, he puts the beginnings of the formation of shamanism at the same period as the emergence of patriarchal tribal society (i.e. the period between 2500 B.C. and 1700 B.C., the period of the Siberian Bronze Age). The situation is not much better in the case of the so-called primitive communal society (from 1000 B.C. to the beginning of our era); but it is slightly better, because he can use the historical-typological method, when Mikhaylov describes the old cults and pantheon of early nomadic state formations, and the old Turkish-Mongol empires (up to about A.D. 1000). The fourth chapter presents material from the 11th-14th centuries, as reflected in ethnocultural process and the 'development' of shamanism.

It must be acknowledged that the Buryat researcher's book is full of unique data. For instance, he juxtaposed the Evenk, Turkish, and Mongol-Buryat terminology (Mikhaylov 1980:206). But unfortunately, in the theoretical field, the conclusions are not substantiated. The bibliography contains no references to foreign, non-Russian-language literature, and he reverts again and again to quoting canonized passages of Marx and Engels. There is nothing left for the reviewer to say but that he awaits with interest the second volume, presenting Buryat shamanism up to our own time which, precisely because of the author's field experience and his native competence in understanding folklore texts, will perhaps contain more of interest and original data (Mikhaylov told me in December 1986 that the manuscript was already at the printers).

Complementing Mikhaylov neatly is a book by I.A. Manzhigeev which explains the terminology of Buryat shamanism in a dictionary format (Manzhigeev 1978). Despite its modest length (colleagues have told that it is just a fraction of the completed manuscript), it is highly significant, not in the field of atheistic propaganda as the subtitle and the preface claim, but because it rescues part of the mytho-poetico-ritual terminology (religious belief-system) of a people, condemned to oblivion. It was not without considerable difficulties that the work finally did appear at the end of the 1970s. It was perceived by the political establishment as a sign of nationalism, of the awakening and strengthening of the nationalities' cultural identity (and in this the leaders of the time were not at all wide of the mark). We learn from the dictionary that the Buryat-inhabited region was also characterized by a blending, peaceful co-existence of certain elements of the old faith, shamanism, Lamaism, and Christianity, in

the daily practice of people who professed two or even three faiths (Manzhigeev 1978:8). We learn, too, that in Buryat popular belief, instead of an abstract concept of God one finds a great number of deities and supernatural beings, groups of which are opposed to each other. The shamanistic pantheon is characterized by duality. As regards Hungarian popular belief, in the opinion of our linguists, the word *bőő* in Buryat shamanism (which means 'shaman' (*ibid.*, 24-29) corresponds to the root of the Hungarian words *bű-báj* ('charm', 'spell') and *bűvöl* ('bewitch'), a correspondence all the more noteworthy as we do not know of a better, semantically closer equivalence even in Finno-Ugrian shaman terminology.

The Buryat Branch in the city of Ulan-Ude of the Siberian Department of the Soviet Academy of Sciences carries out, under the guidance of K.M. Gerasimova, highly valuable research, especially in the field of Buddhism, and in general of Tibetan cultural influences (cf. Gerasimova 1981a). In the 1981 volume, Gerasimova examined the cult – pervaded with Lamaism – of shaman ancestors and quoted Tibetan texts in which parallels can be found. One interesting conclusion she came up with was that, in the early part of the past century, the Czarist government held Lamaism to be more dangerous from the viewpoint of Christian proselytization than shamanism. The same volume, called *Buddhism and the traditional beliefs of Central Asia*, contains two other interesting articles on shamanism. Between 1975 and 1979, G.N. Ochirova collected data within her own family about a local clan spirit-being (*Gutayn-baaby*) and animal sacrifices devoted to it. She also records in detail texts associated with the customs (Ochirova 1981). And an article rich in new data is co-authored by two archaeologists who, in 1978, explored two shaman tombs in the neighbourhood of Kichingi. On the skull of one of the dead was a crown, the characteristic wrought-iron ornamental headgear of Buryat shamans (Hamzina – Imenokhoev 1981:95), and the tomb had rich grave furniture (coins, costume ornaments made of iron, and casts representing mythological scenes). What the authors say about the shaman's iron sticks – as an insignia of rank (*ibid.*, 100) – is particularly interesting, as is the fact that the shaman tombs were on a clan's local sacred hill.

Publications of this kind will perhaps gradually replace the earlier atheistic publications (Tadiev 1955, Mikhaylov 1962, 1980d), which, however, still appear (*Ateizm ...* 1986). Admittedly, in these latter one can find interesting articles containing good data. Of particular interest here is Mikhaylov's survey of the historical periods of Buryat shamanism, because he – basing his discussion firmly on pictographs and archaeological data from the Baykal region – also echoes Okladnikov's opinion that Siberian shamanism, as a composite of cultural elements, developed at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. from local hunting and fertility cults, as well as from the worship of shaman ancestors (Mikhaylov 1980a:45).

Amur, Sakhalin, Korea

Between 1913 and 1924, Ivan Lopatin, who spent the greater part of his life in the Baykal region, led seven expeditions to the Amur region. Of particular value were the observations made among the Oroch, Udehe, Gold, and Tunguz tribes, but he possessed an intimate acquaintance with the customs of the Buryats as well. He spent the last years of his life in the United States, publishing a monograph rich in data among other things in English, centred on the cult of the dead of the Amur region (Lopatin 1960). In this he frequently compared the Siberian (Eurasian) data with relevant North American Indian parallels, and describes in detail types of shaman funerals (Lopatin 1960:81-89). It emerges from his data that in most Far-Eastern Siberian peoples the cult of the dead is inseparable from the activity of shamans (Lopatin 1960:134-137). He describes their roles in directing the rites.

Yu.A. Sem is a researcher of the Far-Eastern Nanais who has published a monograph on the material culture of that small culture of the Amur region. The monograph contains a short chapter on the dress of shamans in which he presents both photos and drawings of the characteristic shaman's belts of Gold shamans (Sem 1973). T.Yu. Sem is likewise a researcher of the peoples of the Amur region. She is now preparing a dissertation about an Evenk ethnic group (the Manager tribe, considered to be a subethnos). She has recently published an extract where she presents photos of a shaman's dress along with representations of the shaman's helping spirits (pictures of tiny statuettes carved from wood – Sem 1986:104-108, figs. 3-4).

Born into the Nivkh, a small people of the Far East, Ch.M. Taksami has devoted his entire activity to researching this ethnic group of a few thousand people and, first and foremost, to spreading information about its folklore. After Vdovin, he took charge of the Department of Northern Siberian peoples in the Ethnographic Institute, and in that capacity he is a regular contributor to volumes which examine spiritual traditions in these ethnic groups. He has written a study about the influence of Christianity on the beliefs of the Nivkhs (Taksami 1979) and another about Nivkh shamanism (1981). In the latterly he also reported his field experiences. Thus, for instance, in 1961 and 1962, in 1974 and 1975, on the island of Sakhalin he repeatedly collected data on shaman rituals, describing what he was told about, among other things, the way to become a shaman. A man born in 1917 had a dream telling him that he must take up shaman duties, the healing of men. His relatives were supportive and they prepared a drum for him (Taksami 1981:175). In another article, he compares the objects of equipment of the shamans of Sakhalin and of the Amur region, presenting fine drawings of over a dozen objects, including a picture of people beating the shaman drum, decorated with carvings of snakes and forgs (Taksami 1984:79).

Of the peoples of the Far East, Korean shamanism has a specialist among Russian colleagues, namely Yu.V. Yonova, who has devoted a thorough study to describing the decades between the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. She distinguished three main types of professional shamans in Korea: (1) 'great shamans' called *tekam*, who chosen by superior spirits, are capable of journeys to the upper world. These are the ones most akin to Asian-type shamans. (2) Female shamans called *mudang*, who, in the course of *kut* ceremonies, establish contact with their helping spirits to the accompaniment of drums while in a trance state. (3) *pansu* shamans are men, whose powers are restricted to the performance of magic incantations. In contrast with the shamans of the other two categories, they have no special dress (Yonova 1980:32-33). All this is interesting to us because the conditions that obtained to shamans at the turn of the century are still active in our own time in one of the world's fastest developing capitalist countries. It is the ceremonies of the *mudangs* that are flourishing in the metropolitan environment of Seoul in today's South Korea (Choi 1986).

Shamanism in Siberia: A General Report

On August 15-22, 1992, the capital of the Sovereign Sakha Republic, Yakutsk, played host to a conference called "Shamanism as a Religion: Origin, Reconstruction, Traditions". It was, in due, the first conference devoted to shamanism held on Siberian soil, widely regarded as the classic birthplace of shamanism, in a region where not long ago even the mere positive or neutral mention of shamanism was unthinkable. The conference was attended by hundreds of researchers, scholar, and lecturers, from all corners of Russia; but it was a particular delight to see numerous representatives of 'small peoples of the North' which, until the recent past, had supported shamanism as a living unbroken tradition. The conference was also attended by some forty foreign participants (including American, Canadian, Japanese, Korean, French, Finnish, and Hungarian scholars). The conference was a huge success for the organizers, since the most distinguished present-day researchers on Siberian shamanism were all there amongst the participants (V.P. Dyakonova, V.N. Basilov, Yu.B. Simchenko, E.S. Novik, T.M. Mikhaylov, and others), enabling the audience to make themselves acquainted with their opinions. It was also a success because a distributed volume featured extracts of the interesting lectures. The wide spectrum of the topics covered and the diversity of new data remind the researcher that there is still much to be studied, there are still many unexplored areas; and 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. In a whole range of subjects, entirely new, surprising, and fascinating results have been produced. In what follows, I review those results – even if sketchily, yet trying to get across an appreciation of the new concepts and conclusions. (Gogolev gen. ed. 1992).

First, it is appropriate to quote from those lectures that devote themselves to the history, cultural history, and origin of Eurasian shamanism.

According to the leading figure in Buryat shamanism research, T.M. Mikhaylov, it can fairly be asserted, based on a comparative analysis, that Central Asian shamanism is a religious system embracing all spheres of life, with the servants of the cult forming – metaphorically speaking – a hierarchical priesthood (the orders of white and black shamans). This special corps of religious specialists had hereditary rights and indisputable intellectual attributes. In one and the same person, they performed the functions of priest and healer, poet and artist, soothsayer and teacher; they were, in one and the same person, knowers and guardians of customs and traditions.

In Mikhaylov's view, the philosophical underpinnings of Central Asian shamanism are provided by the notion of the unity between Nature and Humans. The universe, the earth, human, animal and the plant world form an indivisible unity. The earth is the centre, the focus of the cosmos. By uniting, the earth and the sky perform the act of creation – they, between the two of them, are the creators of all that exists, for which reason they are sacred. That is precisely why, amongst nomadic Asian peoples, the cult of the sky and of the earth-water forms the backbone of the entire belief complex and, more widely, of the whole religious life. The ritual action of nomads on a mountain peak or at the foot of a hill, on the bank of a river or on the shores of a lake, on a roadside or at the site of their horses' noonday rest, – well, in all these places, ritual action is a manifestation of personal life embedded in the biosphere, an expression of the desire for life, the will to live. The central idea of the nomadic religious outlook is the notion of the continuity of the human species. Those professing the shamanic faith sees in her/himself a continuer of his/her ancestor's life; he/she knows and respects them, that is why it is important. At the same time, he/she looks ahead into the future, and sees in his descendants the meaning of his/her existence, and his/her duty to provide for the children and grandchildren, to prepare them for life, and to bequeath them the best qualities of the family, the finest attributes of the clan and the community. The Buryat scholar concluded that these shamanistic principles, in conjunction with the ritual and practical actions adhering to them, represent a considerable achievement of nomadic intellectualism, and, as significant historical and cultural values, they are permanent.

When did Siberian or Eurasian shamanism come into being? Which are the first demonstrable relics? A.I. Martynov (Kemerovo), a distinguished researcher of Siberian rock art, anatomized, in his lecture, the appearance of shamanism

in "Northern Asian rock art". He proceeded on the premise that shamanism is not a religion, but rather a mode of perception and a mytho-ritual concept of life, as well as a world of artifacts associated with the former. It is a combination of these three things that one has to look for in the tens of thousands of pictures to be found on the rocks. The interesting point is that the armoury of symbols employed in the rock drawings was variable depending on the particular historical periods. In the Neolithic, portrayals of moose and reindeer dominated the pictographs, with representations of human figures few and far between. In the New Stone Age and the Bronze Age, we see the vertical world with its tripartite division and the opposite horizontal world, with representations of the sun, as the dominant, leading symbols. The sun irradiates the cyclical motion of Nature, the idea of death and rebirth.

"In the Middle Ages – which, in Northern Asia, is already associated with certain ethnic communities – we can isolate certain symbols among the rock drawings, such as some animals (deer, horse), the shape of the sacred tree, the World Tree, the special animals having branches for their horns, the figure of the shaman, and a high number of anthropomorphic beings. They include real characters, and they also enact real events, such as the pasturing of cattle, nomadic migration, hunting, battles, the séance. ... Siberian shamanism may be charted from its own beginning, the Neolithic age. The mythological code of consciousness was part of it. The Northern Asian rock art, too, is an expression of that mythological consciousness. It was part of an ethical-perceptual triad: mythology – rock drawings – shamanism, as a gridwork of views relating to the surrounding world and of mytho-ritual actions"

– writes Martynov, who is perhaps one of the best authorities on the Siberian rock art (see Martynov 1991).

Another distinguished researcher, based in Novosibirsk, is V. Kubaryov, who reviewed the oldest shaman portrayals from the Altaic Mountains, preeminent among which is a presentment of a shaman found in a Bronze Age colony uncovered in the Ursul Valley in 1985. We can see one of the enigmatic portrayals of the stone chests of Karakol.

"The drawing, etched upon stone tablets, memorializes the culmination of a real theatrical series of actions – namely, the one connected with the send off ritual accorded to the spirit of the departing dead. We assume that the ceremony involved a large group of people, who, dressed in animal costumes and wearing animal masks, were transfigured, as it were, into the spirits of the ancestors, the protectors and the guardians, escorting the dead person to the other world. Proceeding on that assumption enables us to make sense of the composition engraved on one of the tablets of the stone chest in Karakol. In the drawing, we see red spirits waging a ritual battle with black demons, symbolizing thereby the confrontation between good and evil, the struggle between light and darkness, the conflict – which has been going on forever – between life and death. No wonder; after all, we're dealing with a crucial make-or-break point in the life of man, when he passes into a new state. When he departs the world of the living and moves into the world of the dead, he, more than ever before, is in need of help and support in the face of all the perils lying in wait for him along the road leading to the abode of the ancestors" (Kubaryov 1992:25).



Shaman in bird-type attire. Karakol, Altai region, 2nd millennium B.C.

A. Varenov (Novosibirsk) calls attention to interesting Chinese group of finds, a cultic ensemble of graves from the fourth millennium B. C., whose arrangement suggests that the burial sought to symbolize the shaman-mediator acting as an intermediary between the worlds. S. Kistemyev (Yakutsk) reports on another grave which, provided with rich grave furniture, may also be dated to the Neolithic age (4th millennium B.C.). Near the village of Rodinka, situated along the lower reaches of the Kolyma, he found the skeleton of a young woman. The bone ornaments of the extraordinarily rich find display what are called 'peaked headed people', figures normally associated with the images of spirits found in cave drawings and on shaman's drums. Therefore the Yakutsk-based archaeologist identified the grave as that of a female shaman. If that's correct, this find is the earliest (Neolithic) evidence of the appearance of shamanism in the land of the Yakut (Sakha).

Special attention is due to the trend in recent research that studies the old Indo-European and Iranian influences in Siberian shamanism, thus investigating the historical roots of white shamanism.

In her paper, K. Gerasimova (Ulan-Ude) acknowledges that D. Dugarov's book (1991) is a serious profile of early Buryat religion, which – using primarily comparative linguistic methods and based on folklore and ethnographic data – attempts to reconstruct the cult of natural-cosmic forces. Dugarov rejects the theory that the entire intellectual culture of the Southern Siberian nomadic peoples was the result of internal development, contending, instead, that, in the region in question, the culture of the indigenous tribes came into manifold contact with the Indo-Iranian and Indo-European tribes that migrated here in the

Bronze Age (which migrated from Inner Asia and to Central Asia, and the further, to historical homelands). In response it is possible to quote the arguments of the Buryat researcher, Dugarov, who also sent his theses to the conference. He started from the premise that there is, on the western shore of Lake Baykal, a mysterious sacred mountain called *Yord*. Its fame stems from the Buryat traditions of having all clans come here at the beginning of summer to celebrate the onset of summer, to say prayer and make sacrifice to their supreme gods, the creator *Aya* and his wife, *Yord* the mother earth. The month of May was the beginning of the milking of mares, – the month when the first *koumiss* is sacrificed to the gods.

"This is a rite known from the most ancient of times by all Scythian-Saka and Turkic-Mongol peoples. The appropriate sacrificial ceremony and the prayers recited by the white shamans were followed by an *en masse* popular feast (*'naadan'*), whose principal element was the dancing round of the Yord Mountain – the '*Yoohor*' line dance... The Yord Mountain was the counterpart of the mythical world tree. It was through this mountain that the Buryat and their hunter forbears entered into contact with the celestial deities, sending up prayers and sacrifices to them; as, indeed, it was through this same mountain that, in response to their ceremonial action, divine grace, riches, and happiness, the spirits of children and domestic animals descended among them" (Dugarov 1992:72).

Thereafter, Dugarov states that the word '*Yord*' cannot be explained from the Turkic-Mongol languages; presumably, it is a loanword which, in Scandinavian mythology, is the name of the earth goddess. This goddess is the wife of the supreme creator deity, Odin, and is, concurrently, the mother of the god of thunder, storm, and fertility. Dugarov is convinced that the name of the Yord Mountain and that of the Scandinavian earth goddess derive from the same root, presenting us with a Kurikan-Scandinavian isogloss.

Dugarov's final conclusions are important. We quote:

"The cult of the clan god (this is the '*white shamanism*', i.e. the religion crystallizing in early class societies) owes its genesis to two great progressive watershed events in the history of mankind: the emergence of farming and metal processing. It was the age when – in Inner Asia, in ancient India and China – the great eastern civilizations of antiquity, the first slave-holding states came into existence from the 3rd millennium B.C. onwards. In the grassy steppes of Eurasia, this period is marked by the emergence and development of nomadic animal keeping, the breakup of the primitive communal system, the appearance of the societies of military democracy, and the formation of numerically strong cultural and historical folk communities. These momentous changes are most intimately bound up with the fact that, from the areas adjacent to presentday Central Asia and Kazakhstan, a Europic population poured into Central Asia and Southern Siberia. In the 2nd millennium B.C., a group of these tribes penetrated as far as Inner Mongolia and the Sayan-Altaic mountainous region, where, in the twelfth century B.C., it established the famous Karasuk civilization. A part of these Indo-European tribes, then, – which, incidentally, had, by that time, strongly intermingled with the indigenous population – migrated further towards the north, to the Lake Baykal region, to Southern and

Central Siberia, where later they were directly instrumental in the cultural genesis and ethnogenesis of certain present-day Siberian peoples, primarily the Ket, the Samoyed, the Buryat, the Yakut, and other peoples" (Dugarov 1992:73).

K. Gerasimova, in criticizing Dugarov's concepts and theory, asserts that, amongst the peoples of the world, the early stages of the development of intellectual culture display many typological similarities; but this does not, by any means, necessarily imply a borrowing, a direct or indirect contact. It is more worthwhile, therefore, to look for the origin of white shamanism in the inner dynamics of the socio-cultural development of the *ethnos*. She avers that

"the ethno-social communities, depending on the degree of their clanship and territorial cohesion, revered – as family, clan, and community patrons – real genealogical ancestors, fictitious ascendants or mythical ancestors, or some deity emblematical of ethnic coherence. In conformity with that, the key community rituals were directed by the heads of families, the clan elders, the leaders of the community, clan, territorial, and tribal groupings. Their cultic duties were inherently determined by the clan principles of majority: seniority, promogeniture, a traditional, sacral right to leadership, which, to begin with, used to be prescribed by the system of blood-relationship. The celebration of ancestor cult rites did not require an esoteric status, a special initiation, election, possession, the ability to maintain contact with the other-worldly powers. In the pre-class society (*socium*), based on clan structure, power was surrounded by a sacral aura. On the other hand, from the earliest times, we see a specialization process of the cultic functions, leading to a gradual rise of the professional servants of the cult" (Gerasimova 1992:72).

The investigations of folklorist Elena Romanova (Yakutsk) would seem to second those contentions; her subject area is white shamanism, which has latterly been associated by more and more people with the cult of the *Aiyy* clan-tribal deities (N. Alekseyev, D. Dugarov). Researchers tend to discern in it the religion of an emerging early class society.

Among the Yakut Sakha, according to M. Alekseyev, the cult of the *Aiyy* tribal gods is the organizing core of the whole ritual and ceremonial system. The obligatory rites (annual prayer to the sky, to the earth, prophesying for the clan) and the optional rites (seasonal rites, those connected with animal breeding, and those performed in the case of infertility, for the obtainment of a child) fall within the purview of the "white" shaman. Thus did the white shaman model all the crucial cultic actions on which the fortunes of the entire clan (tribe) depended. It would be more correct to call the 'white' shaman, or *aiyy oiun*, of the Yakut – a 'celestial' shaman. The special category of 'celestial' shamans was present, too, amongst the Southern Tuvinians.

According to one of the organizers of the conference, K.D. Romanova:

"Among the Yakut, the birth of the 'celestial' shaman (*aiyy oiun*) is connected with the name of the first ancestor, the mythological progenitor, *Elley*. The cultural hero himself addresses his prayer to the sky-gods; it is the rite itself that establishes the primary nature of the shamanic gift or the shamanic ability. The primordial father *Elley* and the *first shaman* (sometimes his first-born son) enter into a dialogic relationship with the Cosmos (mediation relationship with the three worlds). The

'heaven-born' *aiyy* shaman emphasizes his own aristocratic pedigree by means of a specified complex of symbols, and by his white costume. At the yearly prayers held in honour of the sky and the earth, a white woman's furcoat and a tall woman's headgear are worn. That the 'white' shaman wears woman's garments at the *yhyakh* is explicable in terms of the indissoluble unity of the two principles – the masculine and the feminine. The union of sky and earth, as well as of the two principles, represents Harmony and the Cosmic Order... " (Romanova 1992:90-91).

The worship of the sky, as supreme god (*Tengri*), is a very archaic element of the religious ideology of Turkic peoples. Several lecturers touched upon this complex of problems, which has not so far been duly studied. A. Karimov (Tashkent), for instance, goes as far as to see in Tengrianism the ancient religion of the Proto-Altaic peoples. The authoritative linguist and cultural historian S. Klastorniy (St. Petersburg) has studied formulations of the 'three worlds' in Siberian shamanism, thinks it very important that, in Siberian shamanism, a terminological and ritual continuity may be assumed to have existed for nearly two millennia. Given that the shamanistic pantheon is divided according to the tripartite world concept (upper, lower, and middle) – the boundaries of the worlds demarcate the limits of the activity of the gods in this system. In his paper, Klastorniy reminds us that the sophisticated religious system of the old Turkic peoples "must not be identified with the primitive shamanism of the Siberian hunting tribes". Moreover, following the collapse of the old Turkic states, he documents a rearchaization of the religious ideology of the Turkic peoples, or, as happened in Mongolia and Eastern Turkestan, it merged with Buddhism.

We are treated to the results of particularly fascinating historical research by L. Shertova (Tomsk), who has studied the relationship between Siberian shamanism and Burhanism. Based on the Altaic data, she concludes that

"shamanism may be regarded as an index betokening a transitional state of society or a certain measure of social-political decline. Shamanism, as a product of social and individual psychology, was a dependable social regulatory force. In a period of social instability, psychological uncertainty, disrupted social and ethnic relationships, when the social and economic order takes a new direction, the mediator-shamans acquire an enhanced role. In the process, the more highly structured religious systems – those that require a secure social and political network of relations to keep them alive – are pushed into the margins. At the right historical moment, however, it is precisely these systems, preserved in a traditional culture, that come to life from their 'suspended animation', exerting a crucial influence on the further development of the framework of cognition and ideology" (Shertova 1992:87).

Shertova's perception is important, with possible relevance today. More exactly, talking to leading Yakut intellectuals, in Yakutia today, at a time of ideological vacuum, shamanism might perform the role of an ideology strengthening national identity. Indeed, its 'white' variant would seem the most suitable for that purpose: the festive programme of the conference and the dawn sun-greeting ceremony featured a Neo-white shaman.

The following section is a review of selected lectures according to thematic divisions, beginning with those that centred on the role of the shaman as singer and moving to issues of shamanic symbolism. According to A. Chudoyakov (Gorno-Altaysk), the shamanic and epic singer traditions exhibit numerous similar features which survive to this day, such as the tripartite division of the universe (into earthly, subterranean, and celestial worlds); faith in the dedication of the shaman and the songster; and the professionalism of both. Further, the shaman's 'mind' trip during performances of the healing rite is seen to be similar to the singer's 'mental' vision that enables him to 'see' the journey of an epic hero during recitation of the folk legends. Still, from the moment that they detached themselves from mythology, these two areas of the intellectual or spiritual life of the Siberian Turkic peoples developed along separate paths, becoming 'independent forms of the realization of consciousness: where the shamanic traditions became the religious form and the bardic traditions evolved into the artistic form.

H. Korogly (Moscow) studied one of the oldest written epic monuments of the Turkic peoples: the 'Dede Korkut'. He found that, in this Oghuz heroic song, shamanism represents the ideological basis. It is mainly the figure of the central hero, old Korkut, who undergoes an interesting transformation in the different textual variants: some show him as shaman, others as a general, and still others make him a minstrel-shaman (*ozaan-bakhshi*).

Among the Kirghiz, similarly to the other Turkic-speaking peoples of Asia, oral tradition has preserved to our own days the epic elements consisting of tens of thousands of lines, the *Manas* epic. Even though the Kirghiz are Muslims, the text of the *Manas* is full of references to local shamans, – as we heard from I. Moldobayev (Bishek). The Kirghiz call the shaman *bakshi*. In the 1960s, they were still practising privately. They were black (*kara bakshi*) and white (*ak bakshi*) shaman and also female shamans (*bubu bakshi* or *bubu*). For the activity of the latter, we have a fine illustration from the heroic epic – namely, the passage where, at the birth of *Manas*, all the *bakshis* and *bubus* are summoned to assist with the delivery. Modern ethnographical fieldwork projects have shown that the *bakshis* were mainly successful in treating psychological maladies – disorders caused by an *azhina*, as it is called in Kirghiz, an 'evil spirit'. The epic mentions the rattle pipe (*anzhay mor*) used by the shamans and the pointed cap (*kula*), which were all accessories of the *bakshis*.

V. Nikofova (Novosibirsk) prepared a lecture about "The Tonal Value of the Song of Yakut Shamans and Minstrels". The minstrel or epic singer (*olonkhohut*) and the shaman (*oiuun*) performed two distinct functions in Sakha society, so that a combination of the two was the exception. The sung recital of the heroic epic, the *Olonkho*, and the musical part of the shamanic rituals were radically different from one another. During her investigations, the young researcher made some highly meticulous observations regarding the details.

We quote from these: "both the shaman and the songster were required to be able to sing in an unusual voice and to be in command of their voice-producing organs. In the *Olonkho*, the epic singer uses some leitmotifs in the melody, by which he characterizes the female and male characters, as well as the zoomorphic figures of the epic. The main opposition between the worlds of the *aiyy* ('benevolent spirits') and *abaahy* ('evil spirits') is also accentuated by the singer through a contraposition in tone. The melodies of the *aiyy* heroes are performed in the style of Yakut hymnic singing, by means of the characteristic falsetto technique (*kuluhah*), which also stands out as an acoustic standard, that is, it is a tone marker and characteristic of Yakut folk music."

A strikingly high number of lectures centred on shamanic musical dialects – varying by ethnic group, characteristic local features and genres. This was in part due to the fact that in the folk music faculty of the Novosibirsk conservatory (Centre for the Ethnographic Study of North Asian Folk Music), thorough researches are carried out under the expert guidance of the Head of Department Yuri Sheikin. In a few years, when these publications appear, these systematic studies will open up entirely new dimensions of our knowledge relating to the Siberian shaman as musician. At the conference, Sheikin, together with his wife O.A. Sheikina, presented a portion of their researches, carried out continuously over a span of twenty years among the Ude (or Udehe or Oroch) ethnic group – viz. the musical genres associated with shamanic rituals.

O. Dobzhanskaya (Novosibirsk) – who had carried out field work among the Nganasan or, more exactly, with a single family of shamans – provided highly accurate observations, rich in details. The family in question is that of the famous shaman – perhaps the last authentic Nganasan shaman – Demnime Kosterkin Ngamtusuo (1913-1980). The melodies were noted down from him and his son, who was still performing seances in 1990.

The Nganasan use the word *djamada* to denote the helping spirits of the shaman; these 'appear' partly in the tonal world of the shamanic rituals, in the shaman's songs performed to the accompaniment of the drum, and partly in the sound of the pendants and bells sewn onto the shaman's garments. Dobzhanskaya explains:

"Every *djamada* has its own song, which is its marker, enabling participants of the shamanic seance to unmistakably recognize it. We find seven different melodies in the ritual of Demnime, including the song of the Female Bear, the *Hotare* (loon), *Djau-mali* (the spirit of 'The Big Mountains'), *Kadja-koptua* (Thunder-Girl?), *Djali-nemi* (the mother of the day), and others. Just how fixed the musical characterization of the shamanic spirits is emerges from the fact that, thirteen years later, we noted down the same melodies, too, from the shaman's son, Dulsimyaku: he, in ritual introduced the same *djamadas* as his father had done in his seances" (Dobzhanskaya 1992:56).

Dobzhanskaya's accurate observations are a great contribution to a better understanding of Siberian shamanic singing and music. She reported, for

example, that the most melodically varied part is the first half of the seance (when the shaman collects the helping spirits), where

"the *djamada* songs have a single function – namely, to signal by sound the appearing helping spirits. Later on, the musical characterization of any given *djamada* may reappear, e.g. as a melody accompanying the shaman's trip or as the melody of a riddle. The melodies of particular *djamadas* are different with regard to melodic structure and rhythm, making them easy to distinguish purely by hearing.

'Onomatopoeia is an important device for musical characterization of the zoomorphic helping spirits;' – it is the imitation of the sounds produced by beasts and birds. The shaman's onomatopoeic signals indicate that a *djamada* (goose, swan, duck, loon, stag, bear) is present. These signals also occasionally resound in the song of a given *djamada* (the bawling of the Mother Bear in the song of *Narka-nemi*) or in the song of any other helping spirit. The Nganasan distinguish, by means of intonation, between the onomatopoeic signals of the shamanic *djamadas* and the hunting signals. The sound of the shamanic helping spirits cannot be reproduced elsewhere outside the rite, which explains why several informants refuse to imitate, for instance, the sound of the cuckoo" (Dobzhanskaya 1992:57).

As a result of her investigations, Dobzhanskaya thinks there is sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis – formulated earlier on – that shamanic helping spirits are passed on from shaman to shaman, and that, correspondingly, the helping spirit melodies, too, are handed down from shaman to shaman.

In recent years, we have seen fresh momentum injected into the study of Kazakh shamanism. That is reported by S. Yelemanova, who reviewed the musical traditions of the shamanic ritual (*baksilin sarini*). She said that Kazakh shamanic melodies are characterized by quart intonations, parlandos and prayers of identical pitch or expressed in repetitions of sounds involving minimum intervals. Shamanic *sarinas* invariably stay within the sound range of conventional melodies, characteristic also of burial and wedding songs; thus it seems we are dealing with melodies that stadially and functionally correspond to each other.

N. Petrov (Yakuts) scrutinized the role of the *khomus* (Jaw harp) in Buryat and Yakut musical tradition. He stated that "the Buryat historical vocabulary includes a family of words: *hobhon* – 'magic'; *Homuhun* – *hobuhun*: 'magic', 'witchcraft', 'bewitching', shamanizing. All these are formed from the root *homus*), which means 'Jaw harp' or 'trump' in English. According to Hangalov's information: "the *hur-homus* used to be 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. The shaman wore the *hur* tied to his belt by a chain, in a separate case set with silver. *Hurs* were made only by smiths, who traced their lineage from the celestial smith, they were the so-called white smiths. During prophesying, a well-prepared *hur* was telling nothing but the truth." In addition to telling the future, the Siberian Jaw harp was also used by the healing shamans: it was held to be particularly useful against headaches.

In his lecture, Edward Alekseyev (Moscow), the best known researcher of Yakut shamanic singing (*kuturuu*), drew attention to the way the singer could come under a special self-hypnotic influence in the course of singing. In this altered state of consciousness, however, the dualistic contradictory nature of shamanism – the unity of total control with unconscious activity – still operates in a perfect way. During seance chanting, the shaman must build – by dint of his own song and the sound of the drum – a special vocal world; moreover, he has to attain an altered state of consciousness – the state of trance or ecstasy, or, at least, the borderline of this. In addition, he has to draw the audience under his control, something he can accomplish by means of his acting ability and his hypnotic power, for it alone enables him to make the spectator believe that he does communicate with the helping spirits. Accordingly, theatrical elements are important for an understanding of Siberian shamanism; – that is one of the points made, too, in a lecture by S. Tarbanakova (Gorno-Altai), who dubs the seance of Altaic Turkic shamans ‘folklore theatre’, regarding it as a syncretic art that organically merges words, pantomime, music, song, and dance.

A few lectures were devoted specially to the role of dance in the practice of Northern Siberian shamans. M. Zhornitskaya (Moscow) is possibly the best known researcher of shamanic dances. In her lecture, she pointed out that the dance of shamans is normally an improvisation invariably performed within an enclosed space, often in a cramped room (yurt).

Zhornitskaya distinguishes three main types of shaman’s dances: (1) primitive dances consisting of rhythmically organized plastic movements; (2) imitative pantomime-type dances; (3) ecstatic dances.

A. Lukina (Yakutsk), a disciple of M. Zhornitskaya, also has been studying Yakut shamanic dance. She devotes particular attention to the category of ecstatic dances. In the course of these, the shaman re-enacted rising into the Upper World and descending into the Lower World. She also calls notes the significance of imitative dances, involving simulation of the movement of the horse, eagle, raven, loon and white horse.

Naturally, I cannot recapitulate – even in this highly sketchy format – all the lectures; therefore selection is inevitable, using quotes from the authors’ own texts, so as to avoid any distortions. While the incredible variety of subjects was especially reassuring, it was also delightful that the study of symbolic aspects of shamanism has come to occupy centre stage. This was particularly evident in an ambitious paper by V. Basilov (Moscow) called “Transvestitism – ‘Gender Transformation’ in Shamanism”. The author stated:

“The ritual (including the shamanistic) ‘gender change’ must be studied in a broad perspective, as interconnected with facts associated with an archaic, dualistic world view” (Basilov 1992:4).

The most exhaustive treatment of this problem in the ethnographic legacy was provided by A. Zolotarev. He showed that,

"in the initial period of cultural development, humans divided the whole world, including humanity, into two halves (phratryes): the upper world (coextensively the celestial, white, right-hand side, etc. world, and, among other things, the masculine world) and the lower world (terrestrial or subterranean, black or dark, left-hand side, etc. world, or the feminine world). Both half-worlds had their own respective ritual lives. The shaman (priest) of each phratry had contact with the supernatural forces in his own sphere. The unity of the world and of society was expressed by the conjoining of the masculine and feminine principles (that notion has survived in Indian and Chinese philosophical thinking). The development of religious views has produced the insight that a single person, too, might maintain contact with the lower and the upper worlds; – in this way, enabling combination of the masculine and feminine principles. The idea is present already in ancient religions, as expressed in androgynous pictorializations of deity. Of particular interest among these are those statues of Shiva which exhibit a female figure on the left side and a male figure on the right side. The joining of the masculine and feminine functions – which is so emphatic in the ritual activity of certain priests – explains the circumstance that the Siberian, Malaysian, and Indonesian peoples used to consider the 'gender-transformed' shamans to possess the greatest power. Remnants of a world divided into a left (lower) and a right (upper) half have survived among numerous Siberian peoples, on the shaman's costume and on shaman's drums, as an indication that the shaman communicated with these different spheres, combining, in himself, the attributes of both" (Zolotarev 1980:29).

It is interesting to note that two other participants of the conference wrote quite recently about the same topic, B. Saladin d'Anglure (1992) on the concept of the 'third gender', and M. Balzer (1992) on the patterns of gender transformation in Siberian shamanic cultures.

L. Pavlinskaya (St. Petersburg), in the tradition of S.V. Ivanov, E.D. Prokofyeva, and V. Diószegi, tackled the morphology and symbolic meaning of the Siberian shaman's garb. She made the point that the shaman's ritual costume replicated, in a symbolic form, the archaic world model. Let's quote some of the conclusions of the St. Petersburg-based researcher, for never before her had these ideas been encapsulated in such a succinct form:

"The composition of the shaman's costume is very consistently vertical in arrangement, symbolizing the World Axis (World Tree) – the pictorial idea that is characteristic of all archaic cultures. This vertical axis, having a triple division – primarily represented by the three principal elements of the costume: the headgear, the cloak, and the footwear – signalize the three main divisions of the World Model, i.e. the upper, the mediate, and the lower worlds, of which the two extremes stand in opposition to the intermediate one, the world of humankind. This general division of the world is repeated in each element of the dress – on the one hand, reflecting the full model (or part of it); on the other establishing a specific cycle of movement, thereby uniting the three symbolic spheres in a single whole. The animal figures on the ritual costume also symbolize the tripartite universe – every one of these has a very broad polysemantic inheritance. Accordingly, the three dominant animal figures of the shaman's costume – the reindeer (elk), the bear,

and the bird – typify not only the three spheres of the Universe but, taken together, the entire Cosmos. Concomitantly, as characters of the main cosmological and cosmogonic myths, they also express, in the shaman's costume, the concept of a symbolic creation of the world, the idea of the arrangement of the world" (Pavlinskaya 1992:35).

Pavlinskaya also makes the important point that in the making of the shaman's robes, the technological processes are symbolic the acts of the creation and recreation of the world. Therefore her conclusions are compelling, that the festive shaman-costume is a peculiar cultural text of a pictorial-artistic type, whose content is an infinite storehouse of archaic concepts concerning the universe and humans. The costume essentially records and reflects myth, the shamanistic mythology.

Under the title "The Number 9, as a Symbol of Wholeness and Completeness in the Archaic World Concept", N. Zhukovskaya (Moscow) shows – on the basis of Mongolian material – the functioning of the number 9 in mythological, social, and everyday life. In Buryat and Mongol shamanic cosmogony, groups comprised of nine gods and a sky having nine layers have an important role.

L. Abayeva (Ulan-Ude) wrote an excellent aperçu about the tree cult of Mongolian peoples, charting the transformation of the World Tree – World Mountain concept of the archaic world-view into the shaman's tree and, finally, into the shaman's stick. It is worth quoting her conclusions:

"As a result of the entire historical development of the traditional beliefs and cults of the Mongolic peoples (Mongols, Kalmyks, Buryats), the cult of the shaman's tree – anchored in the archaic image of the 'World Tree' and the no less archaic concept of the 'World Mountain' – transformed into the popular cult of sacred trees, which, in turn, was related to the ancestor cult, the cult of local master spirits, and other clan-based cults, including the cult of sacred mountains, a key cult in the system of clan cults. At the same time, this twofold cult – so popular among the Mongolian peoples – is also genetically related to another mythological figure (possibly the most archaic among them), the concept of Mother Earth, so widely held among the Central Asian peoples in olden times" (Abayeva 1992:70).

A special lecture treated the role of the tree in general in Yakut shamanic rituals. The author, V. Akimov (Yakutsk), mentioned that every shaman used to have a personal tree (*aar-kuduk-mas* 'sacred tree', 'big tree'), among its dry branches shaman's souls were nurtured in the nests. Such shaman's trees were on display at an exhibit of the Sakha Republic Historical Museum in Yakutsk, which was packed with relics of the shamanism (Akimov 1992).

Of the physical accoutrements of shamans, weapons have so far received scarcely any attention, even though investigators have noted their existence on several occasions. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century travellers did mention the role of the shaman in the military organization of Siberian peoples, but subsequent ethnographic collecting trips did not turn up data of this kind. Recent archaeological excavations, however, have yielded numerous military devices, including swords, daggers, pikes, and spears.

These recent archaeological data were reviewed by Yu. Hudyakov (Novosibirsk), who stated:

"the shaman's tombs of Minusinsk and of the region beyond the Baykal have, in their grave furniture, weapons and trappings as well, giving substance to the assumption that shamans also took a direct part in military actions, performing ideological and organizational preparatory business prior to these operations. These shamans might be included in a special category – that of field or 'military shamans'. According to the evidence of sources, these field shamans played an important role, in the Middle Ages, in the military life of nomadic Turkic-Mongolic peoples" (Hudyakov 1992:37).

A paper rich in fascinating conclusions and data is a brief study by B. Zoriktuyev (Ulan-Ude) on the role of shamans during community hunts called *zegete aba*. The Buryat researcher recognizes the shaman, too, among the characters participating in the battle, as represented in rock drawings from the Angara region. His final conclusions are worth quoting:

"Similarly to all other religions, in the Baykal region, too, shamanism, right from the outset, catered to a whole cross section of social needs. Given the tremendous importance that hunting had in the life of the local tribes, the shaman could not keep out of the service of hunting. Underlying the shamanic rituals attending the *zegete aba* community battle is faith in the supernatural help of the taiga's master spirits and in the magic protective force of the *zeg* rope. During the *zegete aba* battues, the shamans -- who occupied a prominent, often leading position in the community -- performed not only their immediate tasks, carrying out a religious-ritual activity, but they were also in overall charge of such a complex and rigorously regimented organization as the battue party, which, if need be, could easily be organized into a military escort" (Zoriktuyev 1992:74).

Evident from the topics of the lectures sent in for the conference, there are whole peoples and population groups whose shamanism is ripe for new monographic treatments, building on the thoroughness of the essays being written. Relevant examples include some excellent studies focussing on Yakut and Even shamanism (the surveys included one by P. Sleptsov on Yakut specialists on folk religions; Ye. Gabishev on the etymology of the word *oiuun* – 'shaman'; A. Petrov and V. Robbek on the vocabulary of Even shamanism; A. Alekseyev on the stages of the initiation rite of Even shamans; S. Alekseyeva on Even shamanic healing).

Several excellent lectures were written for the conference, by conference organizers and others, that concerned themselves with the history of scholarship. A.I. Gogolev's introduction to this topic set the stage for others throughout the conference. Thus our great ancestral figures in the study of Siberian shamans, were acknowledged, with detailed accounts of their work given in some cases. One of these somewhat forgotten researchers was S. D. Maynagashev – himself of Sagay origin –, who, between 1913-1914, carried out field-work among his own people, the Hakass, making 50 phonograph recordings and taking 250 ethnographical photos. These latter are particularly

valuable, since they show a shaman conducting a horse sacrifice. A. Gladishevsky (Abakan) wrote about this first Hakass ethnographer. B.E. Petri was a researcher of Buryat shamanism: in the twenties, he wrote several popularizing works about shamanism, based on his personal experiences and observations. Petri was deeply fascinated with the question of the transmission of shamanic knowledge, which prompted him to write a special essay about the Buryat 'shamans' school'. He mentions five stages in the initiation. – Those are just some of the highlights from a profile of Petri written by A. Sirina (Yakutsk). The third study, by A. Dyachkova (Yakutsk), focusses on the great researcher of Yakut shamanism, G.V. Ksenofontov (1992), whose collected works were published, too, in a volume by the organizers of the conference and introduced by A. Dyachkova. Interestingly, he did not consider shamanism to be the ancient religion of the Yakut, the latter having been preserved by the "white shamans". In his opinion, shamanism is an 'international' phenomenon, which became widespread in the Central Asian steppes with the appearance of the Huns.

Finally, several additional papers are worth to drawing attention to for their focus on more recent history and the clashes of religions and ideologies in the 20th century. N. Vasilyeva wrote about the witchhunts against shamans carried out in the 1920-30s. Let me quote:

"The second wave of the anti-religious campaign – the militant atheism of the 30s begins concurrently with collectivization. Something that exerted a tremendous impact on the attitude adopted towards shamanism was the Stalinist theory which proclaimed that 'as one gets nearer to Socialism,' the class struggle becomes sharper. Shamans were declared enemies of Soviet power who were 'parasite on the body of workers'. A number of shamans were imprisoned during those years, and their drums were destroyed as well. The principal instrument was the younger, rising generation, through the Young Communist League. With that, the spiritual strand linking generation to generation was nearly broken – those who might still have maintained the link were physically annihilated. As the result of the savage reprisals, the shamanistic order exited from the stage of history, at least as far as the public manifestation forms are concerned. One of the corollaries of the battle against shamanism was the breakup of the coherent system of religious, philosophical, moral, ethical, and medical doctrine, producing an erosion of values in national culture" (Vasilyeva 1992:98).

Closing the long line of surveys, I should say that it was a pleasure to see the eyes agleam, including many eastern faces reflecting emotion, as at one point during the closing session, an elderly shaman demonstrated how spirits must be called on to help – help him and help the scholars, the work of the conference. The participants – especially the descendants of the Siberian indigenous peoples-- were delighted that they were at last free to talk about the most sacred relics of their ancient culture; that they no longer had occasion to feel shame, as shamanism had ceased to be an object of opprobrium – that it was, instead, an integral part of identity-building national self-awareness.

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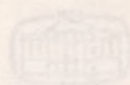
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by István FODOR

Ethnologica Uralica vol. 4

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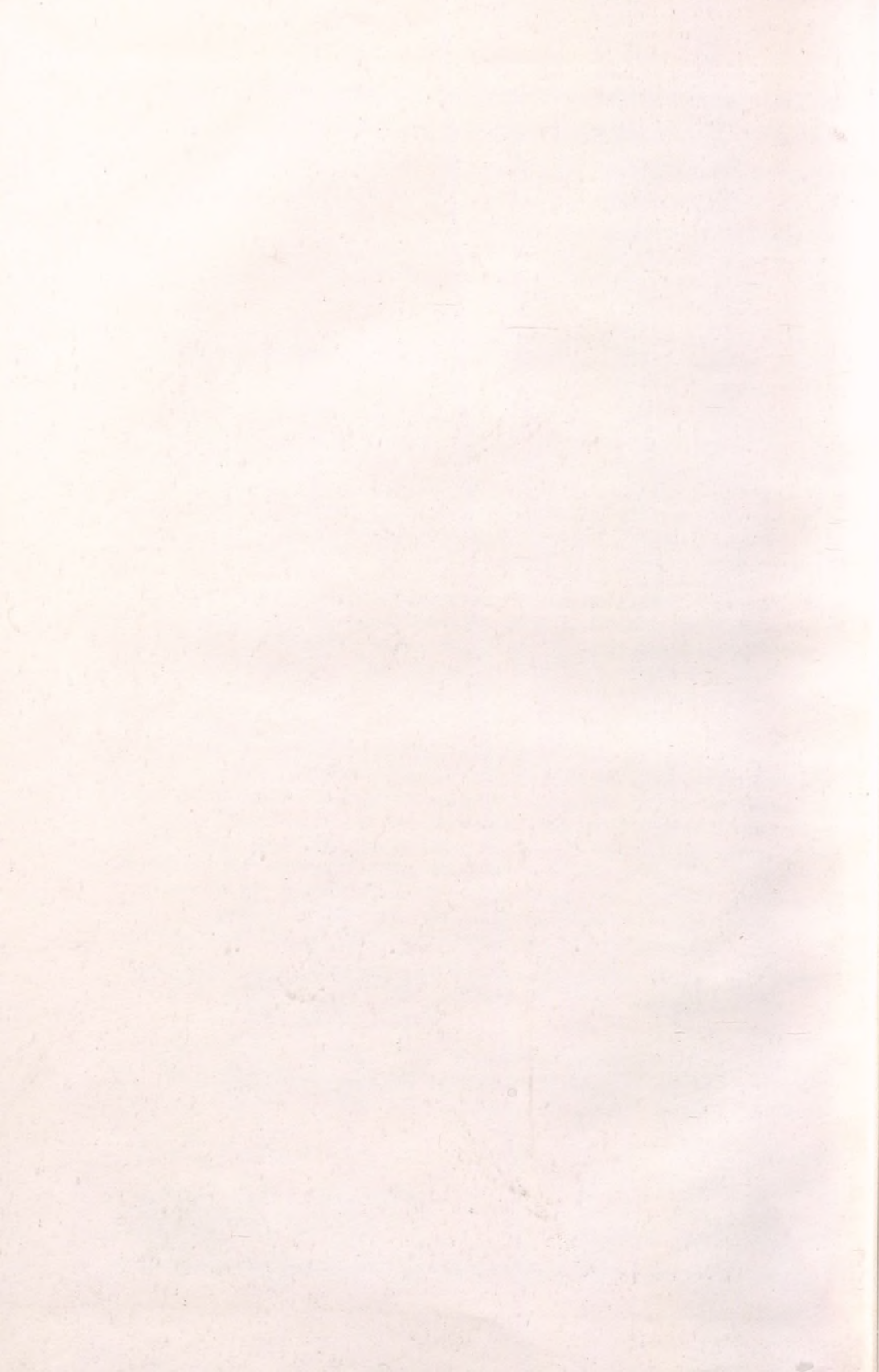
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Proto Indo-European **weid-** to see; suffixed form ***weid-tor** the seer. In Greek **istor** > **histor** wise, learned, scholar; **eid-os** form, idea. In Latin **video** I see; **visio** vision. In Sanskrit **veda** knowledge.

Proto Germanic ***wit-** knowledge, intelligence; in Old English **wis** wise manner; English **wise, wisdom, wit**. In Old High German **wissago** seer, prophet; German **wissen** to know, **Wissenschaft** science. In Old Church Slavic **videti** to see; Russian **ved'** you know; in Old Irish **finn** 'clearly visible'; white.

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